

One Man Who Made a Difference

One person can make a difference, and every person must try to help others to help themselves.

For in the final analysis, our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this small planet.

We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children's future. And we are all mortal.

— John F. Kennedy



LeRoy J. Fischbach
1944-2006

These words describe President Kennedy's vision for the Peace Corps, which he established as a mechanism by which a society fortunate enough to have means and resources could reach out to those in need, improve access to health-care and education, and spread hope. They also embody the spirit, dedication, and tenacity that Lee Fischbach demonstrated in his efforts to bring better care to hemodialysis patients across the U.S. and around the world. LeRoy James Fischbach passed away in March 2006 of a heart attack. He was 62 years old.

Throughout his career, Lee had no agenda other than doing the right thing for patients. Lee's persistent call to raise the standard of care directly helped hundreds of thousands of hemodialysis patients around the world enjoy better treatment. His passing leaves a huge void for his family, friends, and colleagues, but also for the many people who never even knew the good that he did for them.

Lee joined Minntech (then known as Renal Systems) in 1973 as its very first employee, and held a number of management and executive positions during his more than 30 years with the company. His vast knowledge of equipment and the industry quickly earned Lee an international reputation as a technical expert in dialysis, blood filtration, and water treatment.

This technical expertise led to Lee's involvement as member and chairman of numerous technical standards committees with AAMI and the International

Organization for Standardization (ISO). In his work with the standards committees, particularly as cochair of AAMI's Renal Disease and Detoxification Committee, Lee was an accomplished consensus builder, making certain that all stakeholders were part of the standards development process and doing all that he could to ensure that patient safety and quality of care were always the priority.

Usually at work by 5 a.m.—when he would send out e-mails every morning to the Minntech management team about the latest news in the dialysis market—he would gladly work all night if necessary to help complete an urgent project. “No” was a word one rarely, if ever, heard from Lee when someone asked for his assistance. Most recently, he was instrumental in developing a new dialyzer reprocessing technical standard for the People's Republic of China Ministry of Health, and he led the technical efforts in support of the expansion of Minntech's activities in Europe and Asia.

This publication is another example of a project Lee couldn't say no to when approached. He was instrumental in suggesting topics, identifying authors, and reviewing each manuscript. Lee was able to see the final page proofs before he passed away, and he commented that he was very happy with the way it turned out.

Lee's passing will be profoundly felt throughout the hemodialysis community. This publication is dedicated to his memory.