

Greg was a great teacher and friend. As the first Chief Resident in Medicine he inculcated in us the art and science of physical diagnosis like no other. He was strict but not insulting, he was extremely knowledgeable but not pedantic, he imposed discipline yet was generously supportive.

When I left UERM in 1964 I was sad to leave a great teacher and wondered when I would see him again. Well, we wound up together in Chicago where he was training in Cardiology while I was training in Internal Medicine. I was so fortunate to be present at his wedding. Years later I would meet him again at the Philippine Heart Center and at UERM accompanying patients from Clark Air Force base as a referring cardiologist. By then he was a big name in cardiology as professor and as President of the Philippine Heart Association. I remember years ago while viewing exhibits at a convention of the American College of Cardiology when I heard a unique and familiar voice. I mentioned to my friend that it sounded like Dr. Patacsil. We went to the next booth and sure enough it was Dr. Patacsil.

In this day and age of technology, we should gratefully realize that Dr. Patacsil truly inculcated in us the science and art of hands-on cardiovascular examination. I learned so much from him and he influenced me to pursue a career in cardiology. One of my fondest memory of late was in July, 2010 while visiting my classmate, Dr. Tuazon at Capitol Medical Center. Dr. Patacsil and I serendipitously met while waiting for an elevator. Once again his graciousness showed when he let several elevator trips pass by while he and I enjoyed a memorable chat.

You will be greatly missed. Vaya Con Dios Dr. Patacsil!

Ernie Chua, Class '62

xx

To me, Dr Patacsil was THE CARDIOLOGIST.

Whenever someone needed a cardiologist, I would refer them to him.

I remember him lecturing to us at the bedside of patients. He would open his big hand and would show us how to palpate for the various thumps and thrills especially in patients with valvular defects. He would open his bag and bring out his stethoscope to listen then would show us where to place our stethoscopes to get clear heart sounds. He would explain clearly and never shouted at us greenhorns. He was very patient and liked by students and patients alike.

I am saddened by his passing away. May he rest in peace with our Creator. May his family find comfort in the thought that Dr Patacsil was instrumental in molding the UERM students who attended his lectures.

Sonia Belen-Balitactac, Class '73

Please extend our heartfelt condolences to the family of Dr. Greg Patacsil. Our prayers for the repose of his soul. He was one of the well loved teacher. He is also a cumpangre to my sister and a godfather for a member of our family. He's a good friend of our family. He will be remembered fondly in so many ways.

Thank you.

Vincent Casibang, Class '71

Cardio din siya ng father ko. Our condolences to his family.

Myrna Dizon Narcelles, Class '72

Thanks for sharing. Praying for his peace and comfort in the next life. He left a great legacy.

Connie Oliveros, Class '72

Greg is a relative on my mother's side being an Ilocano myself from Sta. Maria, Ilocos Sur (mother's side). He was a resident of Dr. Gonzalo Austria when we were students. Very industrious and extremely dedicated. He never had a temper and he helped us work up patients.

I remembered visiting him at the Cook County Hospital and he was on-call and still making rounds late in the evening. He developed a cardiac arrest while giving a lecture on CPR!!! What a co-incidence?!! I was in Manila and about to get a flight back to the USA when I heard about his demise. He is a great physician.

He took care of my parents and did not charge them a single cent and I always gave him CD music when I went home because he listened to the music of the 50's and 60's.

We will miss him and in behalf of our family, please extend our condolences to the family and relative.

Benjie M. Rigor, M.D., LL.D., Class '62

I was quite fortunate to say goodbye to Greg Sat night in Manila. Before coming to the USA, I was very fortunate to work with Greg when I was a resident in Medicine at UERM. When I came here, I wanted to be a cardiologist like him but on the few occasions we met while I was visiting Manila, he sort of dissuaded me. Luckily, I landed in Derm where I am still actively practising.

I was in Manila for a weeks visit to celebrate my 29th+++++ birthday. Greg is like family to us (took care of my father who died at 97 and also my mother who is quite good at the age of 91) so that he was one of our guests, family and friends. He was discharged from the hospital barely a month ago and was not yet working. He was sitted with a classmate of mine and his wife, Jun and Olive Sanchez and he enjoyed the party that he stayed until the end of the party. Our parties always involve games and trivia questions and he got some good prices since their table won.

He looked weak but OK and we were so surprised that he died early Sat a.m. He literally died with his boots on since he collapsed while giving a lecture at the PHA the morning after my birthday party. I and my family did not only lost a good physician but a family friend. We will surely miss him when we come home to Manila.

Ida Tiongco, Class '68

My family joins me in expressing our condolences. May Dr. Patacsil's soul rest in peace. He was a Resident in the Dept. of Medicine during the years when we were students and Interns. He was always friendly and pleasant to us; unlike the other residents who dealt with us in a manner that created fear. Those who were at UERM during the early years would recall the coffee shop located at the first floor of the hospital next to the solarium (the area that is the ER in the current set-up of the hospital). The coffee shop served a few items such as fruit salad, sandwiches, and a huge hot dog in a bun that we fondly called "Patacsil's delight". It reflected on how we cared for him.

Please extend our sympathy to his family. Thank you for keeping us posted and connected to our "past".

Take care,

El B. Castro, Class '63

I remember him as an outstanding lecturer and eloquent speaker. He keeps his captive audience wide awake. He'll have my thoughts and prayers.

