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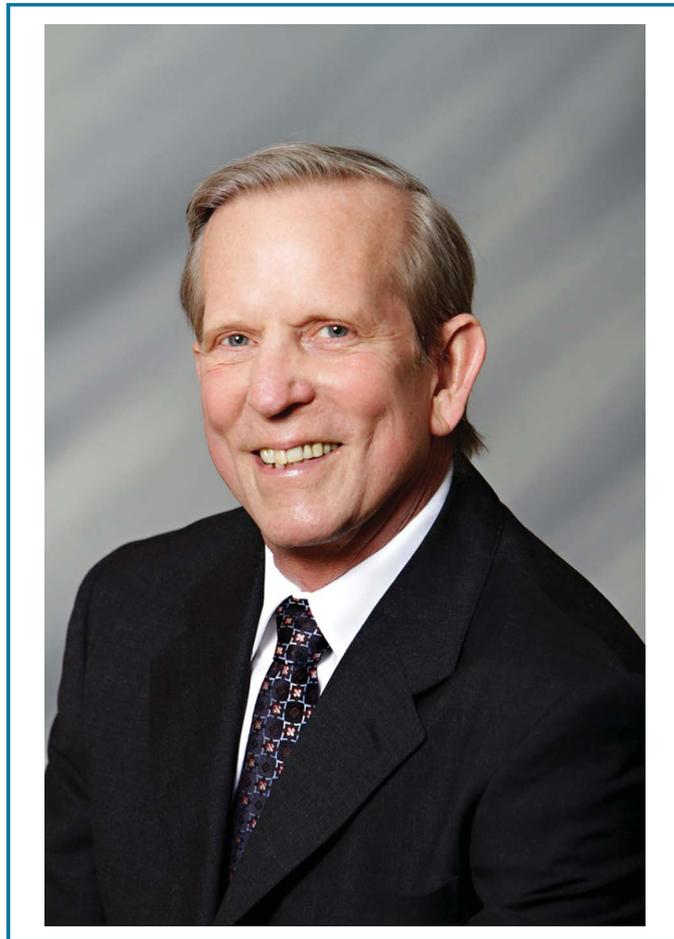
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On the Shoulders of Giants



I was extremely saddened to see the passing of dermatology and human icon Richard E. Fitzpatrick. In every profession, you can sift through the total membership over decades and find thousands of names. In that pile of names, lay a small group of truly special and talented individuals that have made exceptional contributions to the specialty and to life. “Fitz” is at the top of that heap in

dermatology. Not only was he truly a pioneering individual but he was truly an exceptional individual. Dick was the type of person that this world needs. As famous and well-known as he was, he always had time for the little person or the student. You could stop him cold walking down the hall at a major meeting to ask for advice and he would treat you like you were related. He always

made time for everyone and the reward for that time was his impish smile as well as his wisdom.

When laser technology hit the market there were not “user manuals” and the learning curve was exponential. Dick and several other colleagues led the charge to “figure out” this science and make it predictable. He was the Thomas Edison of lasers.

Anyone who knew Dick was well aware that along with any dispensed wisdom would come a joke or funny story. I shared a podium and social evening with him in early March and he appeared quite healthy. He showed me a picture of him in outlandish hot pink outfit that he wore to a Halloween party one year. He told me one of

his patients lent it to him and he liked it so much that the patient gave it to him. What made the story special was that his friend and patient was Ike Turner who along with Tina Turner strutted that suit on stage in the 70s and 80s. Typical Fitz story!

They say that leaders see so well because they stand on the shoulders of the giants that preceded them. We have lost one of the biggest giants ever and anyone whoever shared knowledge or laughs with Fitz will feel void in their life.

Thanks for all you did, Dick. We will never forget you.

JOE NIAMTU, III, DMD