Obituary for Judith Bell-Krotoski

We workers in this field, and especially all persons who had early detection and hence successful treatment of nerve impairment, owe a lot to pioneers like Judith Bell-Krotoski for the use of Nylon filaments that I consider an essential tool in the early diagnosis of nerve impairment. I have met Judith and fully endorse everything that Linda and Robert have said in the letters about her.

Dr. Dinkar Palande, Pondicherry, Tamil Nadu, India

Despite Judy’s ongoing series of chemotherapy treatments for her cancer, she maintained a keen interest in hearing and reading of developments in the field of P.O.D. particularly along the lines of measuring nerve function impairment with Monofilaments. For example, [not long before her death] Judy wrote:

*The goal for me has always been to use a sensitive, reproducible test to monitor patients for early neuropathy*

and

*Please convey my warm greetings and best wishes for success in testing to all. We know the monofilaments are good, but now need more clinical data for comparison with treatment, and identification of treatment that can really prevent impairment and disability by interrupting the developing neuropathy which in all I have measured and monitored seems highly possible if detected early.*

We were in touch before, during, and after the ILA Congress. She was so pleased to hear of the resurgence of interest in the utility of the Monofilaments for helping to assess nerve function and the requests for batches of loose filaments from different continents – thanks in great part to the LML [Leprosy Mailing List].

I can confidently say that Judy would be simply thrilled to read of Dr. Narasimha Rao’s news update re: the dissemination of the Monofilaments and instruction in their use at the seminars for large numbers of dermatologists – this appears to be a ‘first’ globally in terms of such numbers and of the significance of target audience – dermatologists.

If not for Judy’s dedication and generosity, the Monofilaments would not have been available for distribution at the Congress (and there is still an ample supply for some time to come for those who were not able to receive them at the Congress – those interested can contact me).

One of our last conversations included the question of a grant proposal for a sustainable supply of the Monofilaments to major centres and clinics worldwide.

In Memoriam and Gratitude to Judy

Robert S. Jerskey, LOTR, P.O.D. consultant