

These Are Truly Tumultuous Times in Medicine for Both Patients and Physicians

**Muriel Kowlessar, M.D.,
Widow of O. Dhodanand Kowlessar, M.D., Ph.D.**

"Dhod" Kowlessar, who was born in Madras, India, received his baccalaureate degree from Carthage College in Illinois and his Ph.D. in Biochemistry at the University of Iowa before matriculating in the Class of 1954. At the end of the second year he took a year off and performed medical research and graduated with the Class of 1955. Following graduation he received his postgraduate training in Internal Medicine and Gastroenterology at New York Medical Center. He served a productive career in clinical teaching and research at Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia. The Kowlessar Award for Excellence in General Internal Medicine, established posthumously in his memory by his friends and colleagues, reflects the high regard he enjoyed throughout his thirty-year career at Jefferson Medical College.

Muriel Kowlessar was a resident in Pediatrics at Strong Memorial Hospital when she met her husband.

I have attended reunions of three medical school classes: my own from Columbia University, Dhod's Rochester Class of 1954 and Class of 1955. The Rochester 1954 class has always been singularly warm. This spirit was underlined the winter just passed when, by coincidence, I happened to be skiing the Big Sky, Montana at the same time as Don Hare, (also 1954 and 1955), Neal McNabb and Jim MacWhinney. I enjoyed one of the best après-ski parties ever with them and their spouses and friends. How I would have loved to have shared that mini-reunion with Dhod!

Of course, he should be writing this piece. He clung to life as long and as valiantly as he could. Our daughter, Indrani, and I, with the generous support of his numerous friends and colleagues, established the Kowlessar award for Excellence in General Internal Medicine. This prize is given annually in internal medicine at Jefferson Medical College, where Dhod taught for thirty years. The award recognizes the senior resident who best demonstrates excellence in clinical skills, research and teaching as exemplified by Dhod. He certainly was recognized for his preeminence in these areas. Instead of accepting Jefferson's traditional faculty honor that a significant sum of money be spent on his portrait, it was his wish that any recognition given to him be utilized to commend and reward young physicians who achieve significantly in these areas which were so important to him. Although most of his career was spent as a gastroenterologist, he came to recognize the nation's paramount need for first rate general internists.

These are truly times of tumultuous change in medicine for both patients and physicians. The Kowlessar Award has given and will continue to give me an opportunity to stay in touch with young physicians embarking upon their careers. Seniority has definite value in a changing world. Some of us will continue to contribute in vital ways as a result of our excellent Rochester training and rich experiences. Others will move aside to enjoy our well earned retirement, often developing new skills and interests and allowing our places to be filled by young people who have the training, ability and flexibility to mold as well as to adapt to this new world in a creative and participatory way.

