

# AMHE NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2017

DECEMBER 18



*New York*

*Baltimore / Washington*

*Chicago*

*Saint Louis*

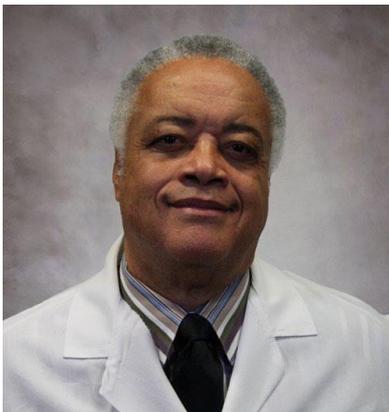
*Montréal*

*New Jersey*

*South Florida*

*Louisiana*

## HAITIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION ABROAD ASSOCIATION MEDICALE HAÏTIENNE À L'ÉTRANGER



Dear AMHE members and Friends,

As 2017 draws to a close, it is my privilege to send the best wishes for a Holiday season to All. Being Physicians,

Nurses or Allied Healthcare workers, we do have in us the " Gift of Giving" to make changes in the life of a less fortunate. It is time to reflect on the under privileged, the sick and the poor around the world. It is time to enjoy with friends and family.

May this Christmas season bring Love, Peace and Hope and may 2018 be a healthier, happier and more prosperous year.

On a sad note the passing of Reynold Ducasse MD has left

a void on an Association he loved so much and for which he devoted his Life. He was instrumental in structuring the AMHE Foundation in his present concept and has contributed financially to stabilize our Organization. He lost his battle to a long disease. Let us keep him In our prayers.

Best wishes.

Maxime J-M Coles MD

### In this number

Message from the Editor, Maxime Coles, MD

La chronique de Rony Jean-Mary, M.D.

Gongolo, Reynald Altema, M.D.

Décès

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Reynold Ducasse MD nous a quitté à la suite d'une longue maladie. Il a perdu cette dernière bataille pour aller rejoindre son Créateur. Il a été cet ami sincère de la AMHE que nous ne sommes pas prêts à oublier. Ce poème de Gangadharan Nair Pulingat traduira ce que les membres de l'Association qui l'ont connu pour son dévouement, ressentiront après son départ. Repose en Paix mon ami et que la terre te soit légère.

Maxime Coles MD

### A Friend's Death.

*Poem by Gangadharan Nair Pulingat..*

An untimely death of a dear friend  
 Never it is possible to forget  
 A life long friendship that expected  
 But death took away the life.

Still memories of the best moments  
 Parted with the departed friend  
 Ever it is an asset for a future life  
 Which the death couldn't take away.

Death, always a winner in the play  
 Death, always finding its way  
 Nature entrusted the duty to it  
 We have to accept the reality in principle.

Gangadharan Nair Pulingat..

Dear members of the AMHE community,

It is with deep sorrow and great consternation that we have learned of the passing of Dr. Reynold Ducasse, on December 12, 2017. Dr. Ducasse, a graduate of the 1965 class of the State Medical School in Haiti (UEH), was a dedicated member of the AMHE, and a strong believer in the potential of the AMHE foundation. Dr. Ducasse contributed his time as well as his money magnanimously to the AMHE Foundation.

On behalf of AMHE leadership and the membership, I present my deepest sympathy to the family members and close friends of Dr. Ducasse.

Sincerely,

J. Roosevelt Clérismé, M.D.  
 President, AMHE



### Remember Reynold Ducasse MD

*By Emmanuel Francois  
 MD, MPH*

This week, on December 12, 2017 at 5:30 am, Dr Reynold Ducasse, one of AMHE most sustaining pillars had expired. With his departure, AMHE had lost one of its most ardent member and supporter. Dr

Reynold Ducasse may not be part of the original quintet that created the Association, but he rides right up there with them.

