

# The Edward Mott Moore Physician Award Winner

## Edward D. Lewis, MD

---

Back in the late 1970's, self-proclaimed "boring" guy Ed Lewis, MD was featured in "Cincinnati Magazine" in a look-a-like contest. He was runner-up as a doppelganger for Gabe Kaplan (aka: Mr. Kotter of the sitcom, *Welcome Back, Kotter*) and lost to an Elizabeth Taylor twin. Thankfully, he got over the disappointment and realized there were other things he could excel at, like practicing medicine.

Lewis grew up in Rochester and attended Brighton High School. He was a graduate of Rutgers College and the University of Rochester Medical School. "During Med school I was fortunate enough to spend 3 years working with Birch Griggs and Dick Moxley doing research with families with kids with muscular dystrophy. I decided I enjoyed not only working with children, but also their families. I thought back to whom I considered 'my doctor.' It was Don Frank, my pediatrician," says Lewis. This was what made him choose to become a pediatrician, himself.

While in medical school he also reconnected with his soon-to-be wife, Bess. They originally met as sixth graders at a religious school they both attended. When he was in his first year of med school, she was in her senior year of nursing school at the University of Rochester. "Once a month, the med school and nursing school held a 'history meeting' – basically a social hour. I saw her and, smelling of formaldehyde from first year anatomy, reintroduced myself. She only vaguely remembered me, but I think her answer was, 'I sort of remember you, but you must be a first year med student (based on your smell);" he laughs. They became good friends. She told him she would never marry a doctor, but he persisted. They moved to Ohio while he did his internship and one year of pediatric residency at Cincinnati Children's Medical Center and she worked as a nurse specialist at Children's Hospital Medical Center. They married during his internship year and returned to Rochester in 1980 when he had the opportunity to be a

senior resident at Strong Hospital. "I liked the Rochester model of pediatrics with the tightknit 'town-gown' relationship. I also established some good relationships with mentors during medical school and looked forward to coming back to be part of that community," he reflects. Unlike many places, in Rochester you have the ability to be a community physician, clinical faculty at the

medical school, and participate in clinical, community-based research. "I did my senior year here and was eager to start a general pediatric practice. I was thrilled to join my own pediatrician, Don Frank, and Dave Shuttleworth in practice. We were three solo pediatricians sharing space and call, along with Cenie Cafarelli. I could not have asked for better mentors," he says. Lewis established his solo pediatric practice in 1981.

"I love watching kids grow up and start careers of their own. I am proud to include patients who have become doctors, lawyers, teachers, artists, NFL players, professional baseball players, actors and musicians among many other things," he says. He's been a successful pediatrician because of the simple question he asks himself each day, "What would I expect as a parent?"

In the late 1980's he, unexpectedly, added more to his full plate by becoming active in organized medicine. There was a crisis and he happened to speak up during the meeting. Soon after, he received a call from Marilyn Brown asking if he would like to be on the MCMS Executive Board. "I was flattered but asked how many meetings were involved. When she told me 'two' I figured I could handle two meetings a year. Little did I realize; it was two meetings a month. But it has been well worth it, even when there have been two meetings a week," he laughs. This led to one of his biggest professional accomplishments: having leadership roles in MCMS, MSSNY and American Academy of Pediatrics. He credits these with adding another dimension to his career and



has been honored to represent his fellow physicians all these years. The other professional accomplishments he is most proud of include establishing a successful pediatric practice, watching his patients grow (some coming back for him to take care of their children) and teaching (especially those pursuing careers in pediatrics). In 2015, his fourth year medical students honored him with the AOA Volunteer Faculty Award.

No matter what he has accomplished, he credits a number of people for helping make him the person he is today. His wife, Bess, is at the top of that list. Not only has she been supportive but she has tolerated all the time he has spent in the office, hospital and meetings over the past 30 years. Bess is a Nurse Practitioner whom he has run his "mom and pop" practice with for 42 years (which also happens to be how long they've been married). "In 1992, at the annual MCMS meeting, my last as President of MCMS, I had the honor of presenting my mother-in-law, Pinny Cooke, with the Edward Mott Moore Award. I also made one of the largest gaffes in my life. I thanked everyone for their help during my presidency, except my wife. Oops. (Thanks, Bess!)", he laughs. He also states that the many pediatricians in the community and at the medical center, have helped shape him as well, though too many to list. He also would like to thank the MCMS and AAP executive directors with whom he has had the pleasure to work with: Lisa Brubaker, Nancy Adams and Chris Bell. He especially appreciates all the families he has had the honor to be a part of including those he was with at the most heart-wrenching times, like when sitting with parents during the final moments of their child's life. It's with this compassion and understanding that Dr. Lewis lives his life.

Regardless of how difficult times can be, Ed Lewis loves being a pediatrician. He also recognizes though that there are big challenges facing the medical community. At the moment of this article, COVID-19 has Rochester in lock-down and has resulted in huge hurdles for everyone, especially independent, primary care physicians. Other challenges include regulatory burdens, certifications, hinderances to work flow (like the amount of time electronic medical records have added to their daily work) have invaded time that would be better spent taking care of patients. Lewis is a self-professed nerd who loves technology and though he was an early adopter of computerized medical records (and couldn't wait for a robust EMR), he still recognizes their limitations. "I would love to be able to see patients and not have to worry about all the other 'stuff' that detracts from patient care," he proclaims. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, things have slowed a little sooner than he expected. He would love to pass his practice and legacy down to a younger pediatrician, but doesn't see a solo practice surviving in the current medical environment.

No matter what is happening in the medical industry though, Dr. Lewis isn't going anywhere anytime soon. "As

long as I have fun practicing pediatrics and can continue to provide the best possible care for my patients, I will continue to do so," he says.

His wife says that his priorities have been his practice first and family second, but he disagrees. "My most meaningful accomplishment has been my family. As they grew, I found that parents are allowed to bask in their children's accomplishments. My kids really let me bask a lot. Watching them grow up, thrive, become successful in their own right, and get their own health insurance," he laughs. "If you ask Bess, I'm never "not working." But when he really isn't working he loves golf, reading and making wine. The wine was even good enough that both his daughters asked him to provide the wines for their weddings (including "champagne").

Lewis resides in Pittsford with his wife and fox red lab, Harper Lee, (an important member of the family and practice). He has 3 grown children, Charlie and his wife Marie and granddaughter Audrey, Molly and husband Dan Gilbert and grandson Graham, and Jenny and her husband Matt Holmes. He looks forward to spending more time with them.



## Who is Edward Mott Moore?

*Each year, Monroe County Medical Society (MCMS) presents its distinguished Edward Mott Moore Award to both a physician and a layperson whose lives reflect the qualities exemplified by Dr. Edward Mott Moore as a physician, teacher, investigator, leader and contributor to the community. This is the highest honor bestowed by MCMS, in recognition of outstanding and dedicated service to the medical profession and the community.*

*A leader by nature, Dr. Moore served as president of the American Medical Association and the Medical Society of the State of New York, and was founder and president of the American Surgical Association and the New York State Board of Health. In addition to his contributions as a talented and dedicated physician, Dr. Moore played a leadership role in developing Rochester's park system and in organizing a summer hospital for infants. He was also the first president of the local Red Cross chapter. Through this award, the Medical Society seeks to recognize those in our community who most closely emulate the service and breadth reflected in the life of Dr. Edward Mott Moore.*