



Heroes

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We all have heroes – people who have helped shape us into the people we are today. Growing up, my parents, my high school football coach, my favorite college business school professor, and my cardiac pathophysiology professor in medical school were some of mine. As a man, I still found others who fit my “hero” mold.

One such person is Dr. David Dodd. He is a tall, stately-looking fellow with a gentle manner and a soft voice – previously a surgeon and later the first medical director of the Tennessee Medical Foundation (TMF) Physicians Health Program (PHP).

I have often thought that Dr. Dodd could “walk on water,” for I once saw him perform what I consider to be a miracle. Several years ago, I had a medical colleague and close friend who was a dedicated fellow, true to his patients, smart, well-liked and “pulling all the right levers” to become a superstar in the medical field. Unfortunately, he fell into the dreaded cycle of addiction, which threatened his life and livelihood.

Enter Dr. Dodd. Working his magic, Dr. Dodd successfully guided my friend through several weeks of therapy into a program of recovery. Today, this person has realized his previous potential and has been a successful MD in our community for nearly 30 years. His career and family were saved and his patients, his hospital, and the community were the benefactors. To me this was a true miracle and Dr. Dodd a hero. Later, when asked to serve on the board of the TMF, I could not wait to become associated with such a remarkable organization; it was my desire to get closer to Dr. Dodd and to find out his secrets.

Through the years, I watched with awe and admiration as Dr. Dodd performed these miracles over and over again with much success. He was tireless in his efforts to help addicted physicians receive treatment so they could restore their families and return to practice.

As the years of service, dedication and hard work took their toll, Dr. Dodd reluctantly was compelled to slow his pace and eventually take on a more abbreviated role in the TMF. Today he acts mainly as a consultant and fundraiser, albeit, no ordinary fundraiser. His efforts raise thousands of dollars each year and allow this fine organization to carry on the work it does so well and is so vitally needed.

When it was obvious Dr. Dodd would have to slow down and turn the reins over to someone else, we all thought such a replacement certainly could not be found. Enter hero number two. The current medical director of the TMF I know well, for we “slugged it out” together through four years of medical school. Dr. Roland Gray, my fellow classmate and close friend, is a smart, serious man who carried these traits with him into a very successful pediatric practice in

Middle Tennessee. Later, Dr. Gray and I served together as TMF board members, working closely to supervise the great work that Dr. Dodd and his associates were doing.

Four years later, Dr. Gray has not only exceeded expectations in the area of addiction counseling but has helped shape the TMF into a solid organization that is now more efficient, focused, and resourceful. The Tennessee Medical Foundation is the “poster child” for physician health programs in the entire nation and is becoming internationally recognized as Dr. Gray spreads the gospel, literally, around the world.

With two great heroes like Drs. Dodd and Gray, any organization has the potential to be successful, but the work and success of the TMF still depends on many people. The administrative staff is willing and dedicated, working tirelessly under Dr. Gray and TMF Administrator Michael Todd.

Think of the hundreds of doctors who have been helped through the years and, as a result, the thousands of patients these doctors have helped, the lives that have been saved, and the hospitals that have benefited from the miracle of a “doctor saved.” What a great organization! This makes me want to do two things—first, get out my checkbook and make a generous donation to the TMF; and second, look around for more heroes.

To make a tax deductible contribution to the Physician’s Health Program, contact TMF Administrator Michael Todd at (615) 467-6411, or write to the Tennessee Medical Foundation, 216 Centerview Drive, Suite 304, Brentwood, TN 37027.

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