From the Editor

Leadership and Mentoring

This issue is special. It contains THREE articles (1–3) authored or co-authored by the incredible giant in perfusion, a previous Editor-in-Chief and former AmSECT president, Mr. Jeff Riley, who is no longer with us. He left us unexpectedly on October 15, 2021. A rich In Memoriam article celebrating his life and career will be published in the next issue. In the meantime, I would like to pay my own tribute to this tremendous person and describe how some of his past exemplary deeds have impacted me and our journal, and will continue to do so in future even in his absence.

I have never directly reported to Jeff, whether as a clinical perfusionist or in AmSECT where he held many leadership positions over the years. And yet, I am proud to claim Jeff as a mentor and someone who somehow still managed to influence the very trajectory of my career! Our paths occasionally crossed early after completing my doctorate and starting clinical practice, mostly at the various perfusion schools he served at. But it was when we both worked at Mayo Clinic, he in Rochester, MN, and me in Phoenix, AZ, that he created opportunities and encouraged me to take them up. It wasn’t much, but leaders such as Jeff have a habit of helping and promoting people from behind the scenes whenever they had a chance. In my case, he (initially, unbeknownst to me) encouraged an anesthesiologist he worked with to repeatedly invite me to present at an annual Mayo/Cleveland Clinic continuing education meeting. That helped build my CV and get me better at speaking in front of people. Jeff and others continued to mentor me before and after I was appointed to this role as the JECT Editor-in-Chief. It’s a little bitter-sweet that a few weeks before he passed, I got my final dose of “Jeff Riley mentorship” when he called me on the phone and I got to share with him my plans in taking my perfusion training program in a new direction. The sweet part for me is that Jeff left this world aware of my ambitions as he heartily approved and blessed the plan!

Many, many other perfusionists have crossed paths with Jeff, especially if they attended perfusion conferences as Jeff was heavily sought as conference faculty. Many have thus also either witnessed or experienced the kind of mentorship that Jeff doled out. It doesn’t take much to imagine that when a speaker is presenting a paper or if you are reading an article where Jeff was a co-author, it is likely that Jeff played a mentoring role. A gracious mentor would insist that the speaker or the primary authorship go to the person who was most responsible for the work, not the most senior person in the group. This collaboration likely began long before the public presentation of the work when the mentor encouraged and guided the young mentee on the research project in the first place. One might think that such mentorship happens commonly, but in my interactions with perfusionists I have heard of instances where very prominent leaders in our profession have surprisingly not been as generous in ensuring that junior members of their own teams were being allowed or encouraged to partake in the kind of academic activity that would result in abstracts at
meetings and publications. It was this revelation that led me write this editorial; to gently persuade all directors, chiefs and senior perfusionists to help build our next generation of perfusion investigators and authors. I intend to help where I can as an Editor-In-Chief in providing opportunities for perfusionists to be peer reviewers and Editorial Board members, and as a program director with my graduates as well as any and all students. If more of our current leaders would follow Jeff’s generous leadership and mentorship habits, our perfusion community and JECT will thrive just that much more!

In another instance of leadership, our own gurus from Downunder, Dr. Rob Baker and Tim Wilcox have invited an esteemed colleague of theirs to share his contemporary treatise on the pitfalls of the scientific method that investigators sometimes succumb to whether intentionally or not (4). Dr. David Sidebotham, an anesthesiologist and intensivist practicing in Auckland, New Zealand had prepared a rich lecture for a perfusion meeting that was postponed due to the pandemic. Dr. Sidebotham has kindly made his lecture available to the entire JECT readership as an invited editorial instead! Thank you, David! His insights are accurate, relevant and profound. Although his examples are cringeworthy and our journal must strive to avoid publishing such practices, these topics are well worth discussing in this era when “science” is being distorted and/or dismissed by too many. Through increased awareness the perfusion community need not give the anti-science crowd more material. Dr. Sidebotham does conclude with optimism though, so please read the entire editorial.

Raymond K. Wong, PhD, CCP
Editor-in-Chief

REFERENCES