

Additional Interview

October 16, 2011

Interviewee: Dr. George Malouf, Sr.

Interviewer: Dr. Allan Jensen

In Audience: Mrs. Eva Malouf, Claire Jensen and Connie Gilcrist

AJ: George, thank you for having us at your home to interview you for the MedChi Oral History Project. The purpose is to recall some memories, anecdotal episodes, and wisdom you can bring us about your time at MedChi.

GM: It will be my pleasure.

AJ: Thank you for your willingness to do this, and George I know you have been interviewed before and told about your family history and training and so forth but we would like to expand on that a little bit. The one thing everyone talks about is, that of all the people at MedChi no one seems to be more energetic and able to do things than you. Many of us go to meetings and get tired, but you seem to be able to bring tremendous energy. How do you account for that?

GM: You may perceive that I have a lot of energy but as far as I am concerned it is in a day's work. Whatever I do I like to finish it and if you call this a lot of energy, then so be it, but I don't feel like I am doing a lot of work and have a lot of energy.

AJ: George, MedChi has had its headquarters in Baltimore and for many of us like me it is three miles from my house and it is easy to get to, but when you go there you have to spend an hour and a half driving. Has that ever created a problem for you and have you ever thought that MedChi should move to Adelphi Road? (laughing)

GM: It would be nice if it does but I don't mind at all driving back and forth to MedChi whenever they have meetings.

AJ: Has there ever been a time people talked seriously or was there ever a consideration moving MedChi away from Baltimore?

GM: At one time they thought maybe we should sell the building because we could get good money for it and we looked at different places that we could relocate but after making a study we decided to stay where we are. This is the history of MedChi and lets remain there.

AJ: I think you were there when there was actually talk about moving to Annapolis and we did open an office in Annapolis. How long have we had that office there? Do you remember the genesis?

GM: Yes I do. It was Angelo who purchased it.

AJ: Angelo Troisi?

GM: Angelo Troisi who purchased it and I think we paid half a million dollars for it and in the beginning we thought it was a good thing to be nearby where the action was happening. Then we discovered in time that maybe it was one of the best things that we did. Being close to Annapolis is a great thing.

AJ: Talking about Annapolis, you are noted for are your political skills and your ability to get people together. We saw that at MedChi and I am sure it is true in other parts of your life including your church and maybe even your family. Did you take political science courses?

GM: I tell you, my skill is a gradual thing but I never intended to be involved in politics. I wanted to be a good doctor. They elected me to be Chief of Staff at Prince George's Hospital and by virtue of that I sat on the Board of the organization and there was someone that wanted to run the show completely disregarding the physician, and he wanted to put someone on the Board that I thought was not good. At that time I was close to Parris Glendening. I talked to him to see if he could convince the man that sits on the Board to be on our side, but he did more than that. He talked to the one representing the council so we had two people that were going to vote my way. That discouraged the gentleman from fighting me. I got a call that said "well George, we see your way. You are a wise man and are going to have it your way."

AJ: And you agreed with him? (laughing)

GM: I agreed with him and I thought well it is nice to have some power in politics and that is how I developed it gradually and enjoyed being involved.

AJ: While many of us are involved politically in our medical society or in our church we don't go out into the real world of Annapolis/Washington DC politics. You mention you knew Parris Glendening. You knew him before he was Governor?

GM: I knew him when he was the Executive of Prince George's County and I helped him in so many ways with the physician's point in mind.

AJ: Was there a particular time when you decided you would be more involved not just in hospital and MedChi but to go out there in the legislative world of Annapolis?

GM: Allan this was gradual and I began to enjoy being powerful and being able to do things, and the fact that Parris Glendening was listening to me and let me use that influence in the best interest of MedChi. I used to go sit down with him for breakfast and give him the different issues that MedChi was involved and he listened to me and many times helped us.

AJ: When you're talking about political power, and someone said I really should not say this, we joke about your being the godfather, and that is not a pejorative term but you know it can be a term of endearment.

