

Dr. John Woodbury — A Personal Recollection

In the fall of 1956 I entered my second year of medical school at Dalhousie University with the happy prospect of escaping the dreaded anatomy lab and starting to see patients in our clinical skills course. With three of my classmates we had the great good fortune to be assigned Dr. John Woodbury as our clinical skills tutor. Much of our instruction was carried out in the now long-extinct Halifax City Home where the residents were more or less permanent and not necessarily ideal for second-year clinical skills teaching. To compensate, John Woodbury became not only our tutor but simultaneously our patient. At the age of 38 he already had fairly advanced inflammatory back disease and he was able to demonstrate to us all the well known clinical features of spondylitis. The term student-centered medical education was not yet part of the lexicon in 1956, but he was clearly an early proponent. He was also a superb generalist clinician, a

fine doctor with concern for our patients, and always a gentleman.

As I find myself practising rheumatology nearly 50 years later I cannot help but believe that much of what John Woodbury tried to inculcate into those four young students eventually found expression in my choice of career.

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