

Dr. Corstiaan Brass, 72, infectious disease specialist was 'a powerful presence'

Lou Michel
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Brilliant, kind and dedicated are among the words colleagues use to describe Dr. Corstiaan “Chris” Brass, an infectious disease specialist known to work late into the night caring for his patients.

The son of parents who immigrated from Holland to Canada in the years after World War II, Dr. Brass moved to the United States to further his studies in infectious diseases and in 1992 began working at the Buffalo Medical Group.

Physicians there knew they could count on him for help whenever they encountered a complex case involving infectious diseases, said Dr. John C. Notaro, the group’s medical director.

“He was a true physician, working tirelessly for our patients, holding office hours during the day and then regularly rounding in the hospital through the evening and into the early hours of the morning,” Notaro said. “He was a great intellect in the field of infectious disease. All of us can recall cases that he elucidated.”

Dr. Brass, 72, of Amherst, died Dec. 20 after a short illness. He had worked for the medical group until his death.

In addition to his specialty, Dr. Brass was described by Notaro as an early innovator in introducing telemedicine to nursing home residents long before it was a common practice.

But it was his devotion to patients and colleagues that brought the strongest tributes on social media and elsewhere as word of his passing spread.

“In short, he was a rare and powerful presence, for us and for our patients, who we will never forget and never stop missing,” Notaro said.

After graduating from medical school at the University of Calgary in Alberta, Dr. Brass advanced his knowledge by pursuing fellowships that eventually brought him to the United States.

With board certifications in infectious diseases and internal medicine, he completed a fellowship in clinical pharmacology at McGill University in Montreal. It was there that he also completed his residency for internal medicine while serving at Montreal General Hospital. He completed a fellowship in infectious diseases at Stanford University in California.

Dr. Brass also served as an associate clinical professor at the University at Buffalo Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. He was a member of the Infection Control Committee at Kenmore Mercy Hospital and the Catholic Health System Infection Control Steering Committee.

He wrote many articles in medical publications. His other areas of professional interests included computerization of medical practice, disease state management and multidisciplinary team approaches to wound care initiatives.

Dr. Brass received numerous honors that included the Robert S. Berkson MD Memorial Award in 2000; a Medical Research Council of Canada grant 1978-1980; and Castle/Connolly Top Doctors recognition from 2006 to 2020.

But there was also another side to Dr. Brass.

He loved to collect models of John Deere tractors and enjoyed learning about airplanes and other facets of the aerospace industry. And he loved listening to music and playing the piano. He also enjoyed spending time with friends and family on the shores of Lake Erie.

He is survived his wife, the former Mary R. Eberz; daughters Margaret Vonzel and Ruth Evans; sons Austin and David; eight grandchildren; and two brothers, William and Jan.

A Mass of Christian Burial is set for 10:30 a.m. Monday in St. Gregory the Great Catholic Church, Amherst.

Lou Michel

reporter

I am a member of The Buffalo News' watchdog team, coauthor of New York Times bestseller, American Terrorist: Timothy McVeigh and The Oklahoma City Bombing. I'm also a proud graduate of Buffalo State College where I met my wife who is my editor in life!