I remember

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I remember when I first met Jim during the first cycle of the ESPN course in Oslo in 1987.

I remember how he was upset not to have had his certificate for this course and how it became a running joke for 20 years.

I remember how after this course I was looking forward to being with him again 3 times a year for the European, Australasian, and South American courses.

I remember how impressive his lectures and his hands-on were.

I remember how the trainees were always attentive when he started to speak, and how patient he was with them.

I remember also how they sometimes complained about his inimitable accent (from the Bronx he used to say) and how he was proud to be a neurosurgeon at Albert Einstein College of Medicine and Montefiore Medical.

I remember how he liked disguises and costumes.

I remember his blue eyes and his benevolent smile.

I remember how it was difficult for him to arrive in Berlin with his didgeridoos.

I remember how proud he was of his first iPhone in Liverpool.

I remember his black and white picture in the hall of fame in the Burdenko institute in Moscow.

I remember his amazing home library full of old medical books.

I remember him being very proud of his Z-80 MMXVIII A.D. catalogue full of fine collections of medical instruments and ephemera, Antiquarian Books and Manuscripts dealing with medicine and science, Collection of old Japanese and Oriental Books on Medicine & science, and Collection of World War II Samurai Swords.

I remember his infinite knowledge on craniosynostosis but also how patient he was with colleagues who wanted to explain to him how it works.

I cannot remember him losing patience or speaking badly about anyone.

I remember how attentive and kind he was with his nurses and that he considered them as his equals.

I remember that he always offered the wine to everyone when we were in a restaurant.

I remember that my children never forgot the dinner we had with him and Judy in an Italian restaurant in New York.

I remember how our Brazilian colleagues were impressed by his skills when he went to Ribeirao Preto to help them to operate on conjoined twins and how all of us around the world were impressed by his unique expertise on craniopagus.

I remember how he was active in the Section of History of Neurological Surgery of the AANS.

I remember having the privilege of admiring his unique collection of shrunken heads.

I remember that we drank together a bottle of a Saint-Estèphe Cos d'Estournel 1956 from his incredible wine cellar.

I remember how he liked to spend time in his "hacienda" in Puerto Vallarta.

I remember the endless nights we spent, just the two of us or with friends, discussing very serious or sometimes futile subjects (including the merits of fine alcohols and cigars).

I remember that he did not want to speak about Vietnam and that it was 15 years before he finally accepted to explain why.

I remember how he liked to be named the "Most Interesting Man in the World" and how true it was.

I remember that humanity and humility were always the first words that came into my mind when I thought of him.

I remember how he liked to say "you sinners", "hasta manana" and "in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti".

And none of us will ever forget what a great surgeon, a great doctor, a great teacher he was, as well as being such a good friend and "un homme fantastique".

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