

The Old Brown Coat

Issue 19

University of Illinois Emergency Medicine Residency Alumni News

Feb 2006

Dauphinot Derek Piper



“We never know how high we are, till we are called to rise, and then, if we are true to plan, our statures touch the skies.” – Emily Dickinson

May 30, 1969-January 7, 2006

It is with tremendous sadness that we write of the loss of one of our very own after a brief diagnosis of brain cancer. Derek was a 2004 graduate of our internal medicine/emergency med program, survivor of Hurricane Katrina, mountain climber, sailor of far away seas. Below is an excerpt from his obituary, printed in the Miami Herald on Jan 11, 2006.

“Derek Dauphinot Piper, MD, adventure, science and generosity; dies at 36, death followed a recent diagnosis of a brain tumor. His fervor for adventure and history led him to travel to the remote corners of the planet. As an avid sailor, he circumnavigated the globe on Pipe Dream IX, along with his father. As a mountaineer, he summated Kilimanjaro, Tarija, Huayna Potosi and Parinacota. Most recently he was training for his conquest of Aconcagua – the highest peak outside of the Himalayas mountain range. He attended Tulane University’s Freeman School of Business and University’s School of Medicine, followed by his medical residency at the University of Illinois in Chicago. He was board certified in both Emergency Medicine and Internal Medicine. Within medicine, his passion was medical relief work, which he pursued in both Central America and Southeast Asia.

This selfless devotion has inspired the creation of the Dauphinot Derek Piper Fellowship at Tulane University's School of Medicine and the Dauphinot Derek Piper Scholarship at the University of Illinois which will allow medical students and residents to pursue relief work in impoverished nations. In addition, the early education program at the Edison School in Puerto Rico has been renamed "The Piper's Lighthouse" after him and will carry his philosophy, as put in one of his most recent thoughts: it's a guiding light which brings you to a distant shore or the light that can show you the way back home, never forget that the light shines for you."

Derek touched the skies and mountaintops and he touched our hearts. This picture will be displayed in our ED at UIC as a daily reminder of Derek's courageous life.

Memories, thoughts and recollections.....

"Derek was brave and hopes to live on in all your wishes and dreams. He had an aspiration to help the world and when I was down there learned all he had done in the few years after residency...He wants us all to live life to the fullest and treat each other with respect...He gave faith and hope to all and should never or will never be forgotten." - Scott Yilk ('04)

"Derek lived a lifetime in the last two years...

Sailed the Far-East with his father

Survived Hurricane Katrina

Climbed Kilimanjaro

Above all, he respected life and the human spirit. His latest plans were to open a medical clinic in Puerto Rico to serve the underprivileged."

Tom Eiseman ('02)

"...Derek lived his life without looking backwards and was very confident in his very giving practice style. "

Mark Monahan ('03)

"One thing you had to say is that he lived every day like it was his last."

Jessica Goldstein ('04)

"I used to love exchanging travel experiences with Derek. He had a real passion for life and a generous heart to fuel that passion. He will be missed."

Therese Chan ('05)



“The white sails still fly seaward, seaward flying on unbroken wings, and the lost heart softens and rejoices.” -
TS Eliot

Dauphinot Derek Piper Memorial Scholarship

As tribute to Derek’s passion for world travel and medical relief work, UIC is establishing a scholarship in Derek’s honor that will support the senior international emergency medicine elective in our residency. Currently, this is a competitive scholarship only awarded to one senior resident per year. Ultimately it would be our goal to allow every resident that chooses, to benefit from the opportunity to work and study abroad. The faculty is well aware that once a physician completes their training and embarks on a career, kids, family (dogs and station wagons...), the likelihood of undertaking an international medical experience diminishes exponentially with time. We hope that with financial support from this scholarship, a greater number of our residents can experience the often life and career changing effects of an international medical rotation. Recent residents/grads benefiting from this experience include:

- Jaime Eliades('99) – Rwanda: Malnutrition/education programs

1. Shameem Nazeer ('00) – India: ACLS education
2. Chris Barsotti('02) - rural Italy: EMS
3. Anjali Tripathi-Pant ('04) - rural India: medical relief work, study of domestic violence
4. Mark Monahan ('03)– Rural Mexico: patient care
5. Lydia Haile ('01) – Eritrea: patient care

6. Therese Chan ('05)– Belize: medical relief work
7. Cecelia Cruz('00) – Guatemala: patient care and education
8. Matt Westermeyer('06) – Zambia: patient care

Some insights they sent....

“The time I spent on my trip was an attitude and life changing experience and I believe should be a requirement of every resident, especially those whom have never traveled outside of America so they can see what real poverty is like in third world countries! I worked in a small port town called La Cruz de Haunacaxtel, but traveled to many small clinics during my trip. ...I got to travel to people’s homes and see the inside of them on a personal level...As rudimentary as the care was that I saw, I was amazed at how people lived such full lives without any of the “necessary” amenities that we take for granted...Another amazing tribute was how grateful these people were to see any help.” Mark Monahan



Mexican EMS

“In regard to my international rotation as a third year, I only have wonderful things to say. First, I was given the opportunity to participate in some of the initial trip planning as well as in the procurement of the medications. This allowed me to better understand the ins and outs of planning an international medical trip. Second, working in the mountains of Guatemala in a region where there had not been a physician in over two years was an amazing experience. The people were so grateful for the slightest attention we gave them. They were warm and welcoming. As a third year resident working in an inner-city hospital where one is rarely shown the least appreciation by the patients, it was incredibly refreshing. It allowed me to rekindle my love for my career – it reminded me of why I had always wanted to be a doctor. Finally, seeing the type of medical need and overall poverty that exists in developing countries like Guatemala, made me realize how blessed I am to live in the country in which I do, have the opportunities that I do and be in the position which I am. This further increased my desire to continue working in the international arena, which lead to my completing the international emergency medicine fellowship.”

