

The Laurentian Conference of Rheumatology Turned 45 in 2014!

By Carol Yeadon, MD, FRCPC

It started off as a group of guys getting together in Montreal to discuss what was new, interesting, or challenging about rheumatic diseases. From the outset, it was a forum for the shared interests of these French- and English-speaking physicians, surgeons, and basic scientists. In addition to getting away from the hospital, office, or lab, they chose a venue that allowed breathing mountain air between sessions of serious talk. Finally, with pharmaceutical industry support, they invited some star guest speakers.

Thus, the Laurentian Conference of Rheumatology was born! Dr. Roger Demers of Montreal's Hôtel-Dieu hospital was the tenacious captain of the enterprise through the '70s and '80s, ensuring an appealing, top quality meeting.

The 45th edition maintained these goals, emphasizing immunological topics and recent controversies in osteoporosis prevention and management. All investigators (trainees and staff) gave excellent oral and poster presentations, covering a wide range of topics pertinent to rheumatology.



Dr. Jean-Pierre Pelletier presenting the first Marie-Thérèse Fortin award in 1994 to Dr Edith Verrier-Jones in recognition of her professional and humanistic qualities in the care of patients with rheumatic diseases.



Dr. and Mrs. Donato Alarcon-Segovia flanked by Thérèse Haraoui and Dr. Carol Yeadon at Montebello, 2001.



The gang attending the 1999 Conference at La Sapinière.

Our invited guest speakers were outstanding! Dr. John Stone of Boston brought his unique knowledge and expertise on IgG4-related disease to his talk on "Vasculitis: Pearls

and Myths". Dr. Jack Karsh and Dr. William Rigby from Dartmouth (his third Conference, almost an honorary Canadian!) reminded us of their encyclopaedic knowledge with their coverage of acquired immune deficiencies. Dr. Emil Nashi, a colleague from our own Montreal General Hospital and Dr. Michael Walsh, a nephrologist from McMaster, helped us understand and use immunoglobulin manipulation, focusing on how "we giveth and we taketh away" as we use therapeutic IV Ig and plasmapheresis in many clinical situations. We are now more sophisticated in their uses. Finally, Dr. Suzanne Morin and Dr. Sophie Roux, from Montreal and Sherbrooke respectively, brought enlightening answers to the topical questions "calcium, good for the bones, bad for the heart?" and "is too much anti-resorptive therapy dangerous?".



Dr. Pelletier presenting the first Roger Demers award to Dr. Duncan Gordon in 1998 in recognition for his contribution to the international rheumatology community.

As the accompanying photos to this article remind us of great Conferences past, it is time to plan next year's Conference and to look ahead to our golden anniversary landmark in 2019!

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