



Introduction

Dear Jane, Eric, the Tu family, friends, and colleagues. It is truly my privilege and honor to share with you some cherished memories of Jack on behalf of his clinical and research family.

Last week, when we heard about the news, time froze. I wasn't able to work. I wasn't able to cry.

Since then, my mind has been racing with images and thoughts about this incredible person that I saw almost every day for the past 16 years.

Middle

When I was planning to come back to Canada from the States after my cardiology fellowship, I asked my mentor at that time to recommend a researcher that I could work with. The only person he mentioned was Jack Tu. I can still hear him say - "*Dennis, he's great – go and work with him.*" There wasn't any other name that he spoke of ... only Jack.

I have to be honest that I was a bit skeptical when I first met him. Coming from a place where everyone wore a tailored suit and tie to work, I thought Jack seemed awfully casual. I have rarely seen him wearing a suit, tie or dress shirt at ICES. In fact, his shirt seemed to get untucked as the day progressed. In those days, he wore those big round glasses that made him look maybe a bit like Waldo or a bit like Bill Gates. But everyone reassured me '*don't worry – Jack is very smart, you'll be fine.*'

Over the years, I discovered that Jack was **much** more than just smart.

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Jack was a true pioneer in cardiovascular research

One of the achievements that he was most proud of, was the creation of the Canadian Cardiovascular Outcomes Research Team, and the progress the team had made. For the first time in Canada, Jack brought together leading researchers in all major provinces to tackle heart disease. It was a difficult task because researchers didn't used to collaborate with each other. He had a vision for research, and the drive to carry out his ideas. He was able to gain trust and build

relationships with others because he really cared about them. He was also generous with his personal time and resources in helping colleagues.

He mapped out cardiac risk factors and treatment for different cardiac conditions for the entire country. He discovered that **geography is destiny**. Despite having universal health care, people living in the east coast have a much higher chance of getting heart disease than living in the west. He also created a framework on how to create report cards for hospitals and health care systems, and how we could use them effectively.

Over a period of 10 years, this team went on to publish close to 200 papers and trained about 60 future researchers. **All thanks to Jack.**

In 2012, Jack rebranded the research team into what we now called CANHEART— instead of tackling patients with heart disease, what he wanted to do was to predict and prevent heart disease before it occurred.

Love for research and love for challenges

Jack loved his research. He loved to think about how to solve health care problems, how to conquer his next challenge, and how to conduct research that nobody else could.

There was a downside though.... we would never finish the meetings on time because Jack would always be the one who kept on talking and talking about what we could do next.

In our recent meeting, we spent at least half an hour after talking about the Ontario election. His passion for research was so great that he was willing to vote for the NDP tonight (*sorry NDP supporters*)..... only because they promised to institute universal drug coverage.

Jack said to me – “it’s ok – NDP would screw up the economy and be out of the office in a few years, but the medication database would be a gold mine for us for a long time”

Jack as a clinician

In the medical community, there is a general perception that successful researchers are not good or caring doctors. Jack, however, was just as dedicated and committed as a clinician in providing the best care for his patients.

A lot of Sunnybrook staff still remember when Jack switched from the Division of General Internal Medicine to Cardiology about 10 years back. But most didn't realize that he wanted to do a good job so badly that he bought and read a few textbooks, went to the Mayo clinic board review course, and actually shadowed other cardiologists before he joined cardiology.

In the past week, several nurses came up to me to express their sorrow for Jack. Quite a few of them didn't realize that he was so accomplished in research. They told me that he spent so much time, talking and listening to his patients and their families, he really cared about them, and used simple language to talk to his patients. The ultimate compliment was possibly that the nurses said ... 'he didn't behave like a typical researcher'.

Students

To talk about Jack as a mentor, I managed to dig up my speech from 2005 when we celebrated his promotion to become a Full Professor.

At that time, I called him a "quiet mentor". He didn't bug you, he just let you do your work. He used to mainly communicate through his dear assistant Francine. He would print out your manuscripts and wrote comments on paper -- but you had no idea what he wrote because his handwriting was pretty messy. Francine had to bring you the manuscript, sit next to you and explain what Jack wrote Kind of embarrassing when she had to tell you that your paper was trash.

Yet... everyone who was mentored or supervised by Jack thinks the world of him. He cared about his students and provided unconditional support to make sure that you would be successful. He was prouder of your achievements than his own. He taught me that research is not about competing with others to get the most publications or glory, but is about impacting health care and changing the lives of our patients.

FUN

The last word I want to describe Jack is **FUN**. And I know this is a word very few people would use to describe him.

Did you know that Jack actually wanted to be a magician before wanting to become a doctor?

We had traveled to many places together for conferences. We had a wolf pack that hung out at nights. In Chicago, we would always go to a place called “fogo-de-chao”, an all-you-can eat Brazilian steakhouse and we would bet who could eat the most. Jack, unfortunately, was never the winner.

A couple of years ago, our research teams were coming back from Phoenix after a conference but our flights were cancelled because of a snowstorm in Toronto. Instead of going back to the meeting, Jack said that we should take a couple “education day” for team building. We ended up driving to the Grand Canyon and celebrated his birthday by hiking and watching sunrise at the Canyon.

Conclusion

My friends, we know Jack for his brilliance, his accomplishments, his humility and his kindness. But I think in his mind, he was just a kid who loved to do research and loved his family. He created a legacy that teaches us not to be ordinary, but to make sure the best is given to those are in need.

When I was driving out of the Sunnybrook parking garage the past week, I found myself staring at Jack’s parking spot, wishing his car was still there. But it was no longer there. Jack is not with us anymore, but our memories of him will be with us forever.

Thank you very much.

