

Life Beyond the GI Practice: At 93 This Pioneer Forges Ahead With Hippocratic Roots – and the Creation of New Mobile App

The GI Five is a Q&A feature of the *ACG Update* created to provide readers with insight on a variety of timely gastroenterology-related topics that impact ACG members and their practices at all career levels. From clinical to practice management to national affairs and even health and wellness topics to help you achieve work-life balance, the GI Five will evolve based on your feedback. In an effort to provide you with the most useful information, we welcome your suggestions for topics, members or other people to feature in upcoming GI Five columns. Please email *ACG Update* Assistant Editor Jacqueline Gaulin at jgaulin@gi.org with your suggestions.

Recently, we had the honor of speaking with Martin E. Gordon, MD, FACG, who, at 93 years old, is still enjoying a distinguished career that has spanned several decades and often evolved ahead of the times. After a glance at his long list of accomplishments, followed up by a phone conversation, it is obvious that Dr. Gordon, who is a senior member of the College, is a pioneer. Yet he has held fast to the foundations of the Hippocratic Oath, devoting his life to quality in patient care and educating those who have chosen or will choose a career in medicine.

Dr. Gordon spent most of his career as a Clinical Professor of Medicine at Yale School of Medicine. He was a consulting gastroenterologist to Yale University Health Services and many Connecticut-based hospitals while in private practice.

While at Yale, he received the American College of Physician's Laureate Award for patient care and was the recipient of the Dean's Peter Parker Medal "for lifetime contributions to Medicine and Yale University." Yale medical residents also honored him with the Benedict Harris Teaching Award for contributing most to their first year of resident training. In 2000, he was honored with the Yale School of Medicine Distinguished Alumni Service Award. Dr. Gordon served as the Chair, Board of Trustees, of the Cushing/Whitney Medical Library Associates for 10 years and was made Honorary Lifetime Trustee in 2008.

His passion for medicine and instilling the same excitement in future generations is also evidenced by his work to create a program which trained and placed Yale medical students as tour guides/mentors in Connecticut high schools through the "Yale BIO-BUS" program to encourage youth interest in the bio-medical sciences. His pioneering energy also helped create the Digital Imaging Center within the Yale's Cushing/Whitney Medical Library, which gave students and faculty access to award-winning international science films.

Dr. Gordon now makes his home in St. Louis, where he is the CEO of Medical Films, LLC. Over the years he has produced national and international medical teaching films, exhibits, and various medical teaching devices, including the "Global Disease Guide," an international desk reference for healthcare workers which aids in disease prevention and post-travel diagnosis. He most recently created a new mobile app, "Plants4Cures," which Dr. Gordon says gives healthcare workers and others a unique and fun way to find herbal remedies for medical conditions and

ailments.

Among his honors, Dr. Gordon received a fellowship from the American Society for the Advancement of Science "for contributions to clinical gastroenterology,

travel medicine, and biomedical film production," a John Muir Film Festival award in 1976, and numerous other awards as a director/producer of medical films. His films include an international award-winning film series, "Clinical Aspects of Parasitology: The Intruders—Cestodes; The Infiltrators—The Nematodes; The Insinuator—*Toxoplasma Gondii*." He has also won awards for his films "Medical Innovations – From Obsidian Scalpels to Nano Particles," and "Embracing Plants and Cures."

Currently, Dr. Gordon is hard at work on developing an elective course for Yale students to educate them on plants and their role in health, disease, nutrition, and overall wellness. His proposed course would bring students to the St. Louis area for an immersion-type research experience with local facilities including the Missouri Botanical Garden, the Danforth Plant Science Center, the Saint Louis Science Center, and the Saint Louis Zoo Institute for Conservation Medicine.

In the following Q&A, Dr. Gordon shares his insights and offers advice for current and future clinicians.



Martin E. Gordon, MD, FACG, displays the mobile app he created, Plants4Cures.

GI FIVE: When did you begin practicing gastroenterology, what was it like back then and when did you stop clinical practice?

Dr. Gordon: I opened my consulting practice in 1954. Ever since I began the practice of gastroenterology, I have always felt much excitement with the individual opportunity and privilege to guide patients, their families and "younger" neophytes. This service spectrum widens with time, but never dims nor dulls since new challenges are confronted daily, regardless of the remarkable current endoscopic diagnostic and treatment aids. And I have not stopped as an active licensed physician, mentor and patient advocate, as I continue to see patients at a free clinic in St. Louis and also present lectures.

