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# In Memoriam



## Hilton Pack Terrell, M.D., Ph.D.

The Association of American Physicians and Surgeons mourns the loss of our President-elect, Dr. Hilton Terrell, who died Feb 2, 2009, at age 63, after a brief illness.

Dr. Terrell was a family physician and member of the faculty of the Family Practice Residency at McLeod Regional Medical Center in Florence, S.C. He served two terms on the AAPS Board of Directors, and was a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of American Physicians and Surgeons*. He was also a past editor of the *Journal of Biblical Ethics in Medicine*.

We are honored to have two posthumous articles by Dr. Terrell in this issue, which exemplify his humane approach to the art and science of medicine. They are guideposts for students and physicians, showing a profound understanding of the scientific method—and of its limitations.

Dr. Terrell presents incisive insights into the perils of attempts to codify, objectify, and rigidify medicine. He understood that doctors don't treat disease, but rather patients who suffer from diseases.

And what is a disease? Dr. Terrell wrote: "Our very definition of disease is another messy variable. Is the one-horned Asian rhino a unicorn? Is a horse that has a bony malformation of its face a unicorn? ... Many of our diagnostic categories are Chinese

menus, two from List A, one from list B, and nothing from list C. The DSM is the worst example, and its four revisions attest to this nicely."

His trenchant critique, which could apply to many articles in the current literature: "This thing is a statistical briar patch, and I am not Br'er Rabbit. I go cross-eyed reading it, which is usually a sign of something that is not scientifically worthwhile. Of course, political control, not science, is the real issue here."

On current events (written October 2008): "Just finished Patrick Buchanan's *Churchill, Hitler, and the Unnecessary War* to fill in my information gap between WWI and WWII.... It might have been better not to have known. His final chapter paralleling British imperialism with our aping of it in the last decade was not really necessary. One could see in both cases an aging empire grasping in futility for its possessions.... I have lost a good deal of money in the past few weeks, but it is gut-satisfying to see the lies underlying our financial structure beginning to peep out, and to watch the panic among fascists as their grip loosens."

We have lost a great mind and a dear friend, but treasure the time we spent with him. Requiescat in pace.