

first, I would like to welcome all of you here, graduates and residents, their families and friends, ~~the~~ other residents, students, faculty and staff. Secondly, I'd like to thank

GRADUATION SPEECH

Jrann Mow of Abbott Labs

for giving us the most elegant graduation environment we've ever had

I'll keep this short, because I know you have a full and entertaining evening planned. However, I do have a few thoughts I'd like to share on this night, the night of your completion of your residency training.

My first thought can be expressed in the form of a parable. Once upon a time, a man was fleeing from a tiger. As he ran, he realized a sheer cliff lay before him. Desperately he searched the cliff's edge, luckily finding a thin but strong vine which he thought could support his weight. To escape the ravenous tiger, the man quickly began to climb over the cliff. However, just as he was about to breathe a sigh of relief, he noticed, to his horror, a little mouse gnawing slowly but steadily through the vine above him. At this moment, the man suddenly remembered his faith, and looking heavenward he shouted, "Help! Help!" For a long moment, he heard nothing. Then a majestic voice boomed out, "Do not be afraid, my son. Trust and let go." The man looked up at the tiger, down at the cruel rocks below, and up again toward heaven. Clinging to the vine more tightly, he called out: "Is anybody else up there?"

well known

that sharp rocks awaited at the bottom of the cliff,

You can make up your own minds about such analogies.

Now, through this story, I do not mean to compare residency training to a ravenous tiger; nor do I mean to compare life after residency to a sheer cliff. What I would like to suggest is that we all come to a point in our lives when we have to trust and let go, just as the divine voice in the story suggested. There are moments in life when, after all our preparation, hard work and conscious effort, we must turn ourselves over and trust we are on the right path. All of you graduating here tonight have reached such a moment. You all probably remember the doubts and misgivings you had as you transitioned from medical student to resident. What is happening tonight is an even more significant transition, and it is natural for it to be accompanied by uncertainty as well as elation. But tonight is a time to let go of doubts and fears, to let go of the questions of whether you know enough, whether you have learned enough, whether you are ready for what lies ahead. It is the moment to realize that, to the best of your ability, you have absorbed all that we, your teachers, have to teach, and to trust yourselves; to realize, as you go out into the world of medicine that you have developed the skills, the knowledge, and the compassion to heal illness and diminish suffering. This is the moment to trust you are good enough and skilled enough and caring enough to accept the mantle of full-fledged physicians and the awesome responsibility that title brings.

family

The other thing I would like to say is that I am very appreciative of and grateful to everyone here tonight. As some of you may have noticed, this has not been an easy year and a half. The medical center and College of Medicine have been grappling, not always successfully, with unprecedented changes in the health care system,

having major implications for medical education and patient care. The department has gone through significant change and upheaval. The residency program has gone through a major relocation. We have experienced births and death. Yet, somehow, through it all, we have made it to this moment, this moment of culmination and new beginnings. There have been many bumpy times, and not a few crises, but we have hung together, and we have pulled together. Yogi Berra once said, "When you come to a fork in the road, take it!" A year and a half ago, we came to a major fork in the road of the department. Following Yogi Berra's advice, we took it even though we didn't always know where we were going or what we were doing. But I believe overall we have responded to our challenges with both grit and grace, and the result is a class of graduates who should take pride in their ability to reach deep within themselves and find resources and strengths that perhaps they were unaware of possessing. I think everyone in this room has done that often this year, and you have my deep thanks for all your efforts. I wish you much success and happiness in your future endeavors. As we say in my tradition, "May you go from strength to strength." Good luck and good night.

## HELLO--GOOD-BYE

It is perhaps fitting that my first column for the newsletter as acting chair will also be my last column as acting chair. The past 22 months have been a time of transition, change, and yes, sometimes confusion, chaos, even fear. Yet I believe we all have much of which to be proud. Throughout our challenges, we have managed to function as a team, to take responsibility for our needs and desires, and to work together to achieve our goals. Much is left undone, but much has been achieved:

- After many unanticipated fiscal blows, we have significantly reduced the departmental debt, and are able to project a balanced budget for 1996-97.
- While all other UCI residencies were held at steady-state or forced to downsize, we successfully expanded our program.
- We completed our move to FHC, and it is finally beginning to feel like home.
- We fought hard for an integrated, coherent clinic space, and despite powerful forces in opposition, we got our Family Medicine Clinic.
- We pushed HealthSystems to compensate the department for faculty attending time; we pushed Medical Education to compensate us for time spent by faculty teaching medical students. We had considerable success on both fronts.
- Despite our budget problems, we were able to hire two outstanding family docs, as well as an excellent family nurse practitioner to support our clinical practices.
- The Family Nurse Practitioner Certificate Program, which our department co-sponsors, graduated its first class of students.
- Our predoctoral section underwent reorganization and refocusing.
- The Primary Care Clerkship was officially renamed the Family Medicine Clerkship.
- We have continued and improved upon our nationally recognized training programs in cross-cultural medicine and mental health.
- We have learned to live in peace, if not always harmony, with the other primary care specialties.

Perhaps most exciting of all, we have at last succeeded in recruiting a permanent chair, Dr. Joseph Scherger, a nationally recognized figure in family medicine who has the potential to shape this department into one of the leading family medicine departments in the country.

There have been positive changes in the larger institutional environment as well. Hospital administration has been completely restructured, and much for the better. The College of Medicine and UCIMC are moving toward closer integration through the creation of UCI HealthSystems. Our Dean has decided to make UCI known for its excellence in primary care medical education, and as a result has created a new (and hopefully powerful!) position of Associate Dean of Primary Care, which Dr. Scherger will also hold.

Many exciting challenges and possibilities await us on the horizon. For example:

- Further expansion of the residency program.
- Development of a commercial practice at FHC.
- Pioneering of the Objective Structured Teaching Examination, an innovative faculty development tool developed by the predoc section for use with clerkship preceptors.
- Increased control over faculty practices.
- The funding of our federal departmental grant, which will enable us to implement training and educational initiative in the areas of managed care and cross-cultural competencies.

And you could each add to this list . . .

I have intentionally not named names in this letter because although I owe each of you individually many, many debts, it is the cooperative effort of our department, including our very dedicated and hard-working staff, that I want to praise. We are most of us pretty rugged individualists. But we have learned to set aside our differences to work for shared goals and visions. As a result, in the most trying of times, we have landed on our collective feet.

With thanks to Rabbi Alexander Schindler, former president of the Union of American Hebrew Colleges, who authored a version of the following poem, I would like to say my good-byes as acting chair in this manner:

Out of chaos, out of fear  
Together we have made a circle of hope  
It encompasses our future

It is my joy, now  
To step out of the center of this circle  
My sojourn there is complete

It is my honor, now  
To surrender the hard pillow of leadership  
Other heads are ready  
To dream their dreams upon it