



Children's Medical Care Foundation

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December 2015

Dear Friend of Children,

In place of the usual year-end update on recent Children's Medical Care Foundation activities and accomplishments, I want to take this opportunity to tell you about a very special event that took place last month in Poland.

On November 18th at the University of Medical Sciences in Poznan, before more than 170 distinguished guests, which included the heads of most every major Polish medical university, colleagues and former fellows, many of whom now head Polish medical societies, world-renowned neonatologist and 29-year CMCF Board Member, Professor Michael P. Sherman, was awarded the distinction of Doctor Honoris Causa by University Rector, Hyacinth Wysocki.

Professor Sherman received the award for his nearly three decades of dedication to the cause of improving infant and childcare in Poland. His impact is difficult to overstate, but I want to share some highlights.

Michael first joined CMCF's Board of Directors in 1986 at a time when the infant mortality rate in Poland stood at a staggering 26 deaths per 1,000 live births, and neonatology was not yet a recognized medical specialty.

Later that year, Michael began the task of changing that when, in partnership with two Polish physicians, Professors Irena Twarowska and Janusz Gadzinowski, he organized the first ever Polish-American Neonatology symposium at the Poznan University of Medical Sciences.

It's easy to forget, but a big part of why Poland's health care lagged so far behind ours was that it was just beginning to emerge from decades behind the Iron Curtain, where international information sharing, such an essential part of modern medicine, was virtually non-existent.

Michael was the first to open his medical department to CMCF-sponsored Polish neonatology fellows that same year, as attending physician at UCLA's world-leading Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, paving the way for many to follow.

With well over 100 published research studies to his credit, Michael is also one of the world's foremost neonatology researchers, and an in-demand speaker at medical conferences and symposia worldwide.

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Michael has shared his passion for research generously with an entire generation of Polish physicians, mentoring them through every step of the process, helping them not only to design their studies but to write up the research results in a way that would pass muster with review boards-several of which he has served on over the years. And today it is not uncommon to find pioneering research conducted by his former fellows in the most prestigious international medical journals.

And if a foundation's aim is to build international medical bridges, one could hardly ask for a better ambassador than Michael Sherman. The partnerships he has made over the decades with Polish physicians have turned into lifelong friendships. While at UCLA, he would not only host fellows in his medical department, he welcomed them into his home, and even served as tour guide, taking them to concerts and cultural events and giving them a taste of the best of what Los Angeles had to offer.

But what impresses me perhaps the most about Michael-more than the individual accomplishments themselves-is the huge heart of this man, who didn't need to help in all of the ways that he has. But he did-time and time and time again. And he continues to.

As recently as his acceptance speech, in which he described the honorary doctorate as "the distinction of a lifetime", and accepted on all of our behalf, he rededicated himself to our shared mission.

Thanks to Michael's many collaborators-yourself included-a low birth weight child in Poland has just as good of a chance of living a normal life as an American one does.

I ask for your continued financial commitment, as we expand these international collaborations fostering ever better infant care.

I wish you the most joyful of holidays.

With pride at our shared success,



Bjorn Martinoff
President, Board of Trustees and Officers