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Andrew M. Silverstein, MD, 1956–2000

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Andrew M. Silverstein, MD, 1956–2000

Dr. Andrew M. Silverstein was a neuroradiologist who stood out in a crowd of brilliant doctors. We're accustomed to hearing or reading about so-called "role models" or super-heroes; usually one is talking of famous people, such as great athletes, movie stars, or politicians. But those of us who knew Andy knew we were in the presence of a true hero, a man of special talents. A few months ago, when Andy had left the reading room in his wheelchair, we were struck by his incredible courage, spirit, and determination. One of our colleagues stated, "I'm still praying for a miracle," hoping that something could prevent the steady, unrelenting progression of the renal cell carcinoma from which Andy suffered. One of our other colleagues responded: "Andy is a miracle!" That sums up the universal opinion that those of us held for this dear friend and colleague.

Dr. Silverstein died at home, at the age of 44 years, after suffering from metastatic renal cell carcinoma for 16 months. Andy did his undergraduate training at City University of New York, Queens College, attended dental school at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, obtained his MD degree at the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry, and did his radiology residency at Mercy Hospital of Pittsburgh, where he was Chief Resident from 1987 to 1988. Andy finished a 2-year neuroradiology fellowship at the University of Michigan in 1990. He was a faculty member and clinical assistant professor at Crawford W. Long Hospital, an Emory University School of Medicine affiliate, from 1990 to 2000.

Andy was a rare gem, a bright and shining light—a person who had all the best qualities any physician can have: being kind, thoughtful, skilled, compassionate, methodical, and scholarly. From the moment Andy came to our practice 10 years ago, it was as if a ray of sunshine had settled over us. He was upbeat, optimistic, enthusiastic, and energetic, bringing joy and excellence to everything he did. One minute he was making a complex diagnosis, and the next, he was running down the hall to help a patient who needed a glass of water or who had dropped some personal belonging! He was always first on the scene to help with those "non-physician" tasks, such as lifting patients. He was unique and genuine, the kind of old-fashioned physician whose touch and voice alone could comfort a patient about to undergo an angiogram or other procedure. He was always the first one to pitch in and help with a stack of films, a consultation, or a procedure, even when it wasn't "his day." He was the perfect partner, professional colleague, and friend.



One of Andy's passions was his work. He used his keen intelligence to help patients, hospital staff, and other physicians. He was proud of the interventional spine practice he started and built up, before it was trendy. It gave him delight to ease a patient's pain with his precisely placed facet blocks, discograms, or epidural injections. And all of us who worked with him have had the experience of struggling with a "great case," that unusual clinical scenario or imaging finding that just didn't make sense. His uncanny insight usually solved the problem. Many a radiologist in Atlanta has consulted him at one time or another.

But he was not only a great doctor but also a great teacher—he loved learning and sharing knowledge. His approach was enthusiastic and non-threatening. Those in training wanted to please him by learning. His excitement and enthusiasm were contagious. He enjoyed the stimulation, satisfaction, and feedback of teaching and was visibly delighted when a resident or fellow had a "Eureka!" moment!

Andy was deeply devoted to his family and is survived by his beautiful, supportive, and brave wife Judy Silverstein, MD, a dermatologist in private practice in Atlanta, and his devoted daughters Laura (age 15) and Sophia (age 12). He was a loving son, brother, and uncle. Andy was proud of his Jewish faith and heritage but deeply respected and appreciated everyone else's, too. His interests and talents included playing guitar, cooking, and his beloved music collection.

Over the past 16 months he faced an unfair, cruel, and devastating disease with such bravery that he taught us the meaning of true courage and dignity. He leaves a legacy of beauty, inspiration, and heroism. He accomplished the most important thing one can achieve in life, something to which most of us can only hope to aspire: leaving the world a

better place for having been here. We thank God for having been blessed with Andy's love and friendship. None of us will ever, ever forget him.

Respectfully,

DAVID GREENE, MD
PATRICIA A. HUDGINS, MD