Obituary

John S Young MD

Dr John Sylvester Young died on August 16, 1994 at the age of 74. He was a true pioneer of spinal cord injury management in the United States. John Young was born on December 27, 1919 in Syracuse, Nebraska. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in 1949 from Louisiana State University and his Doctor of Medicine degree from the University of Colorado School of Medicine in 1953. He later served in the US Army from 1954 to 1957 where he reached the rank of

Major, having received a Bronze Star and five battle stars.

Dr Young became the founding father of Craig Hospital in 1957 where the annual John S Young Lectureship is held in his honor. In 1963, he was named Physician of the Year by the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped. After recruiting his successors, John moved to Phoenix, Arizona in 1968 to become the medical director of the spinal cord injury service at Good Samaritan Hospital. There he received one of the first federal grants to form a model spinal cord injury center and system of care. This led to the formation of a national group of spinal cord injury systems and subsequently to the National Spinal Cord Injury Data Research Center which John initiated and directed.

John led the 'charge' of spinal cord injury physicians in the US in the late 1960s to interact with his international peers in the UK. He began to attend annual meetings of the International Medical Society of Paraplegia (IMSOP) in Stoke Mandeville. He later became a member of the IMSOP Council and was also named the first corresponding secretary for IMSOP in the United States. The annual medal of the society was awarded to John in May, 1980.

John was one of the organizers and founding physicians of the American Spinal Injury Association (ASIA). He served on the first ASIA board, was the initial vice president of the board and served on numerous committees. In May 1980, he was the first recipient of the ASIA Lifetime Achievement Award for his outstanding contributions to the field of spinal cord injury management. He also received numerous other awards and commendations.

John Young was a leader, a teacher and a scholar. He was endowed with a warm generous personality and an infectious sense of humor. He will be sorely missed as a friend, an inspiration and a role model.

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