

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

ROLAND DAVID CIARANELLO (1943 - 1994)

Gifted physician-scientist, educator, mentor, administrator, Dr. Roland David Ciaranello died suddenly and unexpectedly of cardiac arrest on December 15, 1994, at the prime of his life and at one of many pinnacles in his professional career. At the time of his premature death, Dr. Ciaranello was the heir apparent for the Directorship of the National Institute of Mental Health, a leadership position in which he was expected to make important contributions to national policies on the future directions of basic science and clinical programs in mental health.

Dr. Ciaranello had carefully charted his professional course and trajectory from his early days of training. That he had purpose and direction was certain and uncontestable. Born and raised in Schenectady, New York, the only child of his loving and supportive parents, Roland V. and Carmella Ciaranello, and the focus of his extended family of grandparents, aunts and uncles, he was educated in the Schenectady public school system. A recipient of the coveted George W. Spaine Scholarship for academic excellence, he completed his undergraduate education at Union College in Schenectady, receiving his bachelor's degree in chemistry, combined with a premedical curriculum, in June of 1965. At Union, he distinguished himself academically, and in addition, was a recognized "townie" scholar-athlete, who played both varsity football and baseball.

Roland's first big dream came to fruition with his admission to Stanford University School of Medicine, following his graduation from Union. As a medical student at Stanford, he made his entree into biomedical research and biological psychiatry, working in the laboratory of Dr. Jack Barchas. This early research experience formed the basis for his committed resolve to apply the most current, up-to-date basic science technologies and strategies to the understanding of the neurobiological and genetic components underlying psychiatric disorders in children. He remained immensely grateful to the Medical School for its unwavering support while he was a medical student, and to his early mentors, including Dr. Barchas as well as Dr. David Hamburg, then Chairman of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. The research work, which he undertook as a medical student at Stanford, would form the foundation and direction of his scientific inquiries for the next 15 years. The studies focused on understanding the controls regulating adrenaline biosynthesis and its relevance to stress-related disorders and psychiatric illness. In recognition of that work, he received the A. E. Bennett Neuropsychiatry Award in 1968. Upon completing his M.D. in 1970 and a year of postdoctoral work with Dr. Barchas, Dr. Ciaranello spent three glorious years at the NIH with Nobel laureate, Julius Axelrod. While a research associate at the NIH, he continued making important contributions to our understanding of the control of the biosynthesis of catecholamine neurotransmitters. Although Julie's working style and the research climate at the NIH were intoxicating and alluring, Roland returned to Stanford in July of 1974 to complete his residency in child psychiatry and fulfill his goal of uniting child psychiatry and developmental disorders with the basic science disciplines of biochemistry and genetics.

While a resident in child psychiatry, Roland continued his research on the control of the catecholamine neurotransmitters and their biosynthetic enzymes with long-term collaborator and colleague, Dr. Dona Lee Wong. Subsequently, he initiated studies on serotonin receptors and began his investigations in

infantile autism, the latter being fueled by his long-term interests and love for clinical medicine, his exposure to childhood neuropsychiatric disorders during his residency, and his yearning as a basic scientist to understand the neurochemical and genetic bases for developmental disorders of the nervous system.

After completing his residency and fellowship in child psychiatry, Dr. Ciaranello joined the faculty in Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences in July of 1978, officially inaugurating the Laboratory of Developmental Neurochemistry. His work in the areas of catecholamine enzyme regulation, serotonin receptor regulation and infantile autism, during the ensuing years, established his reputation as a leading child psychiatrist-researcher in the field of biological psychiatry, and cast the foundation for his appointment to the endowed Nancy Friend Pritzker Professorship in June of 1990. Evidence of his achievements and contributions to the field during this time period was his escalated promotion through the academic track, with associate and full professor stature attained by Dr. Ciaranello in 1981 and 1984 respectively. In 1984, he was also appointed Chief of the Division of Child Psychiatry and Child Development and from 1984-1988, he served as Chief of Psychiatry Service at Children's Hospital. He effectively chaired the Department's Residency Selection Committee for many years. Roland enjoyed several visiting professorships during this time as well and was honored with the Daniel Efron Research Award by the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology in 1988, recognizing his outstanding contributions to child psychiatry.

With Dr. Ciaranello's appointment as the Nancy Friend Pritzker Professor, he was afforded the unique opportunity of building a program under the umbrella of the Nancy Friend Pritzker Laboratory of Developmental and Molecular Neurobiology. That laboratory was to ultimately bring together multiple faculty and research groups of diverse expertise, to utilize knowledge in the basic neurosciences to further the understanding of developmental disorders, such as mood disorders and autism. With respect to his own most recent research, Dr. Ciaranello's interests and efforts were directed at understanding the genetics of serotonin receptor gene expression, specifically, identifying the molecular pathways by which these receptors genes are regulated, and finding the defective gene(s) responsible for inherited forms of autistic disorder. His autism research efforts had led to the identification of numerous families with multiple incidence of autism, and his research team had undertaken exhaustive genetic analyses of the DNA from these families to identify the defective gene(s).