Son of the Nuclear Physicist and former dean of the Engineering School of the State University of Haiti, Mr Vergnaud Ducasse, Reynold was born in Port Au Prince, Haiti on June 6, 1940. Due to his father's choice, Reynold didn't attend a regular maternal and primary school, but instead was taught at home until 1952, when he was ready to sit at the state examination for the primary school certificate. He passed it with flying colors, and that allowed him to be admitted at the Lycée Firmin where he would stay for his entire secondary years. He completed these years with the Bac Philo in 1959, and entered Med School a few weeks later in that same year.

Like most of us who frequented the medical school in the 60's, besides the body of academic knowledge of Medicine, Reynold acquired progressively a deep appreciation of the political and social milieu in which we were living then. This rude wakening of the realities of life under the Duvalier regime, forged in him the desire to do something about it. That desire never left him and probably was the engine that propelled his actions within AMHE. He graduated MD in 1965 with other classmates who would become also important AMHE leaders, such as Board of Trustees member Remy Obas MD, former Executive Committee Presidents and present AMHE Foundation Directors Jean Talleyrand MD and Serge Bontemps MD, to mention but a few.

After medical school, his superior intellect led him to be accepted at the most coveted residency post in pulmonary medicine at the Port-au-Prince Sanitarium. After his two years of residency training, there, he went to Germany for a year to deepen his knowledge in respiratory diseases. At his return from Europe, he was admitted for an internal Medicine residency training with subspecialty in cardiology in Montreal, Quebec. During his stay in Quebec, he met Mariette that would become his wife in a ceremony held in Queens NY, in the early seventies, with long time friends Jean Talleyrand MD and Alix Haspil MD, duly filling out either personally or through family members, the mandatory positions of Best Man and Maid of Honor for the wedding ceremony.

Shortly thereafter, he emigrated again, this time to Chicago, IL. There he polished his skills in Cardiology at the University of Illinois and was appointed in the Faculty staff starting with the title of Clinical Instructor at the Abraham Lincoln School of Medicine.

At the end of the seventies and early eighties, Dr Ducasse became earnestly involved in the affairs of AMHE. From simple member, he rose up in ranks in the local chapter, to become soon thereafter member of the chapter's Executive Committee. As President of the AMHE Chicago chapter, he organized in 1989 the very successful AMHE Annual Convention from August 2<sup>nd</sup> to sixth, in Lincolnshire, IL. Due to the success of that convention, he was elected unopposed to the position of national treasurer within the Central Executive Committee. In July

1994, he was the keynote speaker at the convention held in St Louis, MO. He was introduced then with his newly-minted academic title of Clinical Assistant Professor of Medical Cardiology at the Abraham Lincoln School of Medicine of the University of Illinois. It was a mouthful. The assistance could not refrain itself from bursting out a collective chuckle and received Reynold with such a vibrant round of applause that everyone knew that Dr Ducasse had bought the audience, lock, stock, and barrel. Whatever he would say in the few minutes after, would be received as golden droppings coming off the mouth of a deeply thinking philosopher. Fortunately, Dr Ducasse was at the right altitude. The audience was not short-changed. and received that night, one of the most masterly-crafted keynote speech in the annals of AMHE.

Throughout his dealings within AMHE, his excellent work caught everyone's attention and when the Association's Foundation Board of Directors needed to fill a vacancy, he was offered, and he accepted to be the secretary of the Board. This is where Reynold would demonstrate his true skill in leadership. He reorganized the charitable activities within AMHE, by melting together scattered organizations created in St Louis, MO, New York, NY, and elsewhere to carry out goodwill works toward Haiti, while since its inception AMHE had a Foundation as its charitable arm. From that effort, the official AMHE Medical Relief Foundation was rechristened to become the AMHE Foundation and to be the only and official umbrella under which, all charitable activities will be carried out.

