In Memoriam: Steven M. Podos, MD (1937-2009)

Steve Podos died on October 10, 2009, of complications related to an autoimmune vasculitis. Born and raised in New York City, Steve graduated Summa Cum Laude from Princeton University. He received his MD degree from Harvard Medical School and interned at the University of Utah Affiliated Hospitals. He took his ophthalmology residency at Barnes Hospital, Washington University School of Medicine, in St Louis, Missouri. He was Chief Resident at Barnes, and then spent 2 years at the National Institutes of Health. He returned to Washington University for 6 years, rising to the rank of Professor of Ophthalmology. In 1975 he was appointed Chair of the Department of Ophthalmology at The Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York. He served as Chair for 30 years and retired in 2005. He directed the training of nearly 150 ophthalmology residents and more than 50 glaucoma fellows. Steve served on the editorial boards of several leading ophthalmology journals and for 5 years was the Editor in Chief of Investigative Ophthalmology and Visual Science. He received numerous honors during his lifetime and delivered 20 named lectures.

Steve was a consummate academic ophthalmologist. He authored or coauthored nearly 300 articles, chapters, and textbooks. Reading his curriculum vitae, one is impressed by the breadth of topics covered: ocular manifestations of myeloma, hyphema, inborn errors of metabolism, congenital diseases, and, of course, glaucoma. He was a respected world authority on the understanding and management of glaucoma. He wrote or cowrote more than 200 articles on all facets of glaucoma. I was privileged to coauthor an article with him titled “Transient Open-Angle Glaucoma Associated With Sickle Cell Trait.”

Steve was a lifelong student of ophthalmology. His professional accomplishments were in the top tier of international ophthalmology. He was a true polymath in the best sense of the word, and there was no subject that he could not carry out a lucid and penetrating discussion on. His legacy lives on in the countless people he taught, worked with, and treated.

I am grateful to Dr Morton Goldberg for sharing his eulogy, delivered on October 13, 2009, at Steve’s funeral.

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