REVIEW

The Most Influential Scientist in the Development of Medical informatics (11): David B. Shires

Izet Masic

Faculty of medicine, University of Sarajevo, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Corresponding author: Prof Izet Masic, MD, PhD, Faculty of medicine, University of Sarajevo, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. ORCID ID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-9080-5456>. E-mail: imasic@lol.ba; izetmasic@gmail.com

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DAVID B. SHIRES (1931–2011)

David Shires was Professor of Family Medicine and Community Health and Epidemiology at Dalhousie University, Canada (1–3). Dr. Shires has practiced medicine in Africa, United Kingdom and United States and has been a resident in Canada for the past 20 years. His early work includes development of a computerized medical record system for the Apollo astronauts. Dr. Shires was elected President of the International Medical Informatics Association (IMIA) in 1980, and holds Honorary Fellowship, in IMIA as well as the British Computer Society. In 1983 in Paris, he received the Silver Core award for meritorious services to international computing by the International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP). In 1974 he published a book on Computer Technology called “Computer Technology in the Health Sciences” and in 1986 he co-authored “Family Medicine: A Guidebook for Practitioners of the Art”. David B. Shires assumed the IMIA presidency in 1980, one year after the transition from TC4. During his term (1980–1983), Shires reached agreements with the regional group for Central and South America, known as IMIA-LAC (Latin American Countries), and the most populous country in the world, the People’s Republic of China (PRC), making them active participating members in IMIA. Shires saw IMIA as a family, within which “the then USSR and Eastern Bloc countries as well as other countries such as Cuba, could indulge in animated and mutually productive discussions with their western counterparts with each respecting the other’s political differences.”

er’s political differences.” IMIA worked to become meaningful to developing countries and forged new bonds with the World Health Organization. In 1992, Shires reflected that “IMIA has grown considerably in reputation, recognition and credibility in the ten years since I left the presidency, largely due to the continuing hard work of Presidents Peterson, Kaihara and Willams.” Today IMIA reflects Shires’ goal for his presidency in its international constituency, which goes “beyond the Europe–North America–Japan axis to much greater world vision.” Today, the IMIA family includes a newly invigorated African region (HELINA) and is well on its way to facilitating the establishment of a Middle East Region. (Med-Info 1983: Amsterdam, The Netherlands).

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