



Letter to the Editor

Published online June 27th, 2011 © <http://www.ijav.org>

Adel K. AFIFI †

Professor Emeritus, Carver College of Medicine, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, USA.



† Adel K. Afifi, MD, MS
1147 Penkrigde Drive
Iowa City, Iowa
52246, USA.
☎ +1 (319) 354-9438
✉ adel-afifi@uiowa.edu

Received June 13th, 2011; accepted June 13th, 2011

Dear Dr. Tunali:

I want to compliment you and your colleagues for selecting Dr. Ronald Bergman as the *Honorary Editor* of the *IJAV* [1]. You could not have selected a more distinguished scientist and human being. To me and to all those who know Ron and interacted with him, Dr. Bergman exemplifies the best in academy, science, and humanity. I have known him since 1967 when I was a visiting fellow in his research laboratory at Johns Hopkins Medical School. Since that time, I have continued to learn from him, not only about science, but also, and more importantly, about life, ethics of the profession, honesty, and humanism. He is a generous, gracious, kind, humble decent human being. His humility is amply illustrated in the brief autobiography that he provided to the *IJAV* [2]. His contributions, scientific and otherwise far exceed what is in his brief autobiography. He was one of the early pioneers of electron microscopy, and a perfectionist at that. He was instrumental in defining the pathology and pathophysiology of steroid myopathy in human and animal, and used his own quadriceps muscle biopsy as control in his studies of human steroid myopathy. He published extensively including several books on microscopic anatomy, neuroanatomy, MRI, cross sectional anatomy, among others. His steady, persistent, and demanding research on anatomical variations is a reflection of the true scientist in him. He went through this exercise not for self or academic promotion, rather for the pure pursuit of scientific knowledge. His relentless effort in chasing publications on variations in all languages published over centuries brought the topic into prominence. As a teacher, Dr. Bergman instilled in his students the pleasure of discovery. While at the American University of Beirut, he transformed the anatomy laboratory from a place despised by students to one where students came to learn and discover all hours of day and night. During the Lebanese civil war, and inspite of injuries to his son, he refused to leave Lebanon saying "I knew this country during its good days, I am not about to leave it during its bad days". When many of us could not make it to the Department because of the security situation, Dr. Bergman stayed in the Department teaching and attending to the needs of students who were separated from their families. He was among the few foreign faculty who were recognized by the Lebanese Government for their contribution to education. He was awarded the Medal of Education in recognition. Unlike many foreign faculty at the American University of Beirut, Dr. Bergman was interested in the culture, customs, and traditions of the community, and was loved and admired for it. In a sense, he was both a good ambassador of his country to the Arab World and of the Arab World to his country. My family and I are fortunate to have known Dr. Bergman and his family. They have enriched our life beyond any expectation. By honoring Dr. Bergman, you and your colleagues on the Editorial Board are honoring what Dr. Bergman stands for: human decency, pursuit of knowledge for the sake of knowledge, humility, and a role model for being there for you when you need him.

Adel K. Afifi, MD, MS

Professor Emeritus

Carver College of Medicine

University of Iowa

© IJAV. 2011; 4: 117.

References

- [1] Tunali S. Introducing International Journal of Anatomical Variations. *International Journal of Anatomical Variations (IJAV)*. 2008; 1: 1.
- [2] Bergman RA. An autobiography. *International Journal of Anatomical Variations (IJAV)*. 2011; 4: 98–100.