

Frank W. Jobe, MD — Mentor

Peter D. McCann, MD

In this June issue's Focus on Sports Medicine, Frank W. Jobe, MD, and coauthor Marilyn M. Pink, PhD, PT, have written "The Process of Progress in Medicine, in Sports Medicine, and in Baseball Medicine." This contribution is a fascinating historical review of medical advances dating from the ancient Greeks that influenced the development of "baseball medicine" in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Baseball medicine proved to be the precursor of the orthopedic subspecialty of sports medicine, popularized in this country in the early 1970s.

There is, arguably, no more qualified person to write about baseball medicine than Dr. Frank Jobe, longtime consultant for the Los Angeles Dodgers, cofounder of the Kerlan-Jobe Orthopaedic Clinic, and pioneering surgeon who developed innovative elbow and shoulder ligament reconstructions that have subsequently become standard of care for throwing athletes. Nor is there a greater authority than Frank to emphasize the crucial importance of the nonoperative treatment of throwers, whether they are Little Leaguers or Major Leaguers.

Bill Grana, MD, Associate Editor of Sports Medicine at *The American Journal of Orthopedics*, provides an insightful commentary on Dr. Jobe's paper and urges the completion of evidence-based studies to document the effectiveness of the surgical treatment recommended for throwing athletes.

It is Dr. Jobe's standing as a mentor, however, that is the most compelling to me, and I note with interest that he and coauthor Marilyn Pink cite a mentor in the introductory sentence of their article. One might define a mentor as an advisor, counselor, or guide directing the student in the pursuit of knowledge and truth. A mentor also implies, to me, a personal relationship between the



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pupil and teacher. Although I have never had the privilege of working directly with Frank, I have come to know him not only professionally but also personally through his writing and personal interactions with him at American Shoulder and Elbow Surgeons meetings over the years. Consequently, I consider Frank one of my own mentors.

Professionally, I believe orthopedic surgeons can achieve distinction in three basic categories: as an innovator of technique, as a gifted teacher, and as a master surgeon. One can consider oneself to be a success if fortunate enough to excel in just one of these areas. Remarkable is the surgeon who masters two of the three, and extraordinary is the surgeon who succeeds in all three. Frank Jobe is that rare orthopedic surgeon who has mastered all three: innovator of the "Tommy John" medial elbow ligament reconstruction and anterior capsular ligament reconstruction of the shoulder, teacher of hundreds of residents and fellows (many of whom have subsequently become leaders and innovators in our field in their own right), and highly gifted and respected surgeon. He has done it all.

Nevertheless, beyond (and some might say in spite of) his vast professional accomplishments, what especially distinguishes Frank are his qualities as a human being. That a surgeon who has achieved as much as he has over a long career could still be the kind, understanding, approachable, compassionate, and eternally curious person he continues to be is what truly sets Frank apart as an outstanding role model.

It is with great pride and respect that we present Frank's work on baseball medicine in this issue. He is truly a mentor for us all. ■

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