

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

RICHARD HUBERT BRITT (1945 – 1985)

Richard H. Britt, M.D., Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Surgery (Neurosurgery), was born on June 6, 1945 in Fergus Falls, Minnesota to Dr. and Mrs. H. W. Britt. He received his B.A. degree from the University of Minnesota in 1966, Summa Cum Laude. He was then admitted to the Stanford University School of Medicine in the M.D.-Ph.D. program. He received his M.D. degree in 1971 and his Ph.D. in neurological sciences in 1972. From June, 1971 to July, 1972 he was a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Neurology at the Stanford University School of Medicine. He served as a surgical intern at the Stanford Medical Center from 1972 to 1973 and then entered the Stanford Neurosurgery Training Program. Following the completion of his five-year residency training program in June, 1978, he joined the full-time faculty in neurosurgery at Stanford as an Assistant Professor.

He was a member of Phi Beta Kappa. From 1968 to 1971 he was a recipient of a Fellowship given by the Life Insurance Medical Fund. From 1971 to 1972 he had a Postdoctoral Fellowship from the Giannini Foundation. In 1978, during his year as chief resident in neurosurgery, he was a recipient of a Resident Award Paper by both the San Francisco Neurological Society and the American College of Surgeons. From 1979 to 1980, he had an Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship.

Dr. Britt was certified by the American Board of Neurological Surgeons in 1980. He was an active member in a number of professional organizations including the Santa Clara County Medical Association, the San Francisco Neurological Society, the California Association of Neurological Surgeons, the Congress of Neurological Surgeons, the American Association of Neurological Surgeons, and the Society for Neuroscience and the Acoustical Society of America.

He began his clinical career as a faculty neurosurgeon in 1978, while at the same time accepting an appointment as head of the Stanford Neurosurgery Research Laboratory. He thus continued his "second career" as a research scientist by further important studies on the behavior of single cells in the auditory nervous system. He contributed several important papers in this field. Perhaps the most impartial index of his contributions and creativity were the judgments of his peers who were instrumental in his successful competition for NIH grant support. His enthusiasm for research and his ability to communicate these feelings at Stanford are best documented by the large number of graduate students who sought work in his laboratory—as many as six at one point in time.

Later, while continuing the above work, he also successfully sought to use his talents in contributing more directly to improved patient care. In collaboration with colleagues in radiology and infectious disease he developed a nationally recognized experimental model for brain abscess. At the time of his illness, he had begun still another avenue of research in the treatment of malignant brain tumors by a unique combination of ultrasound and hyperthermia.

Richard Britt was an excellent clinician, a superb laboratory investigator, an excellent teacher, and a warm friend. In addition to his academic interests, he was an accomplished musician and a devoted patron of the symphony and the opera.

In July 1984, he developed a central nervous system infection. Following a prolonged convalescence, he was able to get back to part-time work in early 1985. In July, 1985, he returned to visit his family in Fergus Falls, Minnesota. Shortly thereafter, his condition worsened and he required hospitalization. He remained hospitalized until his death on November 18, 1985.

His loss is keenly felt by the members of the Department of Surgery, the Division of Neurosurgery, as well as many other colleagues in other departments of the medical school with whom he had closely worked.

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