

Obituary

Albin Theophile Jousse MD FRCP(C)



Al Jousse was born in Ontario, Canada on 21 July 1910 and died in Ontario on 23 December 1993. He was my teacher, my colleague and my friend. With Dr E H Botterell he founded Lyndhurst Spinal Injury Hospital in 1945 and remained as its medical director for 30 years.

He was a pioneer in the teaching of this specialty to medical students, nurses, therapists, and postgraduate physicians and surgeons. He did this in the style he knew best, which was as a bedside clinician. To those from Canada and the world who came, he taught consideration, sensitivity, care and attention to detail. He was not given to gadgetry and every new device. He

introduced the concept of multidisciplinary care in the mid 1940s before it became the acknowledged rage.

As colleagues we shared patients and had great discussions concerning the balance between humanism and technology. He recognized the strengths of the latter but his forte was the former. Words and understanding often healed when medications and surgeries failed. Warm hearted and kindly, he understood human nature better than anyone I have known. Based on that talent and much common sense his judgements were well grounded and reasonable. He never wavered in his principles of right and wrong. Patients depended on him and he never let them down.

He was a researcher of the top order. Though not prolific, his studies and observations have borne the pressure of time and criticism and have become the benchmark for like endeavours.

He received innumerable accolades, among them the Order of Canada, the Medal of the International Medical Society of Paraplegia, the Medal of the American Spinal Injury Association, and an honorary doctorate of law, of Queen's University of Canada.

His legacy is his patients. He helped them find new strengths within themselves permitting them to surmount adversity and, through ongoing endeavour, to achieve reasonably useful and satisfying lives.

To them, and to me, he exemplified the age-old lovely story of the understanding heart.

Professor William O Geisler MD FRCP(C)
Toronto, Canada