About Eli

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Only a few people leave a lasting imprint on one's life: parents and siblings, one's immediate family, maybe a grandparent, a special teacher, and a few friends. A very few people, possessed of magnetic charm, courage, vision, or force of personality, imprint the lives of many others. And a very, very special few touch us deeply as human beings, as people we love. Such is Eli Glatstein, the magnetic round man from Iowa, born to be a tackle, a foot shorter than big brother Harry, but always an anchor and a guard on the defensive line. How to describe him?

Eli grew up in Muscatine, one of the Quint Cities at the bend of the Mississippi River between Iowa and Illinois, the son of a local furniture store merchant, and a family of modest means. In the small Jewish community of these five river towns, Eli knew by reputation my mother's family, who resided on the opposite side of the river in Rock Island, Illinois. Eli was a super student and dreamed of going to Yale (Eli Yale!), but, because of finances, he joined brother Harry at the University of Iowa, and excelled there. In 1960, he moved west to Stanford Medical School, where he came under the spell of one of the legends of American medicine, Henry Kaplan. Dr. Kaplan, the Chief of Radiation Therapy, was a pioneer in the curative radiation therapy for Hodgkin's disease and in the development of high energy therapy.

Kaplan had a commanding presence and an authoritative bedside manner. His style was very different from Glatstein's but the effect was much the same: Both men engendered immediate respect, awe, and a desire to cure cancer. Eli's postgraduate training was interrupted by two years of service in Vietnam, after which he returned to Stanford and,

with mentoring from Kaplan and Saul Rosenberg, quickly became an authority on Hodgkin's disease. I first met Eli in San Francisco in 1973, and remember the ground shaking as he strolled into the room, a small man who seemed like a giant. The rumble was due to a minor earthquake, not Eli, but I always attributed the shaking to him. It took courage for Eli to leave Stanford, the epicenter of radiation oncology, but he saw opportunity to strike out on his own and, in 1976, joined Vince De Vita and Bob Young in the heyday of combination chemotherapy at the National Cancer Institute (NCI).

Eli was my friend and colleague for 20 years at the NCI, where he built an extraordinary department and attracted the most talented trainees of that generation (Hahn, Coleman, Tepper, McKenna, Lawrence, Turrisi, Lichter, and many others). It seemed as though some of our best medical oncologists became radiation therapists, a conversion never imagined prior to his arrival. His was a resounding voice of reason and caution. He was never a sucker for new technology, but a quintessential clinician and teacher, a man of Talmudic rationality, total honesty, and great humility. Not that he was indecisive. When Eli dissected a clinical problem, he left no gristle on the bone. Our clinical conferences were happenings. Our fellows learned on a stage occupied by Eli, Vince, Bob, Cos Berard, and Elaine Jaffe. Always a fair man in a debate, Eli gave no quarter to people who wasted his time or expended his emotional energy. For them, he had choice words, unprintable.

He left the NCI for Dallas in 1991 to become Chief of Radiation Oncology at Texas Southwestern, traveling with his close friends, John and Lynn Minna. As Eli was leav-

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ing, we bought a sad-eyed cocker spaniel and named him Eli, to replace our lost friend. Eli and Eli became the best of friends. There were many telephone calls to Boston. Eli and I talked about the usual things—medicine, people, our latest meal, and travel, but my wife, Davi, got to the heart of Eli. She was his comrade in arms in the fight for Democrats, and they railed against Texas Republicans, and especially “W.” After ten fruitful years, Eli left Texas to join Gillis McKenna and Steve Hahn, at the University of Pennsylvania, as the Clinical Director of Radiation Oncology, where he has taught and mentored a new generation of stars. Bob and Barbara Young, his closest of friends from Bethesda, helped seal his recruitment to Philadelphia, and they have shared many birthdays since.

In celebration of his 70th, we gathered in November 2008 to honor Eli. The event was orchestrated by Steve Hahn, and Martin and Ann Murphy, and is recalled in the papers published in this issue of *The Oncologist*. Having no brothers of my own, Eli and Marty have come closest to filling that role for me, and the occasion was a true family event.

There are many sides to Eli. He is a great judge of cooking and loves anything chocolate or Italian; he has an encyclopedic knowledge of the movies and knows every Broadway tune. Several weeks ago, Eli came to Boston for an evening of singing Cole Porter songs with Joel Schwartz, Karen Krag, the Chabners, and friends. His smooth baritone rendering of “I Love Paris” set the neighborhood hounds a-howling, and “Let’s Do It” (“Let’s Fall in Love”) had us rocking on the dance floor. As said Cole Porter, who lived in my room at Yale 100 years ago: boola, boola, Eli. You are in our hearts, “Night and Day.”

Read on, my friends, and enjoy the Glatstein festschrift.

(A): Eli Glatstein and Bruce Chabner, 2008. (B): Eli Glatstein with two desserts at “Cole Porter Night” in Friesland, The Netherlands, 2006. (C): Eli Glatstein kissing “Eli,” with Bruce Chabner and “Lilly,” 1993. (D): Davi Chabner, Eli Glatstein, and Ann Murphy, Amsterdam, 2006. (E): Eli Glatstein with “NCI Gang” at Positano Ristorante Italiano during Eli’s NCI going-away party, 1991. (F): Young Eli Glatstein, Julie Dennekamp, and John (Jack) Fowler, Cancer Research Campaign’s Gray Laboratory, Northwood, Middlesex, UK, 1971. (G): Bruce Chabner, Eli Glatstein, and Bob Young, 1989. (H): Top row (l to r): A hirsute troupe consisting of Allen Lichter, Tim Kinsella, Joel Tepper, and Dave Pistenmaa; bottom row (l to r): Alan Zabel, Eli Glatstein, Mascot “Bones,” and Jim Schwade, c 1981. (I): Eli Glatstein and “Eli,” 1991; who said he didn’t have a son? (J): Eli Glatstein and Greg Curt, 1995. (K): Brochure from “The Eli Glatstein, MD Translational Research Conference: New Paradigms in Radiation Oncology,” with “You Are My Sunshine” music box, 2008. (L): Eli Glatstein and “sailor” Bruce Chabner, 1991. (M): Norman Coleman, Eli Glatstein, and Allen Lichter, ASTRO Gold Medalists, 2005.