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Patrick A. Turski: 40th President of the American Society of Neuroradiology



On May 13, 2002, at the annual meeting of the American Society of Neuroradiology in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, Patrick A. Turski was installed as the 40th President of the ASNR. A steady hand and a thoughtful approach will be the order of the day as Pat leads our society through the many issues that face radiology and neuroradiology in particular. It is at once interesting and educational to discover what factors, both big and small, contribute to the molding of successful people. One wonders what motivates and inspires certain people to the highest levels of achievement, as we see with Pat Turski.

Pat was born in 1950 to Wanda and Ben Turski in East St. Louis, IL. Throughout his early years, and even beyond, he was greatly influenced by his father, Ben Turski, who is still active at 85 years of age. Ben continues to have a “zest for life,” and his positive attitude has left an indelible mark on Pat. Pat remembers very clearly that his father’s positive “can do” attitude constantly encouraged him to push through adversity. Perhaps it was Ben’s World War II experience as a bomber pilot with the Army Air Force in the

Pacific theater, overcoming the challenges of combat, that led Ben to instill in Pat the lifelong lesson that “you can achieve whatever you want.” Of course, advice for a productive and successful life is available only to those who listen, and Pat, even then as a youngster, was a good listener. He took to heart the wise counsel of his high school English teacher and advisor who told him, “Do something special with your life.” Mission accomplished!

At the University of Illinois in Urbana, Pat achieved academic distinction, graduating *summa cum laude* after only 3 years as an undergraduate, and was named the Edmund J. James Scholar, one of the top honors at that university. Professor Drake, in the Department of Virology in Urbana, made a particular impression on Pat because “Professor Drake had incredible focus and intensity,” other attributes that rubbed off on Pat. It was not all work for Pat in Medical School, for there he met a fellow classmate and his future wife-to-be, Deborah. Moving on to Rush Medical College in Chicago, Pat developed an early interest in cardiology; however, as an intern rotating through neurology at the University of Wisconsin, he quickly realized the fundamental role of neuroradiology in the clinical neurosciences or, more directly, as Pat put it, he “saw Joe Sackett in action.” This experience launched Pat on a career in radiology and neuroradiology. Fortunately, there was an opening in the radiology residency program at the University of Wisconsin when later in his internship year Pat decided to apply for that open position. John Juhl was the Chairman at that time, and after a brief interview of Pat, he decided to interview Pat’s wife, Debbie, probably on the assumption that he would quickly gain insights into Pat’s character. After speaking with Debbie for only a few minutes, laughter began to be heard coming from Dr. Juhl’s office and Pat was offered the residency slot. It is clear that Debbie convinced Dr. Juhl of Pat’s abilities, work ethic, and dedication to the task at hand. Of course Joe Sackett’s input might have helped a bit also.

During Pat’s residency at the University of Wisconsin, Charlie Strother joined the Department as the second neuroradiologist, and it was natural that Pat gravitated more and more toward neuroradiology. On Joe Sackett’s advice, Pat went to the University of California, San Francisco for a neuroradiology fellowship with T. Hans Newton. After that, he spent 1 year in Europe as a neuroradiology fellow in France, studying under Jacqueline Vignaud in Paris and George Salamon in Marseilles.

Not surprisingly, in 1981, Joe Sackett, who by then was appointed Chair of Radiology, recruited Pat to join the faculty. Pat rose quickly through the ranks,

serving as Chief of MR Imaging from 1985 to 1989, Chief of Neuroradiology (which, incidentally, he calls the best job he has ever had) from 1990 to 1995, and then Chairman from 1996 to present. One quickly sees how in Pat's eyes, a chairmanship position stacks up on the enjoyment scale against a neuroradiology section chief's job. The latter wins hands down.

Deb Turski, Pat's wife of 26 years, is a surgical pathologist and works full time as a Director of Pathology and Laboratory Services at Saint Mary's Hospital in Madison, Wisconsin. They have two children, Michael, age 19, who is a student at the University of Montana (as best as Pat can tell, Michael is majoring in snowboarding with a minor in kayaking). Megan, age 14, is a high school student and an accomplished equestrian.

Pat has made many significant contributions to neuroradiology as a researcher, an educator, and an administrator. A 6-month sabbatical in 1990 was spent at the GE Applied Sciences Laboratory in Waukesha, Wisconsin, and the sabbatical was particularly important in Pat's development as a clinician-scientist. That experience and training led him to develop techniques in MR angiography that continue to be applied to date. As Pat reflects on his academic career, he feels his major scientific contribution to our field was to describe and characterize the events

that contribute to the signals in MR angiography. The publications that best characterize these important observations are cited below (1, 2).

In the ASNR, Pat has served on many vital committees, including the Research Committee, Program Directors Committee, Clinical Practice Committee, and Commercial Relations Committee, culminating, of course, as President-elect and Program Chairman of this year's annual ASNR meeting. During his Presidency, Pat wants to continue the increased emphasis the ASNR puts on clinical and basic research. By doing so, neuroradiology will be considered to be as legitimate as other neuroscience specialties in the arena of research. To accomplish this, Pat plans to pursue means of obtaining increased funding to support young ASNR investigators. With Pat as President, the ASNR has a focused, dedicated, and forward-thinking leader.

ROBERT M. QUENCER, MD
Editor-in-Chief

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