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**EDITORIAL**

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**Retirement after 50 Years of Teaching and Practice**

Years ago, following my graduation from the medical college in Cairo in June 1957, I intended to specialize in chest medicine when early in my career obtained a resident appointment at prince Abdul illah hospital for chest diseases as it was known at that time. This hospital was largely staffed by physicians with small number of junior surgical staff when they were transferred to serve in other hospital, I was required to help out as a pair of hands in the theatre with Mr. Thomas Kelly. I liked what went on there and decided to switch to a surgical career. The art and practice of thoracic surgery at that time provide an understanding of the difficulties encountered by the surgeons in those days who achieved dramatic success with primitive investigatory methods, limited resources, lack of experienced man power and shortage of equipments.

After spending seven years in UK and upon completion my fellowship in the royal college of surgeons in Edinburgh, I left my post in the ministry of health and joined the teaching staff at the thoracic and cardiovascular surgical department of medical college, university of Baghdad and medical city teaching hospital. One of the greatest satisfactions a teacher can get is the satisfaction of influencing the attitude and thinking of younger generations which we achieved successfully. At that time we were the first in the country, we still are and I hope we will always be ahead.

Later, I have been most fortunate of all to have had the opportunity of being the chairman of the scientific council of thoracic and cardiovascular surgery and then the president of the Iraqi board for medical specializations and the large number of students whom the professors in the board and I have taught and trained, most of them stand out today as efficient surgeons and physicians in the country. Great tribute to my colleagues in the Iraqi board who have made tremendous strides and who have faced a great challenge to bring their work to its present positions, their names are not to be forgotten for generations to come. Their efforts and splendid deeds were always highly appreciated and wish them success and prosperity.

To some people the thought of retirement can make them feel great, hoping they will have a relaxing time ahead, and to others it is ghastly provoking tremors of disgust, ripple of

uncertainty and hoots of discontent, and for me it was the response rather than the initiative itself made me worrying because I could not predict what is going to happen, I do not know what doors will be open or closed by then. But knowing my abilities made me hopeful pushing me to start another chapter in my life to make my retirement as successful as was my career by having enough time and chances to do all those things I dreamed doing but have been put off. Gradually I realized what I have been missing all these years could be accomplished now by restructuring my life style in a way to be compatible with my age, spending more time in reading and writing.

I would like to remind my colleagues the academics in the Iraqi board about their academic duties which should include continuous learning, productive thinking, hard working and professional integrity. Their academic freedom should be allowed and this is referred to the insulation from political interference and sectarian or ethnic discrimination. It remains to be seen when these gains will be accomplished, hopefully this will not be too long to witnessed it, My advice to the new graduates and recently appointed consultants is to understand that their appointment should trigger the start of lifelong learning and continuous professional development.

I would like to inform all students that I will always be there for any advice or supervision, and I would like to see them actively engaged in clinical skill and surgical practice. Their dissertations should be completely amended and rigorously updated so to present an engaging and fruitful study.

This is probably my last article, I have enjoyed my term in the office and believe that my colleagues in the Iraqi board have enjoyed more successes than failures specially with the stresses and strains we all faced and only history will confirm whether that is true. I am grateful to them for moral and actual support. I would like to make particular mention of the staff in the office, they were the backbone of our institution and my job has been made much easier by their wholehearted support.

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**Medical Specialization**

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