

## **Dr. Donald M. Chervenak 2017 De Groote Award Acceptance Speech**

I want to honor two (2) of my “hero’s” today...Dr. Captain Joe Costabile, a true hero and Dr. Christopher Gribbon. Their selfless work in a time of great uncertainty helped preserve this society.

My wife and son travelled a long distance to see me receive this award. My son left disturbed, he thought the award appeared as an afterthought.

Let’s go to basics. Dr De Groote was one of the first to organize physicians in a meaningful way against the on slaught of managed care and corporate control of physicians. The last two (2) years of his life was spent away from his home and family. He indirectly helped millions without personal gain, and then he died.

Winston Churchill wrote; “We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give.”

This concept of helping others first is present in every person in this room; every person in this room deserves this award. Dr. Poole lost a partner with Dr. DeGroote but achieved his own legacy of giving and selflessness which has honored Dr. DeGroote well.

This Society must always honor this concept of selflessness. This concept is much more important than any one of us. We must remember that we are only as strong, state and county if we work together. Despite our dysfunctional family, we demonstrate, on a daily basis despite our differences that we are one.

Let me remind every person here of the Irish proverb “May the wind be always at your back – unless it’s coming from you personally.” Our society does this at times. For the mistakes we make let me remind you of another proverb – “Never stand behind a sneezing cow.” We are in a new time period in medicine

The doctor patient relationship – a sacred rite for thousands of years is breaking down in order for profit and selfish motives of corporations

We all took a variant of the Hippocratic Oath. We owe our lives to the service of humanity and the health of our patients is our first consideration. We must with all our power maintain the honor and traditions of our profession

Vincent Van Gooh wrote: “Man is not on this earth solely for his own happiness, he is here to realize great things for humanity.”

Anne Frank – like Dr. DeGroote died prematurely, but serves as a source of strength for millions. She said “How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.” We can start now, start slowly changing the world. How lovely that everyone great and small, can make a contribution toward introducing justice straight away.

Dr. DeGroote said to his countless students and residents you are only as good as your last surgery. Let’s make this award what it is, our last and greatest dedication to every person in this room.

Donald M. Chervenak, MD, FACOG  
Presented to the MSNJ Board of Trustees Meeting – June 4, 2017  
Fellow, Morris County Medical Society  
Board Member, Medical Society of New Jersey  
2017 DeGroote Award Recipient