

Dr WRN Lindsay

I have known Dr Lindsay for 40 years. He was my teacher, mentor, role model and, ultimately, my partner in the Ross Tilley Burn Centre (Toronto, Ontario). I got to know him really well. He was an excellent teacher. I was his resident for six months in 1975 at the Wellesley Hospital (Toronto, Ontario). He worked very hard. He had a very busy Toronto practice. He also ran a clinic in Sudbury (Ontario) every month and a clinic in Oshawa (Ontario) every two weeks. There were no plastic surgeons in those areas at that time. I don't think he slept very much.

I was born and raised on a mushroom farm in rural British Columbia in total poverty. I somehow got to the University of Toronto Medical School and then through the plastic surgery training program. That took 10 years. During that time, I lived in various rooming houses, usually in less than desirable areas. I didn't have a car and sometimes had difficulty raising funds for food.

Working with Dr Lindsay provided a new and unique experience. It was a different time and a different place. We didn't have a call schedule. You were the resident for six months. If you wanted time off, then you would have likely been considered a wimp. Even then, you would have missed some cases. Dr Lindsay made up for all our hard work. Two weeks into the rotation, he brought me a box with all his medical books. "Keep them for the next 6 months and read up on all our cases" he said. As his resident, you were never a student – you were his associate. He asked questions regularly. If your answer was not correct, then he would simply say "Well, that's a thought". You knew damn well that you had better come up with something better for the next question. He never aspired to that 'disciplinary' method of teaching that was sometimes seen with other surgeons of that era.

Dr Lindsay had just opened his surgical clinic in 1975. After our hospital rounds every Saturday morning, we would go to his clinic for soup and to plan the cases for the next week. He actually took me out to dinner on several occasions to places that I had never even imagined! At the end of my rotation, he sent me to a major meeting in Chicago. "It's a huge meeting and I think you will learn a lot. Don't worry, I will pay for it!"



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Dr Lindsay was a modest man of enormous stature. He was the Chief of Plastic Surgery at the Wellesley hospital for more than 20 years. He laid the foundation for Toronto's first adult burn centre. From 1984 through 2001, Dr Lindsay, Dr Leith Douglas and I supervised the care of more than 2000 patients with major burns at that centre. Dr Lindsay was also a founder of cosmetic plastic surgery in Canada. In those days, cosmetic surgery was 'relegated to the back room'. If you performed any cosmetic surgery, then you certainly didn't tell anyone about it, particularly at the university level. Dr Lindsay made this branch of surgery respectable. For 20 years, he staged the annual "Symposium on Cosmetic Plastic Surgery" at the University of Toronto. The top plastic surgeons from around the world would present lectures, which were attended by plastic surgeons from all over North America. Dr Lindsay was also a pioneer when he built his surgical facility in 1975. He had a hospital

license and provided care to cancer patients alongside his cosmetic patients.

Dr Lindsay and I ultimately worked together as partners in the burn centre for 15 years. He always asked me to call him 'Bill', but I never could. He had reached that level of respect and dignity where I could never call him anything but 'Dr Lindsay'. When he retired, he passed his surgical facility along to me. I have continued to see many of his patients over the years. His patients worshipped him. Whenever his name comes up, their response is always the same: "He was a wonderful, lovely, nice, kind man, and always a gentleman".

Dr Lindsay has now passed from this world to a better one. The real reward in life is the journey. The journey is the reward – all those things that happen along way. Dr Lindsay's journey has been remarkable. He touched many people. He actually changed their lives. He made an incredible difference. Dr Lindsay, may you rest in peace, sir.

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