Claver "Butch" Soriano, Class '74

Standing next to him I remember him as the gentle giant. He was all heart....not a single mean word, never instilled fear to the interns, clerks or students which some residents and consultants relish doing. If I remember right, either I was an intern or a Pediatric resident when his first child was born. I still can picture him looking at the puny baby (he/she was tiny at birth) almost afraid to touch. That baby was probably just slightly larger than his hand. Dr. Patacsil was one of the few rare teachers who did

*not strip whatever little dignity a student had left after going through the hellish years of being a **medical student**, a clerk and an intern.*

Mina Alindogan-Echols, Class '72

He was one of my dad's colleagues. Our families know each other well. Thanks for letting me know. I'm sure mom will be sending our condolences...

Tish, Class '72

Walking on Water...

This blog is as an outlet for my histrionic alter-ego, borne out of a whimsical afterthought, an almost childish, ridiculous, and indulgent distraction, an attempt to chronicle my moments and my thoughts and document them as if they count for the world outside, in order to create a semblance of existence.

As if it matters. As if.

The genre is fiction, but if the stories sound familiar, it's all your bloody fault.

SATURDAY, MARCH 5, 2011

Master Teacher

One of the country's strongest pillars of cardiology passed away today. In faithfulness to this creepy law of nature that requires most great doctors to usually succumb to diseases of their own specialty, he died of heart failure after battling against it for the last decade or so. Few days ago, while giving a lecture to more than fifty budding cardiologists, Teacher had a ventricular fibrillation that was initially aborted, but that eventually led to his rapid deterioration and subsequent demise. After many years of listening to him and looking up to him with awe during my training, and finally, my recent heart-to-heart conversations with him this past year, I am quite sure that that was how he wanted to go. The man literally died teaching. He wouldn't have wanted it any other way.

Many months back, after his lecture with the students that left him almost out of breath, he told me, "Jean, gusto ko pa kayong turuan. Malapit na akong mamatay. Ang dami ko pang gustong ituro." I remember him holding my arm that day, as he slowly walked the hallways of the wards, while telling me, "Noong araw, lahat ng pasyente dito, pinakikinggan ko ang puso. Ganun ako natuto." His

frail hands used to grip my arm for balance as we climbed the stairs that time at the College of Medicine when he insisted on teaching first year medical students the art of heart auscultation. At that time, I used to tell him, "Sir, magpahinga na kayo" but he told me, "Kelangan kong ipasa ang alam ko."



Leora, Jill, Teacher, and me. July 2010.

I last saw him last October, when, after his preceptorials with the students, he gave me his old book on cardiac physical examination and told me to write a summary of important points as guide for students. I still have the book to this day. Our last conversation was about growing old - how you must love and enjoy medicine, because when you're old and when your children have lives of their own, Medicine is where you get solace. Doing and teaching Medicine will be your source of satisfaction and fulfillment. A week later, during our last OSCE, as we were about to start, Teacher called me, and in a very weak voice said, "Jean, kumpleto na ba consultants mo? Sorry ha, di ako makakapunta ngayon. Ang sakit ng likod ko. Pero kung kulang ka pa, sabihin mo lang. Pupunta ako jan."

I never saw him again. During the past months, he had been in and out of hospitals. Together with some co-fellows, I have been planning to visit him, partly to talk about the old days and the birth years of PGH Cardiology but partly to just hold his hand and thank him for everything he has taught me. I never had the chance.

Now, he is gone. But all over the world are hundreds of Filipino cardiologists and internists, and thousands of other physicians he had taught. Many generations of UP graduates will forever remember his green jokes, his witty antics, his logical comments when everybody thought he was fast asleep during a conference, and

how he always goes back to the basics (even claiming that the echo or the xray is wrong!).

Dr. P was already old enough to quit teaching, but he never did. Today, our teacher, our physical examination guru, our human 2D-echo has finally retired. His legacy will live on.



Teaching rounds with the great cardiologist. "The best diagnostic tools that a doctor has are his senses." - Dr. Gregorio Patacsil, Jr.

I have thanked him many times, but I have never thanked him enough, and I never will. All I can give him is a promise: that I will teach as I had been taught. Sometimes, the only way we could ever pay someone back is to pay it forward.

POSTED BY WALKING ON WATER AT 3:49 PM 

3 COMMENTS:



Rheuma Jr. said...

I still remember that one session I attended when I was cardio resident rotator... he taught us how to differentiate mitral stenosis and mitral regurgitation using only our hands! And after that he wow-ed us all when he was able to do a better job of diagnosing a complicated heart condition (I forgot what but at that time only the consultants understood each other) by just using his hands and his steth - he beat the 2D Echo in doing this.

A great pillar nas passed away... and it is up to his students to carry on the legacy.

MARCH 6, 2011 10:05 AM 



mary jessa said...

Hi Ms Jean. I came across your blog about Dr. Gregorio Patacsil, and it's very apparent that you had a close tie with him. I am Jessa Caritativo, Editorial Assistant and writer @ FAME Publishing. I'm working on a story about Dr. Patacsil's life. And I'd like to ask if I can interview you or quote you from your blog(due to limited time) as regards Dr. P as a teacher. Relative to my request, can I get your email address or contact number? Thank you!

MARCH 7, 2011 2:18 PM 



Walking on Water said...

Hi, Ms. Jessa. I had several chances of working with him for our section's activities with the UP med students. My email address is jdalcover@gmail.com. I would love to help.

MARCH 7, 2011 4:37 PM 

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