

In Memoriam: A Tribute to Art McGowan, M.D.

By Peter McDermott, M.D., Ph.D., Friend

In 1998, Art McGowan received the CSA Distinguished Service Award for his many years of service to the society, to the specialty, and to the medical profession. I was privileged to present the award, and think it now appropriate to repeat some of the sentiments I expressed on that occasion. No one who knew Art had a bad thing to say about him. So much for negative praise. He was an enormously good and gifted person, and it is useful to review his life and how he got to be such an admired friend to so many of us.

Good midwestern stock and traditional family values went into producing Art. One can imagine him growing up out there in Kansas, blistering in the prairie sun, and “Tom Sawyering” his way through an untroubled childhood. Wafting summer breezes, the smell of wet hay, large skies, family picnics, cousins, lakes and homemade pies, the lazy droning of bees in the refulgent sunshine, the ineffable sadness of distant trains bestowing mournful valedictions in the summer night, but I digress.

Art was a terrific student, a Phi Beta Kappa from University of Kansas, and then in medical school at the University of Kansas, Kansas City, Kansas, a member of the Alpha Omega Alpha. Art’s internship and residency took place at Harbor General Hospital in Torrance, California.

Art subsequently joined the military and was posted to the Irwin Army Hospital in Fort Riley, Kansas. He rose to the rank of Major in the Army—a fact that rankles in the envious soul of this former Captain. During the Cold War, Art was responsible for the successful military defense of Kansas’ Fort Riley.

I always thought that Art was born—metaphorically—in 1975 when he emerged from the obscurity of his first California practice situation to devote himself to a practical solution to the malpractice insurance crisis. Art not only helped organize the physician work stoppage at the beginning of the showdown in Sacramento, but he even quit his practice and became a registered lobbyist! Indeed, his tenure as a lobbyist lasted three long summer weeks during the special session of the state legislature, during which he accomplished a number of significant things: he drew the attention of the California Legislature to the malpractice problem, and was instrumental in

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passing the most powerful reform legislation in the history of malpractice insurance in the form of MICRA, the Medical Insurance Compensation Reform Act. A generation and more of physicians have benefited from this, and almost none of them know whom to thank for the savings in real dollars and, more important, the freedom from persecution that previously weighed down so many doctors. Give thanks to Art.

He helped to put this specialty squarely in the vanguard of the medical profession's engagement with society. Anesthesiology gained stature from Art's presence and leadership. Give him thanks.

Art's leadership role as CSA president, as our representative to the California Medical Association House of Delegates, as an innovative and superb Editor of the CSA *Bulletin* for six years, ASA delegate, and member of multiple committees is a matter of history. He has often been the quiet warrior for CSA, the secret weapon, the "invisible hero" in Steve Jackson's words.

His love for his loving and supportive wife, Bonnie, and their two wonderful children—Jill and David—of whom he was ever so proud, as well as his grandchildren, was never a secret, and without that crucial bedrock and anchor, Art would not have been Art.

There was a cluster of personal virtues Art possessed that made him special to me and to many. A noisy, back-slapping, gregarious jokester—Art was not. A self-serving opportunist who exploited friends and pursued a personal agenda—Art was not. But because it is never sufficient to define a person by the choices they have not made or by the defects they lack, let us acknowledge his attributes.

Art was unfailingly honest. Not only was he honest, but he held those around him to high standards of honesty. I am sorry if this simple virtue is the first one that comes to my mind, but I find it the prerequisite to goodness in a person, and in Art it was clear and unshakable. Upon further reflection, I think that what I mean to say is that he was "authentic." Art was a person of genuine character, intellectually admirable and morally exemplary.

His diligence was remarkable. There was "conscientiousness" to Art's efforts and consistent quality in his results.

Art was wise. He brought good judgment incubated in honest values to his decisions and to the advice he gave to others. He was a counselor, a guide, a beacon. Farewell and love, Arthur O'Neil McGowan.

