Will Solimene Awards for Excellence in Medical Communication

The New England Chapter established these annual writing awards in 1990 and named them to honor the memory of a member who placed great value on AMWA as a professional organization and who believed that biomedical and health communicators must strive continually to improve their writing, whether in print or in audiovisual media, for lay audiences or for professionals.

Will Solimene joined AMWA in 1978 and was soon appointed to the New England Chapter’s Executive Council. Only two years later he was elected chapter president and served as our delegate to the AMWA Board of Directors. One of the chapter’s most devoted members, he gave generously of his time and talent to virtually every president who succeeded him and to any member who sought his counsel, as many did. Over the years, with unflagging enthusiasm and unfailing good humor, he planned some of the chapter’s most interesting programs.

With a degree in public relations and, later, a master’s in science journalism, he served as public relations director for various hospitals in the Boston area before becoming a freelance communications consultant in 1986. For several years he wrote a regular health column for suburban newspapers.

He was an accredited member of the Public Relations Society of America, a president of the Publicity Club of Boston, and an officer or board member of many community and health-related associations.

Will died of brain cancer in 1989 at the age of 59.

We remember him with affection and respect, and we honor him as a role model.

Neil Duane Awards for Distinction in Medical Communication

The Award for Distinction was renamed in 2004 to honor the memory of Neil Duane, who died that year of complications of polycystic kidney disease. He was 63.

Neil joined AMWA in 1976, when the New England Chapter was chartered, and became one of a handful of members who guided the chapter through its formative years. He was our first program director, serving for two years, and was president in 1978-79.

In 1990, he volunteered to develop and direct a writing competition, which would honor the late Will Solimene. Neil ran this program for years and brought wit, charm, and flair to the awards presentation ceremonies in his role as Master of Ceremonies.

An unusually versatile writer, Neil held a bachelor’s in marketing communication and a master’s in science communication.

In 1983 he founded Boston Documentation Design, a technical documentation consulting firm. Later, he also founded AccessBooks, a nonprofit corporation that converted printed texts into self-voicing electronic books for blind schoolchildren. Earlier he had been a technical writing manager with Hewlett Packard’s Medical Products Group.

In a longtime association with Northeastern University, he was an academic coordinator for professional development programs, and he taught or guided many courses.

Neil always opened the awards presentation ceremonies by noting their purpose: “to honor our colleagues for their pursuit of excellence in medical communication and to honor the memory of our friend, Will Solimene.” Now, we honor another lost friend, whose own lifelong pursuit of excellence was unmatched.
6:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Social Hour
Display of Winning Entries

7:00 - 8:15 p.m.
Dinner

8:15 - 8:30 p.m.
Opening Remarks
Introduction of New Officers
Debbie von Rechenberg
President 2009-10
Welcome
Laurie MacDougall
President 2010-11

8:30 - 9:45 p.m.
Presentation of Awards
Jill Shuman
Master of Ceremonies

9:45 p.m.
Adjournment
Laurie MacDougall

Neil’s Good Sport Award
Presenter: Judy Linn

Honors Award
Presenter: Siobhan Gallagher
Harris A. Berman
“From Communist to Capitalist to Socialist — All in One Professional Career.”

Will Solimene Award for Excellence
Introduction: Jill Shuman
Presenters: Francesca Coltrera & Andrea Gwosdow
Patricia Carroll: Heart Failure, Mosby’s Nursing Consult, 2008
Thea Chalow: Living with Diabetes: Making Lifestyle Changes to Last a Lifetime, Health Dialog Services Corporation, 2007
Janet M. Cromer: Professor Cromer Learns to Read: A Couple’s New Life After Brain Surgery, Author House, 2010
Jennifer Durgin: “Sound & Silence,” Dartmouth Medicine, Fall 2008
Jonathan A. Edlow: The Deadly Dinner Party and Other Medical Detective Stories, Yale University Press, 2009
Amos Esty: “The Supply Side of Medicine,” Dartmouth Medicine, Spring 2009

Nancy Knoblock Hunton: Putting a Smile on Your Child’s Face, Foundation for Faces of Children, 2008
Christine McMorrow: Medical Coverage and Reimbursement in Kidney Transplant, Bristol-Myers Squibb & Custom Learning Design, 2009
Sherry Reisner: Growing Older, Staying Well, Health Dialog Services Corporation, 2009
Constanza Villalba: Protecting Your Bones: Preventing Another Fracture, Health Dialog Services Corporation, 2009
Linda Fossati Wood & MaryAnn Foote: Targeted Regulatory Writing Techniques, Birkhäuser, 2009

Judy Linn Membership Award
Presenter: David Olle
Deborah Elbaum
Hibo Mohamed

Neil Duane Award for Distinction
Presenter: Jill Shuman