

## HOW THE RADIOISOTOPE DEPARTMENT EVOLVED

Dr. G.W. was a top radiologist at the Philadelphia General Hospital but, when the City of Philadelphia decided to close that hospital, he was hired by the VA, where he now became Chief of Radiology. He announced, shortly after he got this position, that he felt the Nuclear Medicine Department (at that time called the Radioisotope Research) should be an integral part of the Radiology Department because therapy involving radiation with isotopes was parallel to radiation by X-ray (or other radiation energies). Diagnosis involving visualization was even more parallel to the taking of X-rays for the purpose of determining bone and tissue lesions. The few in vitro diagnostic tests then available, he believed, should be administered by the Pathology Department. In all of this, most of the Radiology Departments in Philadelphia, as well as the five medical schools that functioned with the VA Hospital, concurred. Unfortunately for him Central Office in Washington did not feel this way, and they demanded a strict separation of the two departments.

When José had left the VAH for his Fulbright Professorship to Copenhagen, Dr. G.W. saw his opportunity and became the Chairman of both departments. He soon found out that the functions of the Radioisotope Research at that time were mostly experimental. Since there was nobody to run the Radioisotope Laboratories and the research, he sought and finally found a disgruntled employee at Merck by the name of Dr. W., who demanded a large promotion to take over José's job.

José, at this time, had been a GS12 at the time he left and had been hoping to become a GS13. Dr. W. demanded and got a GS14, although he had scant training in radioactive tracers and almost no clinical expertise. Vernell Goines, the refined and efficient Afro-American secretary that José had hired when the department had opened, now kept José informed by writing him letters to Copenhagen, describing the lack of research and the numerous absences of the new head. Shortly thereafter, she informed José that Dr. G.W. was having "problems" with Dr. W. A few months later, without much notice, Dr. W. left to return to his old job at Merck.

Approximately a month after that, José received a letter from Dr. G.W. asking if he would consider returning to his old position and the status quo of that time. José accepted, on the condition that he would now be considered for a GS14, especially since he had about twice the number of papers and far more expertise than Dr. W. With the help of Dr. M. of VACO, a formal offer was extended to and accepted by José. On September 14th, 1958, José returned to his job at the VA Hospital in Philadelphia. He was pleased to find that he was now a GS14, with its accompanying increase in salary and benefits.

The other pleasant surprise that awaited him was an accompanying faculty appointment at the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. S.G., the Chairman of

Biochemistry at the University of Pennsylvania Medical School, had requested that José do more teaching in his department and, thus, be granted faculty status as Assistant Professor. All of this had been refused to José before he had left for Denmark, but was now granted to him by the Dean. Dr. G.W., upon José's return, was most pleasant and had no objection to having José run all facets of the department. What he himself retained was the title of Chief.

It was around this time that the department changed names from Radioisotope Research to part of the department entitled Nuclear Medicine. José was given the title of the second part: Chief Radioisotope Research, but he ran both divisions with the help of residents from Medicine, Surgery, and Radiology. These residents were the ones to physically inject and give the nuclear materials to the patients under José's supervision. This arrangement would continue for many years until Dr. J.H. finally arrived to take over the clinical part. At this point, the research section, while under José, was now placed administratively under Medical Research.

In the early sixties, José was very involved in experiments concerning side-effects of radiation and the possibility of medication being given to patients to prevent side effects from this radiation. He found out that, in Madrid, they were giving different pharmaceutical agents **before** administering radiation for cancer therapy. Some of the patients were said to be avoiding many problems if they took some of these medicines prior to the radiation.

José applied to be sent to Spain to study and learn more about this work. Dr. G.W., however, insisted that he himself accompany José to Madrid, and he refused to give permission for José to go without him. Several grant applications were submitted for such a trip, but funding for Dr. G.W. was refused. All five such applications submitted for travel to Madrid to visit the laboratory and clinics of Dr. C.G. were rejected by the granting boards, the reason being that they saw no need for **two** chiefs to go. Eventually, Dr. G.W. backed out, and the next application for José to travel to Spain, this time alone, was quickly approved and funded. After this, Dr. G.W. never again requested that he accompany José yet, every time that he got an idea about something (change of lighting to view X-ray films, timers, film types, etc.) he would immediately order José to drop whatever he was doing and summon him to his office to discuss his latest flash idea. José had to stop many an experiment in the middle to go listen to far-fetched notions not carefully thought out and that were, in many cases, quite fantastic in nature.

The behavior of Dr. G.W. grew more and more unpredictable. José heard that, during one week between Christmas and New Year's, he and his wife (a child psychiatrist) were en route to Atlantic City with their three children. Suddenly, three-quarters of the way there, he stopped the car and announced that he would really rather go to France. Without further ado, they turned the car towards New

York, where they extemporaneously boarded a plane for Paris. They must have been carrying their passports with them but, until they were on the very outskirts of Atlantic City, nobody had ever mentioned the possibility of heading for Europe.

Dr. G.W.'s wife was a bit unusual herself. (Perhaps the loss of one of her four children, who had drowned in their back-yard inflatable pool while left unattended there, had completely unsettled her.) Josy once saw her at a Children's Concert in the Philadelphia Academy of Music. She was delaying the onset of the program by squatting in the aisle to patiently remonstrate with one of her children about the seating arrangements.

"Now wouldn't you rather sit next to the aisle, Dear?" she asked cajolingly, while the child, shaking his head vigorously, stomped his feet and screamed, "No! No! No!" as the musicians gaped and the conductor, William Smith, stood on stage, ready to begin, baton in his hand, staring in disbelief as the scene continued to play itself out for the next five minutes until the child finally sat down.

After several more years had gone by, Dr. G.W. stopped presenting his eccentric brainstorms to José. A few years after that, when he had completed his tour of duty and reached his sixtieth birthday, he resigned and left the position. He recommended a resident (Arlene Shockman) to be made Head of Radiology. She, however, was too busy with her own work to become involved with Nuclear Medicine or Radioisotope Research. Nevertheless, she remained titular Head of all work in radioactive materials while José continued as Chief of Radioisotope Research.