In Memoriam: Arthur O. McGowan, M.D.

By Norman Levin, M.D., Past CSA President and Friend

On June 24, Arthur O. McGowan passed away and left behind a host of friends and innumerable fond memories. With his passing, the CSA, ASA and medical community lost an outstanding, dedicated and wonderful human being.

I had the pleasure of knowing and being a close friend of Arthur for over 40 years. I first met him during his residency in anesthesiology at UCLA Harbor General Hospital in 1969. Since that time, he had been involved not only in the practice of medicine but also in governmental lobbying, anesthesia politics, and publishing. Our involvement in CSA and ASA activities allowed us to spend many hours traveling together to numerous ASA and CSA meetings, in addition to frequent legislative visits in Sacramento and Washington D.C.

In 1975, during Arthur's early years in practice, he became politically and intimately involved in the California malpractice crisis in which anesthesiologists were the leaders. As many of you may not know, he worked with a national public relations firm and had given unselfishly of himself by becoming a registered lobbyist in Sacramento.

He lived there during the crisis, spending months away from his family, friends and practice to further the cause for improving the malpractice climate in California. Through the efforts of Arthur and many other individuals, the landmark MICRA legislation, which California physicians have enjoyed for over 35 years, was passed. MICRA has become the prototype for tort reform of which other states have envied and have attempted to establish in order to control the escalating malpractice premium costs. We thank Arthur for the assistance and sacrifices he made in this effort.

Throughout his professional career, Arthur had been involved with anesthesia politics not only at the state level, but the national level as well. At the CSA he held the offices of Speaker of the House, Secretary, President and CSA delegate to the CMA Specialty Delegation. He also chaired and served on numerous CSA committees. At the ASA, he served as a delegate to the House of Delegates, and he was a member of many committees, in addition to making countless trips to Washington visiting legislators concerning issues that would affect anesthesiologists.

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Among his many professional accomplishments, Arthur will be remembered most for being editor of the *CSA Bulletin*. He devoted thousands of hours to the *Bulletin* and single handedly changed the look, format, and computer programs for printing this widely read informational publication for anesthesiologists. When he became editor of the *Bulletin*, he fulfilled his lifelong passion, since junior high school, to become a writer and editor for a prestigious publication. We were happy that the CSA was able to fulfill this aspiration. His task as editor of the *Bulletin* was enormous, and Arthur handled the challenge well. When he retired from being its editor, it took two people to replace him. We thank him for the changes he instituted and the outstanding and excellent job he did as the *Bulletin's* editor.

In 1998, Arthur received the prestigious Distinguished Service Award for his outstanding and meritorious contributions to the CSA, to our specialty, and to the medical profession. An honor well deserved.

It is impossible for me to enumerate the contributions Arthur has made to the many lives that he touched. As I mourn his passing, I want to extend my deepest sympathy and compassion to Bonnie, their children and grandchildren. I wish comfort to his family and hope, that in time, the pain of his passing will lessen. Arthur, my good friend, you will be greatly missed.

An Editor's Valediction For Another Old Friend

Stephen Jackson, M.D., Editor

It falls to me to inform our readers of the "retirement" of our *Bulletin's* long-serving Managing Editor, Andrea de la Pena. Andrea has been the silent and vibrant enabling force behind the *Bulletin* for a decade and a half, serving her editors with excellence: first for Arthur McGowan, and then for Kent Garman and myself. Andrea has been an exceptionally capable, conscientious, dedicated, loyal and knowledgeable professional, and the editorial board and regular contributors acknowledge her constantly outstanding guidance and assistance. I personally will miss her inevitably cheerful pleasantness, "can do" spirit, "always available" work ethic, and intelligent mastery of her position: the success of our publication has, to a great extent, been in her caring hands. For this, Andrea, we sincerely thank you and wish you success and contentment in your future endeavors.