Dominick P. Purpura’s Neuroanatomy Course: A Brief Reminiscence

Howard Dean
Chairman
Democratic National Committee
Washington, DC 20003

The following is an edited excerpt from the commencement speech given at the 2003 Albert Einstein College of Medicine graduation ceremony by then Governor of Vermont Dr. Howard Dean, Einstein Class of 1978. Dr. Dean recalled how he met his future wife in Dr. Purpura’s Neuroanatomy class.

It is always a great danger to invite an alumnus back to give the commencement address, because one of the things I am going to tell is you how incredibly fortunate you are that Dr. Purpura is your Dean, since that means you do not have to take his Neuroanatomy class.

Those who knew Dr. Purpura when he was teaching know exactly what I am talking about. We met, Judi [Howard Dean’s wife] and I, in his class. The reason I got 35 (the passing grade being 34) was because we were doing the New York Times crossword puzzles at the back of the class. We had been doing the puzzles in some of the classes because the classes were boring. Dr. Purpura’s class was never boring. In fact, doing the puzzles was actually self-defense, in that the class was terrifying. So much information was coming so fast that we withdrew, and tried to read the syllabus later. Judi obviously retained things a lot better than I did.

So, Dr. Purpura, I wish you well in your deanship, and please do not return to the neuroanatomy class!

NOTE
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