

In Memoriam: Saul Krugman

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I shall not talk to you about Saul Krugman, the Giant of Pediatrics who did so much in the prevention of infectious diseases. "Giants" seem to have become more frequent nowadays. Saul was, indeed, a giant and a very big one. But all of you here know about that. My perspective was a little different.

I first met Saul Krugman in January 1946 when he arrived at Bellevue. It did not take long for us to realize that we had much in common, in our attitudes towards our work and our families, in our hopes and in our aspirations for the future which stretched a lifetime before us. We became close friends during those shared years. I cannot hope to tell you what that friendship meant to me during the ups and downs and the uncertainties that make up a life. I shall, instead, try to distill for you some of the essence of Saul Krugman, as I knew him.

If I were to pick one defining characteristic, I would select Loyalty. Not as the word is commonly used, but in a more profound and inclusive sense. Saul was loyal to his friends and colleagues because he believed in them. He was fond of referring to his staff as his "Bellevue Family" and he created the environment that made it so.

The fortunate circle of his intimates enjoyed a rare type of loyalty from Saul, one that did not see their imperfections, that saw only a valuable friend capable of

great things. By some strange alchemy, this faith in us made us better than we would otherwise have been and we gratefully returned his loyalty.

For Saul, loyalty also included devotion to his profession. Here his vision was clear and sharp. He knew facts and he recognized fiction and he eloquently defined the differences and interpreted their meanings. This skill made him an advisor whose services were eagerly sought in Europe, in Southeast Asia and the Middle East, in Africa and New Zealand, here in the States and everywhere else. He tirelessly answered those calls. He believed in Medicine as a bond among people and as a means to improve their lot. He willingly accepted as a duty his role as a teacher and a messenger. Wherever he went, he left friends and admirers.

Of course, one word, Loyalty, is inadequate to describe Saul, significant as that word may be. "Compulsive" is a word that he often ascribed to himself, usually with an apologetic smile. His compulsion was directed toward his work, driving him to meet self-imposed standards and a timetable to achieve those goals. This unrelenting effort discomfited some of his younger, more relaxed colleagues but in the end, they learned to conform.

Saul was a gentleman, I am not referring to civility alone. His approach to discussion and controversy was non-combative, relying on reason and the power of suasion. There was a consideration for others coupled with a

generosity that appears to be rare today, attributed more to a past that probably never existed.

Saul was all this, and much more.

Saul may have had a concentration of virtues but he was also human, and his human-ness was obvious on first meeting. He was not immune to the opinion of others; he suffered greatly during those years when the ethics of his research was challenged. I have seen him furious when faced with the mindless bureaucracy at Bellevue. Saul was not saintly. He had his virtues and his failings - just like you and me. Only his blend was better.