

Jerry and Carol Sherman

Embassy Connections **Canada**

Virtual conferencing

Building bridges with Ambassadors to Canada and their Spouses

Dr. Marvin J. Fritzler, PhD MD

Professor: Cumming School of Medicine

Director: MitogenDx

University of Calgary

Event occurred May 14, 2020



The Power of the “Pencil” Metaphor

I am a tiny pencil in the hand of an Almighty God, through whom he writes love letters to a hurting world, and so are you.” Mother Teresa.

We live in a time of unparalleled knowledge reflected in big data, cloud computing, artificial intelligence, but wisdom is still so desperately needed.

Environment shapes our genetic makeup and these ‘epigenetic’ changes can be passed to our offspring.

In other words, what I do and what I say has an indelible effect on others.

A summary of Dr. Fritzler's presentation follows.

This virtual conference was an opportunity for us to explore and evaluate necessary new communication bridges with dedicated individuals who want to accomplish worthy objectives.

Our objective is to maintain and grow personal relationships. Embassy Connections Canada enjoys an earned reputation of opening doors, making connections.

We truly believe that Embassy Connections is “a ministry like no other”. Our outreach happens with the support of our Embassy Connections partners.

Thank you.

Hon. Jim Abbott PC,
Director, ECC Resources

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The Power of the “Pencil” Metaphor

On February 9, 1999 at a National Prayer Breakfast in Washington DC, the chairperson gave this remarkably brief introduction: *“And now ladies and gentlemen I would like to introduce you to the greatest woman in the world, Mother Teresa.”* After the diminutive Mother Teresa had shuffled to the podium, she paused and replied, *“I am not the greatest woman in the world, but I will tell you who I am. I am a tiny pencil in the hand of an Almighty God, through whom he writes love letters to a hurting world, and so are you.”*

I have often thought of the pencil metaphor and the notion that what I do, what I say, what I think is in fact a letter written not in the five-hundred or so manuscripts I have published, or any award I have received, but a letter I am writing in a much more enduring medium, and that medium is other people's 'hearts'. However, I wonder "how relevant is the pencil metaphor today"? After all, who uses a pencil anymore? Isn't it all text messaging and 'tweeting', *iThis* and *eThat*? One thing is clear to me, that over the past months troubled by the SARS-CoV2 pandemic punctuated by the "Black Lives Matter!", we desperately need 'love letters'. At one glance we are so connected yet on closer inspection so disconnected. We claim to be multinational, pluralistic and socially blended yet our differences remain so stark. Geographic distance is diminished into a "flattened lumpy world" and yet location is so strategic. The rights of the individual and the "power of one" are prevalent yet the emerging paradigm of success is mass collaboration. We live in a time of unparalleled knowledge reflected in big data, cloud computing, artificial intelligence, but wisdom is still so desperately needed.

When I first started medical research in the late '60s, there was revival of an idea dating back over 150 years that our environment could shape our genetics leading to life and generational changes. For decades "epigenetics" as it is called, was dismissed as pseudoscience but it has taken center stage and clearly shows that environment shapes our genetic makeup and that these changes can be passed to our offspring. In other words, what I do and what I say has an indelible effect on others.

I regard the closing chapter of my letter to be the most important. The thing is, I don't know when I am writing the last paragraph. I would like to think that the impact of my letter is not measured in tweets on Twitter, by Facebook hits, scientific publications, research grants, or the number or complexity of patients I have looked after, but it is a clearly articulated love letter written on the hearts of those I live and work with.

Marvin Fritzier PhD MD ©

Dr. Marvin Fritzier PhD MD FRCP(C) is Professor of Medicine in the Cumming School of Medicine at the University of Calgary. He is the Founder and Director of Mitogen Advanced Diagnostics Laboratory. His research focused on the molecular and cell biology of autoimmunity and the induction of autoimmune diseases by environmental exposures. Dr. Fritzier has published more than 480 peer-reviewed manuscripts and his work has been cited more than 24,000 times (H index 74; i10 index 326). He has been

invited to lecture in international symposia focusing on autoantibodies as biomarkers for precision health used to predict, prevent and treat autoimmune diseases. He was appointed to the Government of Alberta's science, technology and innovation policy and strategy board in 2001 and in 2005 was appointed as the Chair of the Alberta Research and Innovation Authority. Among his many awards, he was inducted into the BioAlberta Hall of Fame, was awarded the Alberta Centennial Medal and the ASTech Foundation Award in 2012, was inducted as an Honorary Member into the Mexican Academy of Medicine in 2002, the Order of the University of Calgary in 2014, Master of the American College of Rheumatology in 2013 the American Association of Clinical Chemistry - Carl R Jolliff - Lifetime Achievement Award in 2016, Le Prix Rogers Demers, International Contributions to Rheumatology in 2018, the Canadian Society Clinical Chemists Research Excellence Award in 2018 and the Association of Medical Laboratory Immunologists Neter Award for outstanding contributions to laboratory immunology in 2019.

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Honourable Jim Abbott, P.C.

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