

Letter to the Editor

Now in the twilight of my cardiovascular career, which began in 1978 as a cardiology fellow at The Methodist Hospital with Dr. Michael E. DeBakey, I fondly remember a story that brings a smile to my face. The recent death of Jerry Lewis reminded me of the event and prompted me to share this.

During the first 3 months of a 2-year fellowship with the DeBakey cardiology consult service, I was responsible for making daily rounds on Dr. DeBakey's patients. I was honored and humbled by the privilege of working and training at such an esteemed institution—The Methodist Hospital. Early on Labor Day, I entered the room of a 60-year-old woman who was a few days out from multivessel bypass grafting, which had gone well. The TV was on in the background and broadcasting the annual Jerry Lewis Muscular Dystrophy Association Labor Day Telethon.

Although the patient was polite and pleasant, I sensed she was disappointed that her respected surgeon was not the one who had entered her room. Earlier I had been told that Dr. DeBakey would not be in that day. She asked me directly, "Why isn't Dr. DeBakey with you?"

I froze for a split second, and without much further thought, I responded with an effort to cover for the famous surgeon: "I believe he is in surgery and will probably be there most of the day."

At precisely the moment I finished the sentence, we both heard Jerry Lewis exclaim on TV, "...and now it is my pleasure to welcome my good friend and the talented world-class surgeon, Dr. Michael DeBakey!"

Fortunately she laughed, as she understood I was just a good soldier covering for the general.

Colin Fuller, M.D., F.A.C.C.



Jerry Lewis sent Dr. Michael DeBakey this signed photograph of the two of them. Reprinted with permission from William L. Winters Jr., M.D.