GM: I don't mind it. (laughs)

AJ: But when we use it in your case it recognizes you are in a position of influence and you have been able to help a lot of people. Clearly one of the ways you have gained your political power is you have helped other people besides I guess Parris Glendening. Did you help anyone in particular in the medical society? Besides enjoying the power you are obviously doing good stuff for people.

GM: I enjoy being involved in MedChi and I always wanted to make sure to bring to the leadership people that are interested in what is best for MedChi, always seeing it in the way I saw things.

AJ: How did you identify people here in Prince George's County, who you thought might be good leaders and help a little bit? And when you are dealing with people in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Anne Arundel, and the Eastern Shore you also seem to be able to identify people who will be good leaders and you help them.

GM: I saw them at different meetings that we have a MedChi, hospitals and other places. I always was listening to what people were saying. Those that spoke beautifully and I thought they were a good candidate I approached them and asked them to be involved in MedChi, and many of them did, and when they did I helped them get in there, and many of them remember where they came from. Do I have people that don't see things my way? Yes I do. Do I want to eliminate him politically? Hell no, because I don't mind having someone who opposes my view, because in the end I know I am successful.

AJ: Great. You have been at MedChi now for many years and I am sure there are some things that are good about it and some things might be improved. Can you identify parts of MedChi you thought could be changed and what parts you would like to see improved?

GM: Allan I tell you this MedChi is great as it is now. The reason I am saying that is because we have been able to select the executive who is unbelievably good and he has surrounded himself by help that is doing great whatever you wanted and he listens to the Board and digests what we tell him and comes up with the answer and he is not independent in his thinking but he does what MedChi wants but he is very effective. This is fine. Do I have people that don't see things my way? Yes I do.

AJ: You remind me that you and I have worked with I guess five executives and you might help me, Jack Sargent, Angelo Troisi, Mike Preston, Marty Wasserman and now Gene Ransom. Were there others you knew about that I missed; was there someone before Jack Sargent?

GM: No you recited them all.

AJ: Maybe can you give us a two sentence description of each one and how you got along with them?

GM: Jack Sargent was very independent but he had a lot of friends in the city that were listening to him and were good to him. There came a time when he felt he should be independent and he rebelled against them. That is when I came into the picture and I worked with him to do whatever he thought at that time was in the best interest of MedChi and he left many of those guys behind. He began to listen to the voice coming from this county.

AJ: I know you had a special close relationship with Angelo Troisi. How long was he there?

GM: He was there seven years at MedChi. Yes I did. His problem was that despite the fact that I was very close to him he was afraid of identifying himself of being close to me. We have a room called the Malouf Room. He never called it the Malouf Board Room because he was afraid we might antagonize a lot of people. After he left we began to call it the Malouf Board Room.

AJ: Angelo and I became friends and I asked why there was no plaque in the room for Dr. Malouf. Three months later the plaque went up.

GM: I gave \$50,000 at that time to MedChi and requested that we name that room after my parents so I'm sure that the fact that you talked to him did not hurt.

AJ: Now let's go to the next one, Mike Preston.

GM: Mike Preston was afraid 100% to be identified with me and until a certain time when he felt I'm not his enemy and he asked me once that there is a rumor that he may be appointed as a Secretary of Health and he wanted to know what I thought so I told him honestly this would be a bad idea because he would be at the mercy of the Governor. As long as you are at MedChi you are at the mercy of nobody because we want you to be there forever. I think that made him feel like he could be close to me and we began to be very close after that.

AJ: Talking about the Secretary of Health our next executive had been the Secretary of Health.

GM: That's right.

AJ: Tell me about your relationship with Marty Wasserman.

GM: Marty Wasserman and I were very close and (long pause) there came a time when he was not doing what MedChi leadership wanted him to do. He was independent thinking that maybe thought being the executive he is the executive period and he does not have to listen to the leadership of MedChi. Some people who are very close to me went after him and they wanted him out. I came to his defense to some degree but I couldn't change things and he remembers that I did fight for him but I did not stand at the door to say "hell no."

AJ: Of course Gene Ransom is the Executive now and I know you respect him a great deal.

