

SILVER ANNIVERSARY

This month marks my “silver anniversary”, that is, 25 full years of urologic service to coastal Orange County. I am still awaiting a medal, but not holding my breath! I am, seriously, humbly proud of this uninterrupted commitment to good patient care. I know that in the vast majority of cases, I have improved my patients’ quality of life; reassured; and in some cases, helped extend longevity. I have not been perfect, but I have learned to recognize complications of disease and treatment thereof--and to attend to these problems expeditiously. Learning to accept my own limitations and--when occasionally needed--refer to others with more technical expertise in a particular area or who wish to be more aggressive in their treatment, has been a lesson of time.

The technical changes in my specialty have been major: greatly improved radiographic diagnosis, ureteroscopic/laparoscopic surgery, shockwave lithotripsy, PSA, robot-assisted surgery, improved new drugs-- to name just a few. Although not all that is new is better, I think all the developments have made it easier for us and our patients.

The same cannot be said for the overall health care system, which increasingly suffers from excess demand, unrealistically high patient expectations, government and legal interference, underfunding including gross underpayment of physicians, erosion of physicians’

(those who own the knowledge and experience) power to be at the forefront of decision making in their patients' care, and lack of proper controls over utilization of expensive (yes, high-tech) resources. When patients do not face their own medical bills, they do not act rationally, as in consumption of other goods and services. Health problems, per se, introduce an emotional obfuscation overlaying logic and reality.

Despite my ongoing concerns, I hope to be practicing for many years to come, and to offer my patients a true wealth of experience--more important than any lab test or x-ray result. I like what I do. We need to treat the whole patient and avoid disassembling people into parts for assessment by individual specialists, practicing in a vacuum of sorts. Who knows, perhaps as I get older, I will, by choice, do more primary care medicine where I can feel more part of the solution than part of the problem of "dissociated" medical care.

Thank you, to all my wonderful patients, for allowing me into your lives, for your trust, and for your teaching me more about kindness over this quarter-century journey

Alan Freedman, M.D.

401 Old Newport Blvd., Suite 101

Newport Beach, CA 92663

Phone: (949) 645-3434

FAX: (949) 645-0277