

Team effort” is a term that’s easy to bandy about. Sometimes, however, it’s just a pat phrase—one of those inspirational slogans that gets slapped on gooey posters but that, in actual practice, takes a backseat to things like ambition and expedience.

But a team ethic is an integral part of both clinical medicine and scientific investigation. As this issue’s cover feature makes clear, practicing medicine is no longer a solo endeavor; the days of *Marcus Welby, M.D.*, are a thing of the past. Medicine now involves the efforts of doctors from across many disciplines, as well as of numerous nurses, therapists, technologists, and social workers. And running a research lab today is also a team enterprise, with postdoctoral fellows, research associates, and grad students all a vital part of developing new knowledge about how to advance health.

A team approach (sometimes even inspired by athletics, as the feature on page 58 suggests) is especially evident at DMS and DHMC. Here, it is truly lived, not just given lip service. The prima donna who begins every sentence with “I” instead of “we” is a rare commodity here.

In fact, more often than not when we approach a faculty member whose work we’d like to highlight, the response is something along the lines of “Oh, but you *can’t* write just about me—the work is a team effort and you really *must* recognize the contributions of everyone else in my section/lab/program/what-have-you.” Then the project leader proceeds to rattle off the names of faculty colleagues, administrators, residents, postdocs, doctoral candidates, medical students, and even undergraduates, all of whom have made very real contributions to the work.

But sadly, a list of names doesn’t make for very compelling reading. And there’s no way we can say something meaningful about each member of a team in a short piece, and even in a longer one we’d run the risk of confusing readers with a character list rivaling that of a Russian novel.

We know it’s disappointing to our subjects when we don’t mention everyone they ask us to include. But although we recognize the reality of such requests, and are moved by their generosity, our obligation is to write interesting stories about the work,

not to extend public credit to every single individual who was involved in the work.

We do try hard to convey the team element of academic medicine. In fact, in this issue’s “Vital Signs” section alone, the words “team”—and “group” used in the same sense—appear 34 times. And this issue’s “Faculty Focus” profilee (see pages 66 and 67) was especially self-deprecatory, so the author of the piece, Associate Editor Laura Carter, figured out a creative way to weave his protestations into the article. But please keep in mind that even when such protestations don’t end up in print, teamwork underlies almost everything we cover.

Speaking of Laura’s creative way with words, teamwork is absolutely essential to a publications enterprise, too. The bylines you see for Laura and for Matt Wiencke, our highly competent editorial assistant, give only the merest indication of these two staff members’ many contributions to what our office does. They are also inventive photo researchers (Matt dug up the wonderful historical images for the features starting on pages 42 and 58); perceptive editors (Laura works closely with the faculty and student authors of several of our essay sections); dogged fact-checkers; meticulous proofreaders; and conscientious archivists.

And take a look to the right at the list of the many other contributors to the magazine—a few people in other offices within the institution; over a dozen freelance writers, photographers, and illustrators; our design consultant; and the discerning and devoted members of our Editorial Board.

Everyone’s contributions are valuable, but let me mention two key “playmakers.” Roger Smith, an emeritus professor of pharmacology, is a terrific reporter in the trenches. His byline has appeared on stories about research in every single issue in the four years since his retirement. And Heinz Valtin, an emeritus professor of physiology, has been an especially valued member of our Editorial Board for many years. We’ll miss his judicious advice and attention to detail when his term ends this month.

I could wax eloquent about everyone on the “roster,” but I’d better stop there or we’ll be accused of “Do as I say, not as I do” by the next faculty member who says, “Oh, but you *must* mention . . .”

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