EDITOR'S PAGE

A Letter to the (Founding) Editor

A King by Any Name

David J. Moliterno, MD, FACC, Editor-in-Chief, JACC: Cardiovascular Interventions

Dear Dr. King:

I read with great interest your Editor’s Page in the November issue of the JACC: Cardiovascular Interventions, “An Open Letter to My Successor” (1). In fact, I have enjoyed reading all your Editor’s Page comments through the years. Like you, the pages have contained a serious underlying message but delivered in a kind, polite, Southern-gentleman style, and each has allowed us a glimpse into your past and your then-current light-hearted thoughts—whether with innuendos regarding the funky smell coming from the White House or the delightful fragrance of plumeria around your “little grass shack in Hawaii” (2) (what extremes!).

As I look forward to this mantle graciously passed from you, I cannot help but to look backward at the terrific accomplishments of the journal and pen this reply to your letter. And to get to the point and heed your letter’s warning, I will do my best not to screw things up! Just as you made the journal an important part of your life over the past decade, so too, I will. Although I doubt any of the candidates for the Editor-in-Chief position truly had the “free time” to take on the responsibility of the journal’s leadership, as with you, with me, with the other candidates, we all saw the opportunity as a relatively easy call to answer. We each believe in the American College of Cardiology, its goals, its mission, and its members. Likewise, we all richly value and respect JACC, its science, its responsibility, and its readers. We agree that JACC and each of its sister journals represent a team sport, and the associate editors, Heart House staff, and the numerous reviewers worldwide are the essential team members that make the journal work and be successful. I will write about some of the other team members in a future Editor’s Page, but for now I wanted to focus on the leader who deserves great recognition and credit, the JACC: Cardiovascular Intervention’s inaugural Editor—Spencer Bidwell King, III.

When the College’s publications committee discussed whether there should be sister journals for JACC, and it was decided to first pursue one dedicated to cardiovascular interventions (and one for cardiovascular imaging), a next logical question was who should be the founding Editor-in-Chief. Given the then 30-year history of percutaneous coronary revascularization, the gravitas needed for such an inaugural role, and the world-wide readership of JACC, it came as no surprise to anyone in the field that you were selected. Indeed, you defined the insight, wisdom, and pioneering spirit of interventional cardiology.

You helped author the beginnings of coronary angiography and percutaneous interventions in the United States. Many are aware of the early coronary interventional procedures you performed hand-in-glove with Dr. Andreas Grünzig, but some may not appreciate that you knew Andreas before his first successful human percutaneous coronary intervention. So, too, people may know of your success in helping recruit Dr. Grüntzig to the United States and to Emory, but few probably stop to appreciate that Andreas was recruited into Emory Hospital’s first catheterization laboratories that you birthed and developed years before along with your single-catheter femoral approach to coronary angiography (3). Toss in the authoring of hundreds and hundreds of interventional cardiology manuscripts, including the first National Institutes of Health-sponsored trial comparing bypass surgery to percutaneous coronary revascularization, and you had a pretty decent curriculum vitae for the inaugural Editor-in-Chief position!
So at some point along the career path you traded in performing primary angioplasty procedures during the night for reading manuscripts into the wee hours. And read you did. I know you personally read every paper submitted to the journal, which is truly amazing considering during your tenure there were 11,651 original submissions. Even a rough estimate would put that at over 50,000,000 words! And this does not include the many revised papers submitted, the reviewers’ comments, and interventional papers submitted to JACC where you have served as an Associate Editor. That your journal—yes in many ways it should always be thought of as your journal—sits in the top 10% of all cardiovascular medicine journals (#7 of 124) is phenomenal and amazing, yet understandable knowing of your tireless efforts and those of the team you inspired and lead. So to me you are colleague, mentor, and friend, well-deserving of a royal title, irrespective of your fitting name.

Best personal regards always,

David Moliterno

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REFERENCES