

Duke University Medical Center
Durham, North Carolina
27710

DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE

October 30, 1988

Dr. John Romano
Department of Psychiatry
The University of Rochester School of Medicine
300 Crittenden Boulevard
Rochester, New York
14642

Dear John:

John Romano, Paul Beeson and Gene Stead become octogenarians this year. It is a good time for reminiscences. A flood of pleasant memories flow as I think back over the years of your professional life. Soma Weiss was always aware of the importance of the nervous system in well and sick persons. It was not surprising that he decided to add a psychiatrist to his staff of internists. Luck was on his side because there was John Romano what an excellent choice.

I was a doctor skilled in treating diseases which were serious and destructive. I was a product of Grady, Cincinnati General and the Boston City Hospital. At the Brigham I encountered for the first time patients who were not threatened by death, but wanted a doctor to help them solve the problem of interfacing their bodies to their environment. They were ill but not symptomatic from a destructive process. In our small practice I asked many times for your help. You rarely needed mine. You were responsible for changing me from a doctor treating disease to a person caring for a person who might or might not have a recognized disease.

On a less serious note I remember your interaction with Wilhelm, the Director of the Brigham Hospital. Each week he pulled out his files and explained how hard he was working to meet your needs. By good fortune you managed to solve your problems without his help. When you informed Wilhelm that you no longer needed his help, he turned around, extracted papers from his file, destroyed the papers and gave you a big smile of satisfaction. He said, "Well, that solves that problem! "

I remember Al Gogglo arriving at your home a day early for his dinner date. Miriam was cooking liver for the cat. You suggested that one date was as good as another and that he stay for dinner. He took one more sniff of the fumes rising from the liver and said he would like to keep the original date. I remember you and Bob Morrison testing the "righting reflexes" of that same cat.

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I did want you to come to Atlanta. Your refusal emphasized for me the problems of caring for people in a milieu where most of our patients were being destroyed by serious diseases. Duke offered me the opportunity to care for a much wider spectrum of people, most of whom would live.

I have watched your personal and professional growth and have been proud to count you as a colleague and friend. We look forward to a word from you and Miriam--most often at Christmas.

Good wishes for your eightieth birthday!

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