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TRIBUTE TO JENNIFER DARU, MD

With profound sadness we note the passing of our friend and colleague Jennifer Daru. After a two year battle with cancer she died at home among her loved ones on March 23rd. She was 42 years old and is survived by her husband Jon and son Carson.

Many of you know Jenn as a passionate member and chair of the SOHM executive committee. Her initial role on the EC was as newsletter editor although she never saw it as that. For her, it was always a journal waiting to take form. She expertly and tirelessly obtained funding, assembled an editorial staff, solicited and edited articles, and made the SOHM news-journal the finest section publication in the AAP. Her next step was convincing the AAP to support a full-fledged peer-reviewed medical journal. Her dedication and effort finally paid off with the creation of Hospital Pediatrics, now indexed in Medline and a must read for every pediatric hospitalist. She was a marvelous section chair with a great respect for the larger AAP, but also the tenacity to expand PHM’s role and voice within the AAP. As the PHM conference planning committee chair she championed community hospital topics and the addition of conundrums. Her passion extended to her day jobs. She built programs in Chicago, connected with Northwestern, where she trained, and back home in San Francisco at California Pacific Medical Center.

A PHM saying is, “If you’ve seen one PHM program you’ve seen one,” but many of those diverse programs benefitted from the expertise and generosity of Jenn Daru. She believed that all programs had the potential
for success. She provided consults at below-market rates so that programs could get the appropriate guidance. Her commitment to PHM success was often felt at the personal level as Jenn served as a mentor and role model to many junior faculty, especially women entering the field. Anyone who asked Jenn for advice ended up wiser and with a new friend. Jenn often advised not accepting the status quo or taking ‘no’ for an answer; advice she modeled locally and nationally. She accomplished all of her professional success with class, an infectious optimism and determination that amazed everyone she worked with. For most of her time on the EC she was the youngest member and often commented on how lucky she felt being at the table with the rest of us. In fact, she often served as the ‘conscience’ of the group, reminding us why we were discussing a topic or considering an action. We only wish she knew how lucky we were to be at the table with her. She will be sorely missed.

Jenn’s death follows shortly after that of Laura Mirkinson in late 2013. An unequivocal sign of the maturity of our field is the unfortunate passing of those pioneers who worked so hard to reach the point we are at today. The sorrow of their passing must be tempered by a celebration of all they accomplished, and as numerous people who responded to the notice of Laura and Jenn’s deaths stated, we are all much better for having them grace our lives, professionally and personally.

An educational fund has been set up on behalf of her son Carson. It is called Jennifer Daru’s College Fund for Carson.

Dan Rauch