GM: Gene Ransom is very much involved in medicine and he played a role in the Maryland democratic party. His closeness to the Governor and the President of the Senate and so on is a

great help to us so when we thought about him becoming our executive I encouraged him to be there and quit what he was doing. He was practicing law on the Eastern Shore and also was one of the Commissioners in one of the counties. I said quit all of this and come to MedChi and that is what he did.

AJ: George, one of problems that occur at MedChi, is sometimes there are disagreements amongst different components. It is my experience that occasionally one component has been unhappy and decided either to stay away or be out of it for awhile. Can you tell some stories about that or share some insights? Do you think there is a role in MedChi as an arbiter to help make sure the components stay happy?

GM: The answer is that it is not in the best interest of MedChi to interfere with the counties for good or for bad. All we want is to make sure that the counties are working 100% with MedChi. As a matter of fact they should lose their identity when it comes to MedChi and the only role that they could play is to make sure they recruit the people to go to Annapolis. I think the interest of the medical society is in two places, Annapolis and Washington DC. It is not in Baltimore or Prince George's County or in any other county. So we are not interested in what we do between two counties. Let's make sure that all of the counties use their efforts to help MedChi.

AJ: Looking 40 years from now when maybe you and I will no longer be involved with MedChi what would you like then, in maybe two sentences or a paragraph what your legacy to be? What would you like people to say about Dr. Malouf?

GM: Allan, when I first came to the State of Maryland I tried to get a license to practice medicine. I was trained in Massachusetts and had a license to practice in Massachusetts. When I went to MedChi I was told I could not participate because I did not have a license to practice in Maryland, and I will never forget this. So I had to go study to pass the test and had been so far away from medicine but I to go study medicine, surgery, chemistry and all of this to pass the test and I succeeded, by a miracle I guess, to pass the test and they accepted me. So I never will forget that day and for me to come back and be able to influence decisions at the high level of MedChi is something that I enjoy, and I like to be recognized as someone who had some influence of MedChi and from the history I gave you is one of the greatest thrills is to know that I have influence at MedChi and now more influence at the national level of the AMA.

AJ: Would you like to mention your experience at the AMA, what has happened in the past, and what you see in the future at MedChi and the AMA?

GM: Well the AMA at one time had more influence when Ted Lewers was on the Board although he was not so much respected by the AMA Board. But he could do things and he was able to do things and we used to support them and get some support back from them, but those days are gone. We began ourselves to have influence because we got organized, had a voice, and when we speak they listen. So that I was enjoying. At one time I thought you were able to put someone that was not a friend but we became friends and I decided I am going to support David Nagel. I worked so hard to put him on the Board and I think we have succeeded if it was not the fact that the poor guy died. At this time I am enjoying that little bit of power that we have there

because we could influence things in the best interest of medicine and also what we want at MedChi.

AJ: George you know it has been a pleasure interviewing you. Are there any other comments or things you recall that you would like to share?

GM: I tell you this I enjoy very much being a part of MedChi because I have made so many friends. As a matter of fact as I turn the clock back I remember the day when we were at your apartment and we decided to join forces. The Eye Societies of Baltimore were more interested in education and we had an Eye Society in the area here that was more interested in politics.

AJ: The Baltimore area group was called the Maryland Ophthalmological Society and the Washington area group was called the Maryland Academy of Ophthalmology and one of the reasons we merged was because the American Academy was starting its Council and they wanted each state to send a councilor and how can you decide who your councilor is when you have two organizations. There was a little outside pressure to merge but I recall it was a very friendly marriage.

GM: It happened at your house and I think the first president was from the City and her name was?

AJ: Lois Young.

GM: I was the first Vice President and from then on I think we found that it did not make any difference where the presidents come from.

AJ: George it has been a pleasure interviewing you and thank you very much for having us in your home on a Sunday afternoon. Thank everyone also for their willingness to give up a Sunday afternoon to make sure we spoke in complete sentences. (everyone laughing)

GM: I can't but I will try.

AJ: Thank you George.

