Medical Alumni Association Board Member Leaves a Lasting Legacy of Service

Daniel Sheldon, M.D. ’94, shared an observation often made about his father, Jerome J. Sheldon, M.D. ’64: “When my father gave you his attention, you felt like you were the only person in the room with him.”

It was this personable quality, among many others, that resonated for family, friends, and colleagues, who came together to celebrate Dr. Sheldon’s life as a mentor, leader, and devoted family man, after he passed away in early February. A beloved board member of the Miller School of Medicine Medical Alumni Association, with wide-ranging talents and a keen zest for life, Dr. Sheldon was dedicated to the advancement of those he worked with and the communities he served.

Jerome J. Sheldon, M.D.
'64, with his son Daniel at
his 1994 medical school
commencement.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, Dr. Jerome J. Sheldon attended the
University of Florida and then graduated from the University
of Miami School of Medicine in 1964. As a radiologist at Mount
Sinai Medical Center on Miami Beach and a professor of
radiology at the Miller School of Medicine for more than 50
years, Dr. Sheldon was a source of wisdom, strength, and
support for all who crossed his path.

Dr. Sheldon was dedicated to student life, alumni engagement,
and philanthropic giving. He was instrumental in setting up
the longest-standing active scholarship fund at the Miller
School of Medicine – a fund devoted to his graduating class –
the Class of 1964 Peter Lake Memorial Endowed Scholarship. He
kept the fund resourced for 56 years by going back to alumni
each year, encouraging them to contribute to support the
aspirations of Miller School students.

“Jerry was committed to the potential of students,” said Jorge
J. Guerra, B.S. ’68, M.D. ’72, interventional radiologist and
former Miller School of Medicine administrator and faculty
member. “He recognized that not only were they the future of
our field, but that medical alumni could help secure their
continued success – it was a way to bring alumni together for
a common cause.”

Dr. Sheldon’s leadership shone through as president of the
Medical Alumni Association (MAA) from 1994 to 1996. “He had a
vision,” said Dr. Guerra. “He saw that we had extraordinary
talent in our Miller School graduates, brilliant minds in the
field of medicine that the rest of the world did not know enough about.”

Dr. Sheldon also saw the opportunity to establish and elevate the groundbreaking work of alumni. Along with others in leadership at the MAA, he formed the Medical Alumni Hall of Fame Selection Committee. The committee’s charter was to select, out of thousands of candidates, the recipient of the Miller School’s Hall of Fame Award for outstanding achievements in medicine.

The first two alumni were inducted to the Medical Alumni Hall of Fame in 1996. The selection process culminates in a celebration of award recipients at the medical alumni class reunions each year.

“Jerry was a consensus-builder – calm, erudite, non-confrontational, but with very strong opinions,” said Dr. Guerra. “He would convey his thoughts to you in a way that never invalidated or ignored the ideas of others. He kept all of us focused through some heated discussions and helped us move toward our goal with great skill.”
Dr. Jerome J. Sheldon

Dr. Daniel Sheldon reflects on his father’s high regard for the Miller School and the practice of medicine. “My father said one of his proudest moments was when he put the hood on me when I graduated from the Miller School of Medicine,” said Dr. Sheldon. “Growing up, the joke was that we could do anything we wanted after we graduated from medical school.”

As a child, Dr. Sheldon would occasionally accompany his father to Mount Sinai Medical Center during a time when CT scanner technology was just coming out. “He would leave me in the room with this big computer and machinery and I would invariably start touching things, against his expressed wishes,” he remembered fondly. “He was so very patient, and he never got angry. I always felt encouraged to be curious about things around me.”

He also recalled the experience of observing his father with others during those visits. “You could see the way he was respected by the colleagues and staff that he worked with,” said Dr. Sheldon. “He was always a resource to his peers and he extended this quality to others — friends and family would invariably call during the week or on the weekend to get some medical insight, and he was always ready to listen and spend time understanding the situation.”

While in radiology there is little patient contact, especially with the advent of telemedicine, Dr. Sheldon made it a point to talk to patients when he needed to understand more to piece together his diagnosis. “He loved working in the hospital setting with patients, where he would confer with physicians and go through cases with them,” said Dr. Sheldon. “These were
the collegial interactions he would live for.”

Dr. Jerome J. Sheldon left a lasting legacy in the lives he touched. It comes as no surprise that he was a talented carpenter who built things others could enjoy – bookcases, furniture, outdoor benches, and during one summer, a canoe. “He made beautiful and functional things for others,” said Dr. Daniel Sheldon. “It was just who he was, he was a true renaissance man whose lifetime love of learning and creating inspired us – family and friends – to better ourselves in ways we never thought possible.”

Dr. Jerome J. Sheldon is survived by Rita, his wife of 56 years; his children Daniel (Alissa), Paul, and Allen (Keri); and his grandchildren Samantha, Meredith, Dana, Cassidy, and Jenna. If you wish to donate to a cause in Dr. Sheldon’s honor, his family has asked that all contributions go to the Class of 1964 Peter Lake Memorial Endowed Scholarship for the advancement of medical students. Visit this page for further details or call 305-243-9473.