

REMEMBERING Dr. Terence A. Rogers

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“IF I SHOULD DIE, THINK ONLY THIS OF ME, THAT THERE’S SOME CORNER IN A FOREIGN FIELD, THAT IS FOREVER ENGLAND.”

Rupert Brook

The death of Dr. Terence A. Rogers will be mourned by many. It is a privilege to review that rich and remarkable life.

Arriving in Hawai‘i in 1964, he was crucially involved in the establishment of the Pacific Biomedical Research Center, the precursor of JABSOM. In 1967 the first students were accepted into a two year medical school and in 1972, Dr. Rogers took over the helm as Dean guiding the medical school to receive substantial funding through Congress, Hawaii’s legislature, and through private foundations. The conversion to a four year medical school was extremely complicated and involved. In 1975, Rogers stood on the podium and proudly announced the names of the first JABSOM graduates at the UH commencement ceremonies who then stepped forward to receive their MD degrees.

Born into an English family of modest means, (his paternal grandfather was a harness maker and his maternal grandfather was a furniture polisher) his parents came from Highgate in the north of London. His Irish lineage was descended from the O’Callaghans of County Donegal. He had a prodigious memory and possessed an extraordinary grasp and depth in multiple fields of human knowledge. Although his training was in science, in particular nutrition and physiology, he was quite at ease discussing subjects from Shakespeare to the King James Version of the Bible, from Mozart to Wagner, and from Newton to Kant. He received his early schooling in the traditional British style of education immersed in Latin, German, French and the classics. Few realized that he was also proficient in Japanese.

He attended a school that produced two British prime ministers and the famous neurologist and first person to break the 4 minute mile, Dr. Roger Bannister.

In World War II, he was a youthful naval officer and an aide to the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, helping to analyze critical data to guide British, Canadian, New Zealand, and Australian forces in the extremely complex troop landings at Gold, Sword and Juno beaches during the Normandy Invasion.

One of his many scientific experiments investigated the physical and psychological costs of survival which took him on challenging and demanding treks. During NASA’s fledgling days, he was the chief researcher studying the effects of gravitational forces and space travel on humans and was part of an experimental team with America’s first astronauts, John Glenn, Alan Shepherd and Virgil Grissom.

His concerns for the under represented led to the beginnings of the Imi Ho‘ola program which saw the numbers of Hawaiian, Filipino, Micronesian, and Samoan M.D. graduates increase to logarithmic proportions. In 1972 he astutely observed that there were less than 10 licensed Hawaiian physicians in the State of



Hawai'i. As a direct result of his efforts, today, there are well over 300 Native Hawaiians in medicine, the vast majority of them having graduated from JABSOM.

Thus, our medical school became an instrument not only for training physicians but also for social change.

Rogers' extraordinary leadership guided the establishment of a medical officer's school in Micronesia where doctors were trained to care for the health needs of islanders living throughout the former Trust Territory of the Pacific.

During a sabbatical period, he was the scientific person on President Jimmy Carter's Commission on World Hunger.

His middle name was Arthur, christened after that legendary king from Camelot's mythical past. Among the intellectual giants of medical academia occupying chairs at Terry Rogers' departmental round table were: Dr. Tom Whelan and Dr. Charles Judd (Surgery), Dr. Ozzy Bushnell (Medical History), Dr. John Hardman (Pathology), Dr. John McDermott (Psychiatry), Dr. Sherryl Hammar (Pediatrics), Dr. Kekuni Blaisdell (Internal Medicine), Dr. Hampton Carson (Genetics), Dr. Ralph Hale (Ob-Gyn) and Dr. Ram Bhagavan (Biochemistry). Former JABSOM Dean, Dr. Chris Gulbrandsen, was also a department chair (Internal Medicine) under Rogers.

Dr. Rogers was a keen visionary who realized that young people with island ties could play significant roles in numerous capacities to help improve the health and well being of Hawaii's people.

He beamed with unreserved pride as he watched many of his JABSOM graduates assume chairmanship positions at JABSOM: Dr. Neal Palafox (Family Medicine), Dr. Naleen Andrade (Psychiatry), Dr. Pat Blanchette (Geriatrics), Dr. Danny Takanishi (Surgery), and Dr. Richard Kasuya (Office of Medical Education).

Scores of other JABSOM graduates during Dr. Rogers' tenure now hold key leadership roles at the very top of the pillars of our communities including: Dr. Chiyome Fukino (State of Hawai'i Director of Health), Dr. Emmett Aluli (Moloka'i General Hospital), Dr. Elliot Kalauawa (Waikiki Health Clinic), Dr. Phillip Reyes (Hale Ola-Kamehameha Schools), Dr. Gerard Akaka (Queen's Health Systems), Dr. Rick Custodio (Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center), Dr. Nathan Wong (Kaiser), Dr. Iotamo Saleapaga (LBJ Medical Center-American Samoa), Dr. Greg Dever (Republic of Palau) and Dr. Brian Isaac (Kosrae).

