

DOM

Thank all of you for coming to pay tribute to Dr. Delaurentis. The reason I've been at Pennsylvania Hospital for 25 years is because of Dom. When I was looking for my first job as I was finishing my vascular fellowship in New York City, my boss at the time, Dr Veith, heard about a position with Dr. Delaurentis down the NJ Turnpike in Philadelphia. Dr. Veith recommended I look at the job because he had known Dom many years, and he told me that Dom was honest, hard working, academically oriented, but above all, a "good guy". Those last two words still resonate with me because my boss during my fellowship did not say many kind words about many people, and if he called someone "a good guy", that was the highest praise anyone could get.

So I drove down the Turnpike to interview with Dr. Delaurentis. He sat me down in his office, which is now my office, and we hit it off right away, a couple of paisans just talking about things. One thing he asked me was why the hell my parents, who were 100% Italian like he was, gave me Keith as a first name. And that's a long story. And when we were almost done talking, he said he'd like to offer me the position and join him and Dr. Savarese. He asked me if there were any reservations I had about taking the job. I said my only hesitation was that he didn't have a vascular fellowship at Pennsylvania Hospital at that time, and I really wanted to work with vascular fellows when I became a staff member. And he paused, and after a few seconds, he looked me in the eye, and he promised me if I took the job, we'd have an accredited fellowship within three years. And true to his word, three years later we had a vascular fellowship, which is now going on its twenty-second year. He was that kind of person – when he said something, he meant it and he fulfilled his promises.

Dom had several other character traits that I admired. First, he took the time to get to know people. When I first started working here, I would be sitting in my little office, which is our fellow's office now, and

Dom would make it a point to sit down in the chair in front of my desk and talk. Not about anything special, just to make sure everything was ok, sort of like a father might do. He just wanted to check in and see if things were alright. And I found that very comforting, being in a new city with a new job with a new wife, for him to take the time to do that on a regular basis.

I also admired him from an academic standpoint. Dom was a highly accomplished individual. He was one of the first surgeons in the country to publish articles back in the 1970's on bypasses to small arteries in the lower leg and foot. He referred to these small blood vessels as "little spaghettis". He published many articles on other innovative surgical techniques, such as bypasses from the thoracic aorta to the femoral arteries, and was one of the first to address the hypoplastic aorta in women. Because of his academic accomplishments, and his high standing in the vascular community, he was elected President of the Society of Clinical Vascular Surgery, President of the Eastern Vascular Society, and President of this society, all of which he was very proud.

Dom was a great teacher. The surgical residents and vascular fellows all greatly respected Dom for his knowledge and his surgical skills. He would never miss a conference and he was very committed to teaching.

Dom was a master surgeon. He took the fellows through some long, challenging operations in a very patient manner – well, for the most part in a patient manner. When I first came here, he scrubbed with me on some very advanced complicated vascular operations, showing me little tricks and techniques which I use to this day. And there were times it seemed as if he "willed" a patient through a difficult operation. I remember he and I had done a very difficult thoracoabdominal aortic aneurysm on a woman earlier in the day, and we had to take her back to the operating room at around two in the morning for bleeding, and we

were both exhausted. During the beginning of the surgery, she was so unstable that her heart stopped soon after we opened up her chest, and frankly I thought, "Well, that's that". But he reached through her open chest and began massaging her heart with his open hand very vigorously and with an intense determination which is hard to describe unless you're seeing it, and I still remember looking up at his face while he had his hand wrapped around her heart and was pumping it, and I could almost hear him say under his breath, "No, I'm not going to let you die". And I think somehow those thoughts got transmitted to her brain, and I would not have been surprised if she was saying to herself in her sub-conscious, "I do not want to get Dom DeLaurentis pissed off at me by dying". To my amazement, her heart started beating, we stopped the bleeding, and got her off the OR table.

Patients loved Dr. DeLaurentis. I would continually see patients and their families hug him and thank him for his services, as if it was a privilege for them to have the great Dr. DeLaurentis take care of them. Every once in a while I saw an elderly patient kiss his hand in thanks. Sometimes I felt like I was witnessing "The Godfather Visits Pennsylvania Hospital". As far as I know, he was never sued in over thirty years of practice as a vascular surgeon in Philadelphia, which says something. Patients loved him.

Lastly, I knew Dom greatly loved his family. He frequently spoke of his children, and of the value of family.

I have missed Dom since he retired and moved away several years ago, and I miss him more now. I will miss his sense of humor, his gentle smile, and I sometimes still imagine him walking into my office and pulling up a chair to talk and making sure things are going okay. Dom, we'll all miss you very much.