In all his dealings with the organizations, Reynold was never one to seek personal gain and to show that selfishness that had crept within our ranks and had become so rampant, that we loathe to see it in exhibit by certain members nowadays. He could have abused the Foundation. He could have made expensive junket trips to be paid by the Foundation. He never did it. He was never a taker but always a giver. When his wife died in 1994 shortly after that keynote speech in St Louis MO, he immortalized her name by creating the Mariette Ducasse Memorial Fund to promote medical education in Haiti and housed it within the AMHE Foundation in 1996.

For all his selfless and magnanimous behavior within AMHE, I place him on the same pedestal as the original quintet that created AMHE. As a survivor of that

quintet, I am sure that the departed ones would have agreed with me and that I would secure their vote if they could cast it.

Reynold, we miss you dearly. We offer that memorial to your life, so the upcoming Haitian physicians can take your life as a shining example of what theirs can be. We ask that from wherever you may be above us, you continue to keep a watchful eye on the tiny progress of that association within which you had devoted so much of your time and talent. We wish that you continue to guide us, so we can navigate safely among these social and psychological reefs that are always there to get us and to threaten our very existence. And may God receive your soul safely in His kingdom.

We present our sincere condolences to Reynold's brothers Daniel and Russel, and to the rest of the family. A small private religious ceremony will be arranged by the family today, December 18<sup>th</sup>, before

the cremation of the body. AMHE, through its Chicago branch, will have a memorial ceremony to celebrate Dr Reynold Ducasse's life and his achievements. Place, date and time will be communicated when known.

Respectfully submitted

Emmanuel Francois MD, MPH



A Christian Lauriston MD,

Ta mère a quitté cette terre sur l'appel de son Createur. Il n'est jamais facile de laisser aller un être qui nous est cher, surtout si c'est celle qui vous a donné le jour. C'est certainement une séparation temporaire car tu la rencontreras dans l'au-delà, mon cher Christian.

Ceux qui nous ont aimé, disent nos vieux, nous accompagnent tout au long de notre vie. Merancine Frederic, ta mère, n'est pas partie ce 30 Novembre 2017, elle s'est simplement retirée pour rester tes cotes.

Je partage ta douleur et me fais le Porte-Parole de la AMHE pour te transmettre de sincères condoléances à toi, à Marlene et à la famille éprouvée.

Que la Terre lui soit légère.

Maxime Coles MD

Chers collègues,

C'est avec tristesse que nous vous annonçons la nouvelle du décès de la mère de notre confrère, Dr Christian Lauriston survenu le 30 novembre 2017 à Port-au-Prince.

Les funérailles de Mme Merancine Lauriston seront chantées à la cathédrale St-Pierre de Pétiion-Ville le 16 décembre 2017.

L'AMHE de Montréal exprime ses condoléances au Dr Lauriston, à son épouse et à la famille éprouvée par cette perte.

Schiller Castor, MD, Président de l'AMHE de Montréal



## MEILLEURS VOEUX AUX ENFANTS!

La prochaine fois que tu nous liras dans le journal, Tonton Noel aura déjà fait son apparition. Les plus chanceux se reveilleront les mains chargées de presents de toutes sortes et seront gaves de choses dont ils n'auront que faire. D'autres cependant, grands et petits, devront encore attendre qu'il revienne une autre fois, l'année prochaine, pour combler leurs desiderata et répondre a leurs demandes. Alors que les uns ont pu trouver leurs cadeaux en se reveillant sous le beau sapin allumé, ou pres de la cheminee, les autres auront cependant attendu toute la nuit et auront meme traqué le père Noel a travers les rues sans jamais le rencontrer. A l'aube, Ils seront finalement rentres bredouille a la maison, comblés de desespoir, de deception et de rêves brisés. Les plus grands qui attendaient depuis des lunes et qui ont vu les années se succeder sans rien recevoir sous leurs portes, avaient fini par comprendre que le monde n'est point juste, et que la fortune ne sourit pas a tous a la fois sinon que jamais. Pour les plus petits cependant, le reveil sera plutôt brutal. Ils auront bien du mal a comprendre que le père Noel ait sauté par dessus leur maison et discrimine contre eux. Surtout quand dans les prieres et les lithurgies, le petit jesus dans la creche aurait du être synonyme de justice, de bonte et de generosite.

