

Patrick Washington Serruys: a view from across the Atlantic

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Patrick has always “accused” me of being among the most European of the American cardiologists. I don't know if that is because I don't own a gun or because I favour universal healthcare, and I don't even know if it's true. But I know Patrick to be, in some respects, American. It was his grandfather I believe who was a diplomat and for a while stationed in America that caused Patrick's parents to bestow his first honour, his middle name “Washington”. In any case, my relationship with Patrick began in the early days of angioplasty when he, Paul Hugenholz (his mentor) and Michel Bertrand, asked me to become a fellow of the European Society of Cardiology. It has for me been a relationship of admiration and amazement for his accomplishments as he has occupied the centre court of so many developments of our field. Some accomplishments have come quickly while others have marinated over many years. The BENESTENT trial he led was pivotal in quickly establishing stenting as the default strategy in coronary interventions, and his involvement in the first-in-man trials of drug-eluting stenting was so surprising that he said, “Don't wake me. I am dreaming!” Other developments have taken more time.

A conversation he, David Holmes and I had 23 years ago led to early experiments on bioerodible polymeric stents. Now, more than two decades later, Patrick presents the results of the RESORB trial at ACC 2011 where he also received the most fitting tribute for his lifetime of achievements.

Beyond his well-known landmark contributions in illuminating the role of stenting, drug-eluting stenting, and now bioerodible stenting, and beyond the important collaboration with scientists of multiple disciplines at the Erasmus University, and beyond the legion of his trainees who will forge the future of the specialty, I respect the man and his family. As my wife, Gail and I travelled many times with Patrick, Danielle and their children, Michael, Gregory and Olivia, I learned a lot about the man and his priorities.

Finally, as Editor of JACC: Cardiovascular Interventions, it was my pleasure to support the development of EuroIntervention. Just as the journals aim to provide the best forum for disseminating knowledge and hopefully wisdom in interventional cardiology, the parent organisations, the American College of Cardiology and the European Society of Cardiology, have the capacity to enhance cardiovascular health throughout the world. Patrick Washington Serruys has always been a strong advocate and participant in forging collaborate efforts. It was a thrill for me to see him receive the Lifetime Achievement Award from the ACC as the most productive investigator in our field and equally a pleasure to say a few words in EuroIntervention about him.

From someone who has been branded with a “lifetime achievement award”, my only advice is to accept the “award” but to continue the lifetime and the achievements. And keep on “dreaming!”

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