AZ-ACP Monthly MACP Showcase

Masters comprise a small group of highly distinguished physicians, selected from among Fellows, who have achieved recognition in medicine by exhibiting preeminence in practice or medical research, holding positions of high honor, or making significant contributions to medical science or the art of medicine. Masters must be highly accomplished individuals. Evidence of their achievements can come from many types of endeavors, such as research, education, health care initiatives, volunteerism, and administrative positions. The Master must be distinguished by the excellence and significance of his or her contributions to the field of medicine.

Michael Grossman MD, MACP

Dr. Michael Grossman transferred careers from Geology to Medicine, graduating from Hahnemann University (now Drexel University College of medicine). He subsequently trained in Internal Medicine as well as Clinical Pharmacology. After serving on active duty in the US Army, including service in Viet Nam, he returned to UCSF as a clinical instructor internal Medicine and joined an office practice on the campus. He remained active on the clinical faculty and was promoted to the level of Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine at UCSF.

He subsequently relocated to Phoenix Arizona in 1983. He has served in many teaching and leadership roles for the past 40 years. Ha has been a program director both in Internals Medicine as well as the Transitional year program.

Dr. Grossman was appointed as the Associate dean of Graduate medical Education and is Clinical Professor of Medicine at the University of Arizona, Phoenix campus. He also serves as the Vice President of Academic Affairs at the Maricopa Integrated health System.

Arizona Chapter, American College of Physicians: I’d like to start by having you speak a little bit about your career -- how did you originally become interested in pursuing medicine?

Dr. Michael Grossman: I was “red shirted” as a football player giving me an extra year of college education. I had been a geology major but after the extra course work in my senior year decided to go into medicine. I had to go back to school for a couple of years to get those required courses I had not taken as a physical earth scientist.

ACP-AZ: And what are some of the different settings in which you’ve practiced medicine? How did you get where you are today?

MG: It has been a long and not too straight road. I have practiced in areas of the underserved fro the majority of my career, both as a primary practitioner and a supervising faculty member. Dealing with this population also required being able to work with inadequate financial support in caring for people.
Serving in Viet Nam also was challenging at multiple levels. Curiously, I actually was able to sit for the written examinations for the American Board of Internal Medicine while there. 24 of us were allowed to do that. In those days there was an oral exam if you passed the written in order to be certified.

ACP-AZ: How long have you been a member of the American College of Physicians?

MG: I am not sure. I think I actually became a member in 1971.

ACP-AZ: Why did you originally decide to join the ACP and why have you remained a member throughout the years?

MG: First it was THE organization for Internal Medicine, both for practice and academic medicine. Secondly you were to receive the Annals of Internal Medicine as part of this, and lastly, MKSAP was fairly new at that time and very useful.

ACP-AZ: What are some of your proudest academic or professional achievements?

MG: Difficult to recall in any hierarchical sense. Being elected governor for the Arizona Chapter of the ACP and being awarded the Laureate Award is one of these. Being selected as an outstanding teacher is always a proud moment.

Being selected to be a Master befuddled me, but clearly a proud moment.

ACP-AZ: How do you maintain a healthy balance between work and the rest of your life?

MG: I really had not done that early in my career. It took awhile to develop the balance that allowed me to concentrate on medicine – and try to remain up to date (and at my age, maybe the word is relevant).

ACP-AZ: What are some of the challenges that you think the current health care system is facing, on the state or local level?

MG: Our delivery system is imprecise and inefficient. We need to have better information to allow the best clinical decision analysis possible and a continuous review to assure systematically we are focused.

There has been intrusion into the dissemination of scientific knowledge and the literature in the past that has created true problems for us and our credibility. Most of these have been addressed, but we still have to worry about the free interchange of scientific development and commercial interests.

Health care must be available for all citizens, at a reasonable cost and with reasonable access.

ACP-AZ: What advice would you give to our physicians in training?

MG: Life long learning requires skills most of us have not learned. Included in that is the ability to truly self evaluate and recognize those areas where gaps in knowledge may appear.

Learn the necessary skills in computer utilization, hopefully this will allow better information gathering in shorter time.

ACP-AZ: Dr. Grossman, thank you for taking the time to correspond with us!