

Introduction

Advanced Forum in Family Medicine

The papers in this special issue are selections from presentations at an "Advanced Forum in Family Medicine" held at Keystone, Colo., September 23-28, 1984, under the sponsorship of the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine Foundation.

The idea for such a meeting was spawned in 1980 at Quail Roost in Chapel Hill, N.C., by a group of incumbent and past STFM officers who were "brainstorming" about long-range planning for STFM, and who were concerned about preserving and advancing the intellectual roots of family medicine amidst the changes in medical practice and medical education that were even then apparent.

The original plan was to develop a prototype forum that could be replicated by any interested parties in which a relatively small group of family medicine teachers would meet in consultation with resource persons from disciplines outside family medicine to further our understanding of how behavioral sciences, humanities, economics, and education relate to our discipline. A letter to assess interest in such a project was sent to program directors and departmental chairpersons in 1980 and there were many interested and even enthusiastic responses.

Nothing further was done until 1983 when a small group of STFM past presidents (Stephens, Kane, Shahady, and Bishop) revived the idea and presented it to the STFM Foundation. By that time it seemed that we should try to assemble a group of current and past leaders in family medicine to take stock of our history and future prospects in a way that is not possible in regular organizational meetings. We wanted to consult with ourselves about what we have been doing since the late 1960s and how we see the future.

The Foundation approved a plan and appropriated \$2500 to support a meeting in the fall of 1984 for approximately 50 registrants who were willing to pay their own expenses. An invitational list was prepared

that was exclusive only in so far as to assure a critical number of attendees but not to dilute the possibilities for whole group discussion. Fifty affirmative replies were received from the first 75 invitations. There were a few cancellations and additional names were suggested so that the final count of registrants was 65, who along with spouses, friends, and guests comprised the 95 who attended part or all of the meeting.

The Colorado Rockies were selected as a site conducive to relaxed discussions and the third week in September as a time of unusual beauty in that location. Three guest lecturers were invited but the major contributions to the meeting were provided by the registrants, some of whom prepared papers and all of whom participated actively.

The focus of the meeting (since referred to as the "Keystone conference" in recognition of the locale, but apropos, nonetheless, to the discussion) was both historical and futuristic. Many of the principals were present who presided at the birth of family practice as a specialty and who played major roles in the development of the discipline of family medicine. The first day was devoted to two round tables in which each participant remembered the past, recounted how they became involved, what events transpired and the ideas that moved them. There was an intensive concern with historical accuracy and these sessions were recorded and transcribed.

The second day was devoted to the industrialization of medicine and the group responded actively to presentations by Dr. Paul Ellwood. The third and fourth days were about education and research, and the last day to three original presentations. Interspersed throughout were informal discussions, recreation and group activities. Responses during and after the meeting were warm and appreciative and there was a consensus that we should "do it again."

G. Gayle Stephens, MD
Conference Moderator