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# Jacques Dion, the Seventh President of the American Society of Interventional and Therapeutic Neuroradiology

Charles M. Strother

Jacques Dion, the seventh president of the American Society of Interventional and Therapeutic Neuroradiology (ASITN) was born near Quebec City in Lac St. Jean, Canada on October 27th, 1954. His father, a general practitioner in this rural community, was striving to accumulate sufficient reserves so that he could enter into a residency in general surgery. In 1954, this portion of Quebec was still quite remote, and Jacques can remember stories regarding how his crib was placed close to a wood-burning stove to ensure that he was snug and warm during the frigid Canadian winter nights. When Jacques was 3 years old, his father realized his goal of becoming a surgeon, and the family moved to Detroit where his dad began and completed a surgical residency. During these years, his mother worked as a nurse, and Jacques attended kindergarten and the first grade.

Upon completion of his father's surgical training in 1961, the family moved to the small town of Hull in Quebec. Here, Jacques attended primary and secondary schools directed by the Fathers of the Holy Ghost. His training at these traditional schools was of the classical type and he "fondly" remembers the 5 years of required Latin instruction. He also recalls being happy that the requirement for Greek instruction, in addition to Latin, had been rescinded before his reaching secondary school. After graduation, he went just across the Ottawa River to the University of Ottawa, where he completed his undergraduate studies, majoring in both premedicine and philosophy. This time in the early 1970s was one period when Jacques was "something of a rebel," at least from his parent's perspective. Long hair and a series of motorcycles, each larger than the last, are things that stand out in his memory from those days.

After completing his undergraduate training, Jacques remained at the University of Ottawa to attend medical school from 1974 to 1978. Hearing the call to "go west" for warmer climates and new adventures, he applied for and was accepted into an elective in radiology at the Long Beach Memorial Veterans Hospital in California. Here, he met Henry Pribram, a neuroradiologist, who was to be a key individual in his ultimate decision to specialize in radiology. On Henry's recommendation, Jacques applied to and was accepted into postgraduate training at Harbor Hospital at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). Here, he was trained in angiography by Grant Hieshima and Mark Mehringer, both of whom



were exploring and introducing new interventional techniques. This experience allowed Jacques to observe and, to some degree, participate in these interventional procedures. Difficulties with his visa forced him to return to Canada, where he completed his residency at Notre Dame Hospital in Montreal. Now committed to a career as an interventionalist, he secured a fellowship at the University of Western Ontario in London. During these days, the influence of Dr Charles Drake and his colleagues had made London, Ontario, one of the world's most active centers for the study and treatment of CNS vascular diseases. Working with Allan Fox and Fernando Vinuela between 1983 and 1985, Jacques thrived in this exciting environment and was able to complete fellowships in both neuroradiology and peripheral interventional radiology.

In 1985, his training now completed, Jacques returned to Montreal, where he worked as a staff physician at Saint Luc Hospital. Here, he worked in an 800-bed hospital, in a radiology department he and five other radiologists staffed. He "did it all" and served as the only interventionalist for the facility. It was at this time, as the result of a blind date arranged by his brother, that Jacques met Lucie Thibault, an assistant professor of pharmacy. This encounter was one that would greatly affect and enrich Jacques' life in the years to follow.

Fernando Vinuela relocated from London, Ontario, to UCLA and, soon after arriving, offered his former fellow a staff position. After taking a few months off in Montreal as a "ski bum," Jacques moved to Los Angeles and started work at UCLA in the summer of 1987. The practice was rapidly expand-

ing, and Fernando and Jacques subsequently added Gary Duckwiler as a partner in 1989 just after he completed his fellowship. Jacques worked at UCLA from the summer of 1987 to August of 1991, when he moved to the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. The years at UCLA were special, both because of his colleagues and because of the excitement in developing and introducing the Guglielmi detachable coil.

In September of 1991, Jacques started work in Charlottesville, along with Lee Jensen, a former fellow from UCLA whom he recruited from Richmond, Virginia. While expanding Jacques' wine cellar, the two also developed an outstanding clinical and laboratory program at the University of Virginia. Trainees included David Kallmes and Harry Cloft. In 1998, Jacques left and moved to Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, where he still practices today as the chief of interventional neuroradiology.

In addition to his brother, Pierre Dion, and a college friend, Marc Girard, Jacques counts Fernando among his best friends. Likewise, along with his

mother and father, Fernando is among those who have been most influential in Jacques' life.

In his free time, Jacques enjoys wine, food, music, skiing, and attending the Working Group of Interventional Neuroradiology meetings in Val D'Isere. (He has not missed one meeting since 1986.) Jacques is proud and happy to have been able to work for 20 years in a field that excites him and that he does still love. He feels lucky to have been able to enter the field when he did, and he appreciates the good fortune to have been at the "right place at the right time with the right people." His major frustrations are related to the increasing financial pressures that are now placed on medical practices. These, to some degree, account for a loss of academic and laboratory opportunities, which he greatly misses.

During Jacques' tenure as president of the ASITN, it became, in many ways, a society that brought real value to its members. To a very significant degree, this maturation was the result of Jacques diligence and thoughtfulness.