Leurs yeux, tout accrochés aux beaux jouets de leurs petits amis, traduiront l'amertume et l'angoisse qui les accablent en ce matin de Noel.

Ce n'est point de leur faute s'ils sont decus. Car pour eux, La jouissance du bonheur devrait supposer des chances égales a tous, et constituer une aspiration legitime de tout un chacun.

Lorsqu'ils se reveilleront le surlendemain ou dans les jours d'apres, ils finiront par se resigner. Car, Ils oublient vite le mal qu'on leur fait. Ils ont un grand cœur. Ils charrient beaucoup d'amour en eux et ils pardonnent facilement. Ils sont l'espoir de l'humanité pour un monde meilleur. Et si le monde de demain doit faire un pas dans le bon sens, c'est avec eux qu'il le fera. Donnons-leur donc l'instruction dont ils ont besoin et quand ils deviendront grands, nous dit la bible, ils ne s'en detourneront guere.

Comblons-les de notre affection et rendons leur cœur heureux a Noel! C'est la plus belle des fetes pour les enfants d'ici et d'ailleurs. Et lorsque demain ils perdront la naivete de la fete, tout au moins ils pourront encore en garder l'innocence.

Bonne fete a tous !!!!!

RONY JEAN-MARY, M.D.

*Gongolo is our version of the Grinch, a character that will be mentioned quite a bit this time of the year. Gongolo in his own way personifies greed and avarice. Christmas is the time of the year where redemption tends to occur.*



# Gongolo

(Part 2)

Reynald Altema, MD

*Darling,*

*I awoke this morning with a pang across my chest as I realize it has been years since you and I have seen each other. I have myself only to blame. It was not supposed to be this way. When I first laid eyes on you, you were like a ray of sunshine that crossed my universe. Somehow I let it dissipate for selfish reasons that I now regret so much. I beg for your forgiveness, the type that only a daughter can extend to a forlorn and possibly dying father. Yes my health is no longer as good as it once was and I would hate to think that I could close my eyes and not see you before and just as importantly, I am dying to play the role of grandpa.*

*I don't remember the last time I said to you that I love you. Let me say it now with all the force my vocal cords can muster to produce. No matter what, you will be my daughter and I will be the only father you will ever know. I hope this counts for something. I miss seeing you and I miss hearing your voice.*

*With all my love,*

*Dad.*

To his son, he wrote the following:

*As I approach the sunset of my existence, I have been able to gauge events with a better understanding and I have reorganized my priorities in life.*

*I am the first to recognize I was not the best father I could and should have been. For this I apologize. I was reminiscing about the days when you were a little boy and I used to take you kite flying and we both had a good time. How I allowed the situation to deteriorate to the point we live like strangers is not one else's fault but my own.*

*Not too long ago I came close to not making it as I had a close broach with death. I hope I can see you again before I die. I sincerely hope if you have any child I would have a chance to kiss his/her forehead the way I feel like doing to you now.*

*Despite it all, you shall remain my son and I your father. This type of lifelong bond is indelible. I want you to know that I love you my son and I miss talking to you.*

*With all my heart,*

*Dad.*

Marcel asked Gina to hand deliver them. The role of peacemaker appealed to her. She also wanted to latch on his offspring, as she was not lucky to have had any. She made a special trip with Albert who had volunteered to drive whenever needed.

"I made this trip especially to deliver these two letters to you," Gina said with her hands shaking. Germaine hesitated and Gina pursued, "I want you to know he is someone I care a lot about and he wants to repair his relationship with you and your brother. Give him a chance, you may not regret it," Gina pursued in as *sotto voce* as she possibly could with a gentle touch of Germaine's hand.