– Cecelia Cruz ('00)



Guatemala

“In Aug 05 I had the opportunity to go to Africa as part of the international elective at UIC. It was an incredible experience which changed the way I viewed medicine and the world. When I got accepted for the elective, I knew it would be a unique opportunity to offer my medical training to a part of the world where medical care is needed most. I spent 30 days at Mwami Hospital in eastern Zambia.. AIDS, TB, malaria and a myriad of other tropical and common diseases are rampant and the average life expectancy is only 33 years. However, the people are so appreciate of anything and everything that you do for them and often only the simplest medications or treatments make a significant difference. The spirit and attitude of the Zambian people amazed me and their ability to deal with adversity was something that I will keep with me forever.

For me, the trip was an opportunity to apply the things I am learning in residency to people who are in desperate need of medical care. It was also a chance for me to put things in perspective... I have seen hungry people in stores without food...I have seen children die when they can't get the simplest antibiotics. Going to Africa was a chance to try and give something to people in need, but I am sure that I'm the one who received the most. I am very grateful to the... residency for making my trip possible and allowing me to have such a unique addition to my training.”

Matt Westermeyer ('06)

“I was in Rwanda for a month, teaching a nutrition seminar in Kigali, then working clinically at a hospital in Kibagora with a missionary orthopedic surgeon. ...my impressions...mostly it was of the continued ‘presence’ in the air, if you will, of the psychological trauma from the genocide...still, four years later. It seemed to permeate everything from the bullet and mortar holes in all the buildings and billboards, to the glassy look in people’s eyes. The poverty and lack of essential care, of course, is always striking...major abdominal surgeries without intubation, only ketamine sedation...a local woman trained to stand at the head of the table and watch for clues that the patient may need more, in place of an anesthesiologist...an orthopedic surgeon performing c-sections, surgery for perforated ulcers, eye operations...a young child with blue lips, eyes rolled back in his head, from dehydration due to diarrhea, literally seconds from death and saved at the last minute by a femoral line, screaming and crying within seconds of the fluid going in...and the calm feeling in the room the staff had while searching for an IV, the lack of urgency, as if they see it everyday.”

Jamie Eliades ('99)

My trip to India during residency was fantastic. In fact, anytime I go to deliver medical care, or respond to a disaster in a less developed setting, it brings me back to work in our US EDs refreshed and with a different and often better perspective.... I spent the majority of my time working in the acute care center for OB-Gyne and the trauma center and did an evaluation of the brand new trauma center at King George Medical University where I was working....This rotation helped confirm my interest in pursuing a career in international emergency medicine and I am currently in my 2nd year of fellowship training at Johns Hopkins. I appreciate the opportunity to have gone abroad and worked in a lesser developed emergency care setting. The flexibility and support from the residency was crucial to my being able to go and I greatly appreciate that.

Anjali Pant ('04)

I went to Belize in 2004...at the Hillside Healthcare Center..the poorest and most rural district in Belize, with many remote villages that lack electricity, potable water and easy access. These challenges created an ideal backdrop for me to learn more about rural and remote medicine...trekking the jungles of southern Belize with a happy-go-lucky Irish priest, a visiting Irish author and a volunteer nurse from Wisconsin. With a backpack full of meds and supplies, the nurse and I sep up makeshift clinics in each of the villages, working from dawn til dusk, often well into the night by the light of a torch. And for those too sick to come to the clinics, we went to them – sometimes climbing up muddy, steep hills...We relied on the generosity of the village people for simple, warm meals and we usually slept on the benches of the village church....some days I staffed the clinic, seeing pts and supervising med and PA students. Other days were dedicated to home visits to care for the elderly and immobile, mobile clinics to outlying villages and community outreach and educational programs. ...it was a busy month –one well worth it. What I got from Belize was for greater than what I gave. I had an invaluable experience that enables me to catch a glimpse into lives which are so different than mine, but share in the same basic needs and emotions which define the human condition. It gave me the chance to reconnect with the reasons why I went into medicine in the first place...something that often seemed remote back in Chicago when I was seeing the frequent-flyer in room 16 for the third time that month, holding my breath to escape the pungent odor of booze and feet while he uttered those dreaded words. ‘I got chest pain...and you got a sandwich?’”

Therese Chan ('05)



African waiting room --Zambia

We, the UIC emergency medicine family, felt this scholarship was our best way of remembering Derek and honoring his legacy. We are deeply saddened that he is no longer with us, but we hope this scholarship will not only keep his memory alive, but benefit our present and future residents, foster an interest in medical relief work and ultimately help those most in need.



This is a current use fund, meaning all contributions go directly into the scholarship for purposes of supporting this international medicine opportunity for our residents. As the fund is being administered directly by our department, there are no administrative costs, dean's taxes, or other fees. Checks can be made out to: **"UIC EM International Fund"** with a note in the memo: ***"Derek Piper Memorial Scholarship."***

All checks and contributions can be mailed to:

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