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Queen's Memo

To: Dean Barry Smith
From: Jackie Duffin
Date: July 11, 1996
re: A. A. Travill Commemoration

Dear Dr. Smith,

Thanks for including me in plans for a commemoration of Dr. Travill. I have had an idea and am enclosing an outline of it in advance. If you think it's worth considering, please feel free to copy it to the others who will be attending the meeting.

Jackie Duffin

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A Proposal for Faculty of Medicine Commemoration of Professor A.A. Travill

PREAMBLE. As his friends and colleagues know, A.A. 'Tony' Travill was intelligent, quick, witty, a great teacher, who loved to talk--preferably to argue. Proud of his credentials in clinical medicine and his origins in practice, he rose to head a basic science department (Anatomy). He was an erudite historian, with distinguished publications, and he co-founded the John Austin Society, which is the Queen's history of medicine club. Travill also had a deep interest in Philosophy, especially logic, ethics, and epistemology. He loved to cast doubt, to stir up trouble, but he didn't really mind losing.

To keep his memory alive in a way that pays tributes to his many qualities, I propose the Faculty of Medicine launch the A.A. Travill Annual Debate.

HOW WILL IT WORK?

1. A controversial topic in medicine with both clinical and laboratory aspects should be selected.
2. A statement of resolution should be constructed.
3. An articulate spokesperson for each side, Affirmative and Negative, should be chosen. Silver-tongued orators would be welcome.
4. A suitable hall should be booked for late afternoon. The entire faculty should be notified well in advance, students, profs, staff etc. The media should be invited as good topics will be of general interest in health care.
5. A brief history of the topic (5 minutes maximum) should be read by a historian or a designated individual as an introduction.
6. Each side speaks for five minutes to state their position (max).
7. Each side then rebuts the other for five minutes (max); repeated once, followed by a one minute summary.
8. The debate should be judged by a committee consisting of one representative of the department of Philosophy (Chair), a medical student, a clinician, a basic scientist, and the dean or dean's representative.
9. Sources for the nominating and judging committees might include members of the John Austin Society (which Dr. Travill co-founded), the Anatomy department, and the Aesculapian society (which gives the Travill award as the highest honour to a student for faculty service).
10. Following the announcement of the winner, a reception to honour the debaters. Among other refreshments, sherry is a must; it was Dr. Travill's favorite aperitif.

POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENTS/ADVANTAGES

Like the Basmajian award and its lecture, the Travill debate should become an annual faculty highlight.

People working on controversial topics can air their views in a lively fashion (sample topics and speakers appended).

It may build bridges, by bringing diverse and loculated components of faculty together for intellectual (rather than business) reasons.

It will endorse the faculty goals of life-long learning and the relevance of research, questioning, and solid reasoning.

It will stimulate an interest in the faculty and students for achievements that might not otherwise come to their attention.

It will be fun.

Selection for the debate should be a faculty honour and the professors and students should be invited to suggest names and topics.

If there were to be a lot of interest/nominees, the topic and the debaters could eventually be selected by faculty-wide ballot--fairly simple with electronic mail.

The event should be a living tribute that testifies to the many qualities and talents of Dr. Travill.

SAMPLE TOPICS (random sample in no particular order and without contribution or knowledge of the faculty named below)

- * Every postmenopausal woman needs hormones Dean Van Vugt vs. Ruth Wilson
- * Breast Cancer therapy E. Sterns vs. E. Eisenhower
- * Home vs. Hospital Deliveries Susan Philips vs. ?
- * Coffee is good for you? Albert Clark vs.??
- * The French paradox: red wine lowers cholesterol, so let's drink Albert Clark vs.??
- * Our Health Care system: it ain't really 'broke' Duncan Sinclair vs. ??
- * Lung transplant: the surgical creation of a chronic disease:
Ron Wigle vs.? a brave surgeon
- * Prozac deficiency a common plight. Analyst vs. pharmacologist/psychiatrist
- * PMS is a "real" disease Robert Reid vs. a brave feminist
- * Being a good teacher can be taught. Susan Moffat vs. a brave diehard
- * Cis-platinum a nephrotoxin with anti-neoplastic side effects
Ross Morton vs. Barb Campling
- * Back surgery is not neurosurgery (well, you can imagine)