Germaine was very perplexed, trying to gauge the situation, not willing to embarrass Gina and not yet willing to go down the path of rekindling a bond with an absent father, a reality she had learned to accommodate her life with, however painful that was. Finally, "Thank you kindly but I am not sure I want to go there," she replied and her hands were trembling as she accepted the letters and inserted them in her purse

"I miss my own dad so much, you have no idea," Gina murmured as she departed.

Germaine's pride prevented her from opening the letter in front of essentially a stranger, though Gina seemed to be a nice person, always being congratulated by the bishop for the excellent work she was doing at the school. That more than anything else swayed her to accept the letters. She kept them in her purse and her instinct forced her to relegate them to the far recess of her memory and priorities.

A few days later at mass, the bishop preached about the prodigal son who returned home and by extension the need for reconciliation among estranged family members. Germaine took it as a personal advice, if not an omen and decided to take a look at the letter later. She kept wondering why on earth her dad would make that step and also speculating about the nature of his relationship with Gina. Once she reached home and tired of the yin and the yen of the internal debate, she opened the letter, her heart galloping, her hands shaking uncontrollably. It didn't take long for her eyes to become misty as she read the first sentence. It didn't take long for tears to well them up and not long at all before sobbing at the lecture of the very words she had been longing for as a child growing up, as a teen who missed her mom and needed a father to lean on and even as a grown woman whose three year old daughter kept asking about grandpa. Her husband, a tall and lean fellow, ebony-colored, got a hold of and read the letter and "At least he recognizes his flaw and wants to make amends. You ought to give him a chance," while rubbing her back as she sat at the kitchen table of their modest but plants filled house. Her husband hand delivered her brother's letter that same evening. "As one man to another, look at it with an open mind and give your dad a chance. I did the same with my own years ago and it was worth it," he counseled Jr. on his way out. Jr. did read the letter and kept fighting tears, not willing to come to terms that indeed he also loved his father despite it all. His ego got in the way and it took him the whole night tossing and turning in bed before deciding that in lieu of a reply, he needed to go and discuss the matter with his sister. He was still single. He was a successful engineer and had a construction firm. He realized he and his dad needed each other more than either had acknowledged in the past.

"What is going on? Is he dying? Is he truly sorry? What do you think, sis?" Jr. with his arms akimbo and a perplexed mien; he usually depended on his sister's read of a person. He wanted to make sure they were on the same wavelength.

"He sounds sincere. This is so painful but yet we can't remain enemies for life. This is not healthy." That sealed Jr's decision. He wouldn't fight Germaine's.

"What do we do next?"

"He sounds sick. It would be best to go to visit him but I need a few more days to let the idea sink in." Germaine's shrewdness could always be counted on, thought Jr.

Marcel Jr. and Germaine did take the trek to the father's home the following Saturday morning, on Christmas eve. It was raining on the way and like magic, it stopped when they reached his door. The sun came out, auguring a pleasant outcome.

“This is the happiest day of my life,” an elated Marcel stated. He embraced both. They all shed tears of joy and turning toward Raynette, “Please go get Gina.”

“Let me introduce my fiancée, Gina,” with a noticeable glow on the face rivaling the sun’s brightness. Marcel gently kissed Gina and she in turn extended her hand to Marcel Jr.

Bowing, “Let me kiss your hand,” Jr. announced, thawing any ice and making everyone at ease. Not to be outdone, Germaine extended both arms, “Welcome into the family” and both embraced.

Marcel felt in heaven, “Gina saved my life twice. She was with me when I fell sick and helped to nurse me. She made this meeting possible and that feels like a piece of gold,” while looking at Gina with the tenderest gaze.

“You guys look so much alike, it is just amazing. I wish I had a child that looks like me. You are so blessed!” These words felt like music to the listeners’ ears.

Marcel was beside himself. The first and most gratifying development was his encounter with Yvette, his granddaughter. She was a handful to manage. Barely three years of age, “Where have you been hiding grandpa?” or “Why did it take so long for us to meet?” or even better, “Will you be like all grandpas and spoil me?”