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GI Five Interview

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GI FIVE: What do you see are the biggest differences in medicine today, gastroenterology in particular, compared to when you began your career?

Dr. Gordon: Sadly, today we see a defocus on the patient's story, usurped by a need for forms, time compressions and technological foci. I believe one's focused images of a patient may best come from computers every time.

GI FIVE: What do you think the future of gastroenterology will look like? What are the main advances you see on the horizon?

Dr. Gordon: I see the continued evolution of bio-chemical/cellular activities within the GI lumen coupled with increased genomic knowledge that will be further enhanced by bioengineering instrumentation, all promising to enhance patient care. Future pioneers will be lauded by others as we will also admire these breakthroughs, (using retrospective holographic lenses).

GI FIVE: When it comes to medicine and gastroenterology, what are you most passionate about?

Dr. Gordon: I am most passionate about the integration of clinical GI practice into all specialties since nature does not survey boundary lines. Diagnostic dilemmas can be solved, per Soma Weiss: "any diagnosis is easy, once we think of it." For example, that midnight call related to nausea and vomiting may be the onset of acute glaucoma.

GI FIVE: Tell us about the app you developed and why you developed it.

Dr. Gordon: Botany was always an integral part of ancient medical schools, providing important medical knowledge. These aspects were gradually abandoned despite the ongoing lay use of herbals and nutritional food supplements. Today, the supermarkets are overloaded with "body slimming, sexual enhancements and fan-

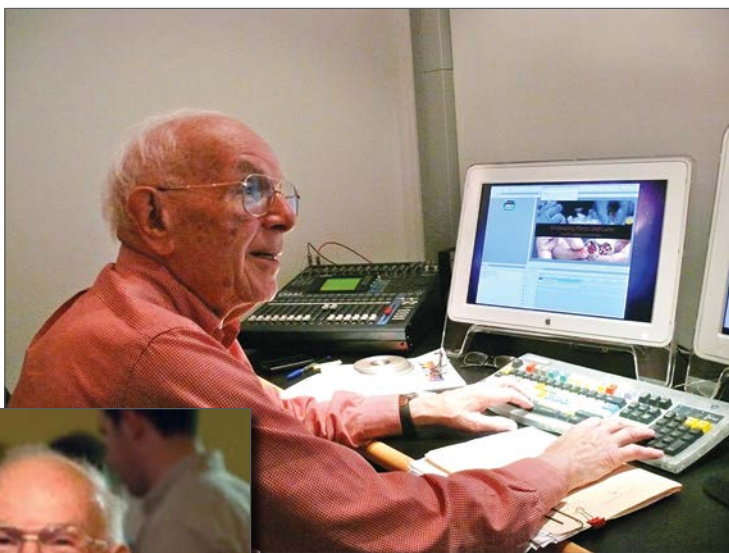
tasy fulfillments. Some are toxic, some become interactive with our drugs, yet the information is repressed (yes, often herbal withholding with one's doctor). The



"Plants4Cures" app, is an attempt to increase awareness of diagnostic and treatment potentials for the clinician as well as other professionals. Evidence-based science opportunities are still limited but CAM (Complementary Alternative Medicine) is now becoming more acceptable.

GI FIVE: Your latest endeavor involves educating medical students on the use of botanicals and herbs – please tell us about this project, why you decided to embark on it, and what your vision is for its success?

Dr. Gordon: I am in the midst of mounting a Yale Student Elective Program for Medical, Forestry and Bio-Engineering school students by bringing together a consortium of outstanding plant science facilities, their researchers, and involving Yale Medical Library and others. The St. Louis area is replete with such opportunities, rapidly becoming a renowned world center for research advances in plant biosciences. The need for expansion of effective botanical medicines, increased food and fuel production by genetic engineering, and



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prevention of crop diseases all must be addressed. These areas, along with new research tools will enable rapid identification of new targets for clinical cancer development and prediction of drug resistance strains, each derived from the expanding plant sciences.

GI FIVE: Please share some of the highlights of your distinguished career.