During JABSOM's early years, Dr. Rogers often expressed enthusiastic gratitude and appreciation in his speeches for the unflinching support from such stalwart leaders as, the late Governor John A. Burns, for whom our medical school is named, from former senate president the late David McClung, from former UH Vice President of Academic Affairs, the late Robert Hiatt, and from U.S. Senator Daniel K. Inouye.

He was also noted for his quick humor. Once, a legislator, who had a separate hidden agenda while trying to deliberately block the funding for the medical school, had numerous open conflicts with Dr. Rogers. When that legislator was caught with embarrassing incidents related to finances and abuse, Rogers comment was "It couldn't have happened to a nicer guy!"



Several years ago at Rogers' retirement dinner, Senator Inouye said to an overflow audience that "When any of us depart this planet, we would all hope to leave behind a legacy like Terry Rogers which would show that our lives made a difference."

In 2007, Dr. Terence A. Rogers was named by the Honpa Hongwanji as a "Living Treasure of Hawai'i." His life has indeed made an indelible difference for all the peoples of Hawai'i and the Pacific.

Admiration for individuals responsible for making significant accomplishments often fade with the passage of time, eroded by declining memories and misty recollections. It is our hope that any person in future years reading this article would be able to recapture the many contributions of Terence A. Rogers who adroitly designed and built the elaborate foundations essential for community alliances, hospital contracts, funding pathways, faculty kinships, national accreditations, and university relationships, upon which JABSOM was established.

And, in future years, should an itinerant stumble across his "corner in a foreign field", he would realize that in that rich earth "lies a richer dust concealed."

His passing is deeply felt by his beloved companion of many years, Tomi Satake Haehnlen, his children, Keith, Clare and Valerie of Canada, and Patrick of France, his two grandchildren, Gus and Renee, longtime friend and former JABSOM administrative assistant, Gayle Gilbert, medical school colleague from England Geoffrey Ashton, fellow associate from UH, Deane Neubauer, and protege friend, Ben Young.

Gathering Places: Medical School dean's legacy spreads across the Pacific

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AS A RESIDENT of Micronesia and Hawaii, I congratulate all the honored recipients of the Living Treasures of Hawaii award ("Keepers of culture named," Star-Bulletin, Jan. 13). As a graduate and faculty member of the John A. Burns School of Medicine, I was particularly pleased to see former JABSOM Dean Terence A. Rogers, Ph.D., so honored. Rogers' impact on educating Pacific islanders is spread far wider than the excellent JABSOM Imi Hoola program mentioned in your article. Through his efforts, scores of Micronesian and American Samoan students have become physicians and are the backbone of health care services in the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia (Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei and Kosrae states), the Republic of the Marshall Islands and American Samoa.

This was Rogers' other mission at JABSOM: to upgrade health care services by training the physician work force among the isolated islands of the former U.S. Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

In Palau, where I work, 17 of the 18 Palauan physicians were trained at JABSOM programs either at the Manoa campus or at the Pacific Basin Medical Officers Training Program in Pohnpei state, FSM. The PBMOTP was an emergency physician training program conducted from 1986 to 1996 to re-establish the indigenous physician work force in Micronesia. JABSOM graduates in Palau include the current minister



of health and the directors of the Bureau of Public Health and the Bureau of Hospital and Clinical Services. Other JABSOM graduates are in prominent positions throughout the Pacific islands.

Rogers' legacy also has influenced other JABSOM training programs in the Pacific, which include the Hawaii/Pacific Basin Area Health Education Center, which is now coordinating in-country public health training for 300 physicians, nurses, environmental health workers, health administrators and nutrition workers in the Republic of Palau, Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands, which spread across four time zones of Pacific expanse. In a May 2006 graduation, the Palau Area Health Education Center, part of JABSOM Hawaii/Pacific Basin AHEC, presented the Dean Terence A. Rogers Excellence in Public Health Award to one of its postgraduate recipients, a 1992 PBMOTP physician graduate. When she came to the stage at Palau Community College to receive her award, I told her that she was the kind of physician that Rogers was thinking of when he established JABSOM's medical officer training program.

At the last PBMOTP graduation in Pohnpei state in 1996, keynote speaker Rogers reminded the graduating physicians from Micronesia and American Samoa of the importance of "the quiet satisfaction of a job well done." Over the years, Rogers has so positively influenced many of us in the Pacific. His being named a Living Treasure of Hawaii only strengthens our admiration for his job well done.