Yvette, cheeked like grandpa, same body shape of mom, same tint of dad, was as happy to meet grandpa as he was. They gravitated toward each other. In Yvette, Marcel found the pleasure of giving, and in return, he received unconditional puppy love, the best warmer of a heart’s cockles.

Marcel made peace with his neighbors and especially the school kids. He had his hernia removed. His yard was the place to be for his neighbors to come and listen to football games being broadcast live.

He mended his relationship with his children. With Germaine, he found a soul full of pent-up love, while with Jr. it was the reverse, a dad expressing his long repressed feelings to a son who never had any inkling of his value to his father. It was therapeutic to all and in the best outcome possible, they consummated closure with a checkered past.

Marcel’s circle now included Yvens, his son-in-law with whom he clicked from the first meeting. The social event of the year was Marcel’s wedding on his birthday. No less than the local bishop officiated the ceremony; conciliatory, Marcel agreed with the expenses. No less than Jr., the dandy, helped him pick an outfit and Germaine’s seamstress sewed Gina’s dress. Marcel’s house was elegantly decorated with flower arrangements thanks to Germaine’s flair and touch; she also doubled as maid of honor. Gina’s cousin was the best man and Yvette was the flower girl. Gina insisted on having Jr. walk her down the aisle as her son in lieu of her departed father. Symbolic acts foreboding positive family dynamics and no one benefited from this well of goodwill more than Marcel.

Marcel did weep during the wedding ceremony. That sight was stunning to Jr. and Germaine who had never seen it before but quizzical to Yvette who pulled her mom’s dress while fidgeting, “Why is grandpa crying?” a spontaneous, somewhat loud, innocent query that adults responded to by chuckling.

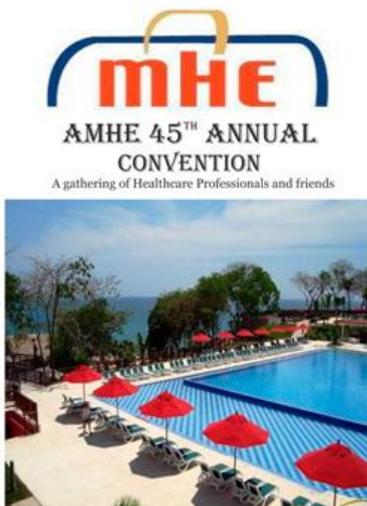
Marcel’s new quotidian regimen still started with his elaborate eating, his gardening but his afternoons were filled with tutoring. He either went to Gina’s school or students came to his house in an alternating pattern with his days of treating them as nemesis, part of a forgiven and forgotten past. Once a week, he had a class for adults, either teaching or improving reading and writing capacity. He was able to transfer his years of knowledge in a seamless way, gaining unexpected personal satisfaction.

Barring this daily struggle, life with Marcel was a bundle of joy for Gina who had plenty of leeway on financial matters. She resigned herself to the fact that better to have a happy husband, dieting be damned, than a moody companion.

Gina bonded with Jr. and Germaine; she related to them as a surrogate mom and it was a mutual love fest. Yvette started calling her grandma. De jure and de facto, Gina became Marcel’s alter ego and irreplaceable.

Family gathering entailed activities with the clan, be it a picnic in the yard, daylong trip to a beach resort, courtesy of Marcel, visits to town on Sundays for dinner with Germaine. Life had taken the ho-hum of the average family living in harmony.

# Upcoming Events



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THEME: MEDICINE OF TODAY AND TOMORROW

ORGANIZED BY  
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AND THE  
AMHE MONTREAL CHAPTER

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE  
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(718) 245-1015 OR VISIT US  
ONLINE: AMHE.ORG

[www.amheflorida.org](http://www.amheflorida.org)

We also thank Dr Valme for bringing the Dialysis machines to HUEH free of charge.

