

May 12, 2010

Re: Volume 6, Number 1, pages 42–44

Dear Dr. Winters:

It is refreshing to read the tribute to Dr. Michael E. DeBakey by Philip A. Salem. It is of great importance to keep Dr. DeBakey's numerous contributions in the fields of medicine and cardiothoracic-cardiovascular surgery alive, and to portray his human nature as a true humanitarian, and a life devoted selflessly to loving his father, mother and brother, and sisters, as well as to friends — in a way beyond service to science — and to his patients, that to this day, no other physician has demonstrated the same qualities.

Dr. Salem did not know fully his qualities as a physician, the integrity, and the dynamic nature of the demands for perfection he imposed on his peers and residents working on the surgical-medical service at The Methodist Hospital, as I did during my residency training.

Drs. Dennis, Don Chapman and Bob Hettig, all of whom mentored me as I worked up the patients to clear them for surgery, be it patients with aneurysms, congenital heart defects, coronary artery disease, or peripheral occlusive arterial diseases. No less than 80 inpatients were under the care of Dr. DeBakey at any one day at the Methodist.

As a treat, Dr. Don Chapman, after morning rounds and discharging his patients home, would invite me for breakfast at the Toddle House right across from The Methodist Hospital on Fannin Street, keeping our contact with operators at the hospital.

Another humanitarian aspect of Dr. DeBakey occurred to my wife and me, after she delivered our first born son. No beds were available in the obstetrics unit, yet Dr. DeBakey brought his mother's bed to a special space in the hospital where my wife could rest and nurse our baby. I could not thank the great Dr. DeBakey enough. With all humility, he smiled and continued on his rounds.

This is just a brief narrative of the work and deeds of a great man and great surgeon.

Sincerely,
Mounir E. Nassar, M.D.