
A CRA Odyssey

By Dr. Glen T.D. Thomson, CRA President, 1998-2000

Adel Fam nominated me to the Board of the CRA in 1992 and gave me his assurance that it would not take up much of my time. This turned out not to be true. The odyssey that followed took two decades to complete.

A year later, I was the appointed chair of the Scientific Committee with the task of organizing the annual meeting of the CRA. I was on the board that separated the CRA meeting from the Royal College. A new meeting model was created and evolved over my five years as chair. The objective was to be inclusive of all Canadian rheumatologists. The structure of the meetings would include community and not just hospital-based rheumatologists chairing sessions, reviewing research and discussing the medical issues of the day.

Simon Carette and I co-hosted the first Town Hall meeting of the membership (Washington, American College of Rheumatology [ACR], at the Canadian Embassy) to discuss the new directions of the organization. Next year as President, the first CRA Executive retreat was held in Winnipeg. This meeting fundamentally changed the function of the CRA Board. A mandate was given to create committees to enhance the CRA's leadership role in a wide range of activities including continuing medical education (CME), recruitment, public engagement and scientific promotion. This structural change allowed more CRA members to actively participate in national programs and has contributed to the relevance and success of the CRA.

After my term as President, I was given the role of Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of the Canadian Rheumatology Association (CRAJ)*. The format of the *CRAJ* was reimagined and grew over the next decade to not only broadcast the new initiatives of the CRA, but also to tell the stories of rheumatologists in their diverse practices from coast to coast.

It was my final honour and task to chair the Canadian-Mexican Rheumatology Meeting in Cancun in 2011. It was exhausting but gratifying. My tour with the CRA and *CRAJ* had been completed. It was a privilege to serve my colleagues from around the country and a joy to work with



those who shared the vision and enthusiasm for innovation as the nascent CRA evolved. There are too many folks to thank individually, you know who you are; my appreciation is undiminished. My abiding gratitude goes to Janine, Shanleigh and Ian for allowing me the time and many absences to indulge this journey. Good luck to the CRA in its next 75 years!

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