Dr. Gordon: As a Dean of Finalist Judges at the Annual International Medical Film Festivals, I persuaded many top global awardees to submit copies of their outstanding productions to the Yale Medical Library Imaging Center for student and faculty checkouts. Its growth continues.

My own DVD Production, "Embracing Plants and Cures – From Seedlings to Remedies," now resides, by their request, in the NIH National Library Medicine Archives and in libraries around the world. My exciting time filming in the Costa Rica rainforest remains a major highlight.

Another highlight is my still ongoing role as a Finalist International Judge for the Robot Scholarship competition. Over 40,000 youngsters from around the

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Women in GI Forum

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reform, documentation/coding and innovative practice paradigms will strengthen one's ability to successfully navigate the new practice environment.

The program kicks off on Friday evening with a welcome reception at 6:00 pm, followed by dinner and a keynote presentation by Sara Laschever, author of *Women Don't Ask*. (Attendees will also have the opportunity to attend book signings by faculty presenters Sara Laschever, and Robynne K. Chutkan, MD, author of *Gutbliss*.)

The educational program on Saturday will run from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm.

ACG's all-day Hepatitis School, Friday, September 19

Hepatitis School is a day-long interactive educational program providing an immersion in hepatitis B and C management, and a clinical update on new therapeutic modalities and approaches.

The course will be held from 8:00 am – 4:15 pm on Friday, September 19, 2014, at the InterContinental Chicago Magnificent Mile, in Chicago, Illinois.

Learn Strategies to Maximize Professional Success, Career Satisfaction and Work-Life Balance at the ACG Women in Gastroenterology Forum

SEPTEMBER 19-20, 2014

Intercontinental Chicago Magnificent Mile
Chicago, Illinois

ACG invites you to join colleagues for a unique program highlighting the challenges the female gastroenterologist faces in practice and ways to build resilience, professional success and career satisfaction in a changing healthcare world, plus clinical updates delivered by an all-female faculty.

The program will focus on the epidemiology and treatment of hepatitis B, the epidemiology of hepatitis C, assessing candidates for therapy, currently approved therapies for hepatitis C and the pipeline of new drug development for the treatment of hepatitis C, approaches to patients with HCV-HIV co-infection and how to navigate the complex insurance processes related to HCV treatment. ACIG

Registration is now open for the Women in GI Forum as well as for ACG's Hepatitis School.
www.gi.org/education-and-meetings/regional-meetings

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world compete for free four-year college scholarships (worth over \$25 million) in this FIRST Foundation event. To say that this reflects my own desire to stimulate the young for careers in the biomedical and engineering fields reiterates my own career desires.

GI FIVE: What are your words of wisdom for current medical students, practicing gastroenterologists and retired clinicians or those thinking about how they can continue to embrace life once they retire?

Dr. Gordon: For current students – Eagerly partake of travel (including repressed local areas) and expose yourself to variegated needs of different patient cultures, maintain nature's sustainability, study vector and sanitary status, thus fulfilling one's humanity while expanding self-growth and value.

For practicing GIs – The pursuit and vital extraction of "history taking

with the third ear" with knowledge of the potential, yet limitation of our new procedures; the excitement of discoveries are all condensed in our multi-organ specialty, hopefully a daily unlimited fulfillment.

For those retired or embarking on retirement – Partake of the many blessings of family joys. Recall your archives as a photo-cyclops, socio-cultural opportunities, the sage historical and current lessons all somewhat neglected during those active practice periods. Educating oneself and

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Learning from Dr. Gordon

The GI Five spoke with Ronald J. Vender, MD, FACP, of Yale University School of Medicine in New Haven, CT, who was a medical student during Dr. Gordon's tenure at Yale, and recalled that "he was always positive and enthusiastic. Dr. Gordon was one of the first gastroenterologists in New Haven, and the first person I knew who performed endoscopy. He was generous with students and residents, and allowed us to look through the teaching attachment of the fiberoptic scopes that were used. He had an early interest in parasitic disorders, but most of us could not figure out his interest since we rarely saw parasitic diseases."

others is never ending, yet always fulfilling.

Reconsider yearnings for those unread best sellers, the hunting, fishing, travel, poker-playing – all those neglected desires. Embrace the final rewards of "as you like it," even using those discretionary funds. ACIG