In addition to his internationally recognized contributions to scientific progress, Dr. Ciaranello was a dedicated teacher and mentor. "Dr. C", as he was affectionately called by his students, participated in undergraduate education in the Human Biology Program, residency education, and Stanford's Continuing Education Program. He was a very active mentor and exerted particular efforts to further the careers of women in science and medicine and instruct women on the survival skills for academic success. He stood as one who assumed a very pro-active posture to ensure that women were afforded opportunities and credited with their successes. In recognition of his mentorship, he was awarded the Outstanding Mentor Award by the Academy for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry in 1992.

During his tenure at Stanford, Dr. Ciaranello was a very active participant and contributor to the affairs of the School of Medicine. He chaired the Medical School Faculty Senate for two consecutive terms while at the rank of associate professor. Subsequently, he served as chairman of the Faculty Budget Committee, a committee assembled in 1988 to help advise the Dean on a restructuring of Medical School cost allocation and expenditures, the results of which are now being implemented. In addition, Roland headed the advisory committee charged with identifying a new chair for the Department of Neurology.

Not one to limit his responsibilities to the home front, Roland participated in many national activities as well. Throughout the years, he had served on many committees for the National Institute of Mental Health, including grant review committees, the Extramural Advisory Board, and most recently, the Centers and Program Project Review Committee. In 1992, Dr. Ciaranello served on the Institute of Medicine's Committee on Research in Prevention of Mental Illness and co-chaired the panel on child psychiatry.

He had been a member of the Scientific Advisory Council of the Scottish Rite Schizophrenia Research Foundation for many years. During the past several years, he was a member of the Scientific Advisory Board of the National Alliance for Research in Schizophrenia and Affective Disorders and a Council member of the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology. For these various organizations, he represented and argued vehemently on behalf of continued federal support for mental health research to the members of Capitol Hill.

Because of his expertise in the basic sciences and child psychiatry, Dr. Ciaranello was appointed to numerous editorial boards for scientific journals. In addition, he was a co-editor of the journal, *Neuropsychopharmacology*. He extended his science to the industrial world as a co-founder of the biotechnology firm, Neurex Corporation.

In addition to being a talented research scientist, Roland was a skilled physician as well, who easily won the confidence and following of the families of autistic patients. To those families, he gave the encouragement and hope that through genetic research in autism, we might one day understand and be able to provide relief from this devastating developmental disorder. He daily committed himself to entering cyberspace, connecting up with the Internet of autistic families and responding to every inquiry that was addressed to him.

Roland extended his energies well beyond the realm of academics and his professional life. He was an avid athlete and outdoorsman, who enjoyed jogging and skiing. Staring down the steep face of a snow-clad mountain slope was to him both an exhilarating as well as an awe-inspiring experience. He let loose his skies in parallel to meet the challenge of the mountain just as he faced every other challenge in his life. Since his postgraduate days, he had enjoyed being a member of the National Ski Patrol, and had achieved senior stature at Sugar Bowl, where he had served on the ski patrol for over 20 years. In addition, Dr. Ciaranello was a staunch and active supporter of Stanford athletics, recruiting for the football team and the men's and women's basketball teams. He was a mentor, as well, for those athletes interested in medical careers.

A man of many and varied interests, Roland had a passion for music and photography. During his youth, he was an accomplished classical pianist and guitar aficionado, playing both classical and folk guitar. In recent years, he had continued to play folk guitar for relaxation and enjoyment, and those of us who were lucky enough feel fortunate to have shared those special moments of strumming and singing the enduring folk tunes he loved. Mozart was Roland's favorite classical composer, and he enjoyed listening to his extensive collection of Mozart operas, piano sonatas, concertos, and symphonies.

Photography was his expressive art form. He applied the same detail and exactitude to capture his subject, as he did to his work, whether that subject was an exotic Hawaiian flower, a Caribbean or Greek sunrise or sunset or the essence of a person, who just as easily might be a complete stranger or someone very dear to him.

Dr. Ciaranello is survived by his wife, Nancy, and daughter, Andrea, and by his parents, Roland V. and Carmella Ciaranello of Schenectady. In his memory, the Dr. Roland David Ciaranello Fellowship for

Developmental Disorders and Autism has been created to support students and fellows continuing research in his footsteps.

Dr. Roland David Ciaranello was a true "Mensch", in the broadest sense of the word. He gave unselfishly of himself and to the people whom he encountered. Neither he nor his contributions will be forgotten. For all of us whose lives he touched and who knew him well, he has left his indelible mark, his legacy, and to him we will be forever grateful.

Dona Lee Wong, Chair
Adolph Pfefferbaum
David Spiegel
Hans Steiner