In Memoriam

Ramzi Suliman Cotran, M.D.

1933–2000

Arguably the most influential member of our field over the last quarter century passed away on October 23, 2000. Ramzi S. Cotran, the F. B. Mallory Professor of Pathology at Harvard Medical School, had just stepped down as Chair of Pathology at the Brigham and Women's Hospital this past summer. His recent accelerated illness coincided unfairly with the time when his local responsibilities were about to ease, but the larger need for strategic influence in our field, an area of focus that provided great joy to Ramzi, remained.

Dr. Cotran was born in Haifa, Palestine and graduated from the American University of Beirut in 1956, where he also received his medical degree. He pursued his post-graduate training in Pathology at Boston City Hospital's Mallory Institute and at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York City. In 1960 he returned to the Mallory Institute as a Harvard faculty member, and in 1974 he was recruited to the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital as Chair of Pathology. In 1990, Dr. Cotran became the interim Chair of the Pathology Department at Children's Hospital Medical Center in Boston. This arrangement worked so favorably that he also remained as Chair at that institution until stepping down last summer. Ramzi leaves his wife Kerstin, son Paul, and three daughters, Nina, Leila, and Suzanne.

Over the past three decades, Ramzi built a highly successful, integrated, and influential academic pathology department at Brigham. Simultaneously, he excelled as an educator (since 1979, primary author of Robbins' *Pathological Basis of Disease*), scientist (with colleagues, a major contributor to modern vascular biology), and senior statesman (Trustee of the American Board of Pathology, Past President of the American Society of Investigative Pathology, past or current member of virtually all governing bodies in the field). Dr. Cotran was a member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences and a recent recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award in Mentoring from Harvard Medical School whose impact was formally recognized both nationally and locally. He was integral to the training of many senior members of our field. Most of all, his scintillating charm, well-honed common sense, and absolute dedication to our discipline made his ever-expanding circle of friends and admirers impressively large.

Dr. Ramzi Suliman Cotran

Those of us who trained, worked, and served with Dr. Cotran also warmly remember his endearing idiosyncrasies: his fussiness with hotels, distaste for garlic, unerring good taste in people, and genuine joy expressed at the accomplishment of others.

In honoring Dr. Cotran in the past, as outgoing president of our key societies, as recipient of the Gold Headed Cane Award, as deliverer of distinguished named lectureships, and at numerous similar ceremonies, much was made of the contributions outlined above and of his inimitable personal qualities. One aspect of his career that was widely recognized, but rarely commented on in such public settings, was the power he possessed in the field. Ramzi's accumulation of power is best understood by reflecting on a line, written first in the ninth century in

Beowulf and recently translated by Seamus Heaney: "Admirable living is the pathway to power among people everywhere." Ramzi's admirable treatment of and respect for others, his outstanding record of supporting and promoting the field in general and young faculty members in particular, his sense of fairness: these are the characteristics that led to his influence in the field. His leadership flowed from these attributes, which made him at once a

most powerful and most beloved man. He is already greatly missed.

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