

DR. STRASSER

Congratulations
ON YOUR
Retirement

We've loved having you as our
doctor and have gathered together
a few memories of our time
together.

Love from your APPA family

The first polio patient I remember seeing occurred in one of my community hospital rotations as a resident in PM&R at Northwestern University in Chicago, Ill. probably in the academic year of 1986-87. As I recall, this polio survivor was a strong willed and frustrated middle aged black woman who was not satisfied with her KAFO. Fatigue, poor – mobility, and pain were her primary complaints, and she didn't feel listened to. The local rehabilitation doctor, Dr. Subash Shah, listened to her and worked with the orthotists to make new braces. It wasn't easy as she was significantly impaired and walking was deemed as the only mobility alternative. As a medical trainee I was impressed by Dr. Shah's patient- centered and practical approach. Even at that time in my development, I saw how a conscientious rehabilitation professional who listened to the concerns and stories of polio survivors could impact their lives.

Later in my residency I had the opportunity to see polio survivors at Northwestern University and at the University of Chicago. As luck would have it, I just happened to meet two of the neurologists most involved in the study of PPS at that time – Bert Jubelt and Nail Cashman.

Atlanta / Emory

I came to Atlanta and Emory University in July 1990. For the next 6 years or so, I would see an occasional polio patient while Dr. Brigitta Jann ran the Emory Post Polio Clinic. Around 1997, I became the physician with the Emory Post Polio Clinic and have never looked back!

Of the current active members of APPA, it's hard to say who was the first one I saw. For some reason (who knows why??) I do remember meeting this strong willed woman who was very outspoken about her shoes. Her pumps would not be considered the optimal footwear for long braces. Quickly I learned that she would hear nothing of shoes which looked "orthopedic". Matter of fact, she had to go to Chicago to get her custom shoes and didn't want any further discussion on the topic! And she delivered all of the information and much more in rapid fire. Quickly you learned the story of a girl who boarded a city bus alone in predominantly black neighborhood to come to the 'white' side of Atlanta to see rehab physicians and therapists at Emory. This experience opened her eyes to other opportunities. She credits these interactions with spurring her on to college, more than one advanced degrees, and many years working in the rough and tumble world of corporate America, and then active community work. Of course, I am speaking of Shirley Duhart.

Polio survivors and professional colleagues sometimes wonder about my affection for individuals who contracted polio. Not only are they strong willed, they can also be hard headed and demanding. What I have learned from so many of my patients – polio and otherwise – is that they define the condition, the condition doesn't define them. So I find it gratifying to bring the practical approach of rehabilitation to these otherwise forgotten individuals. Successful polio survivors are highly skilled at work arounds and we work together on things like mobility, fatigue, pain, depression and so on.

Polio survivors are bit like orphans. Many otherwise skilled health professionals have no clue what to do for them. I offer a practical, rehabilitation approach to their concerns and get tremendous satisfaction when we are able to chart a way to what is important to them.

Dale Strasser

Dr. Shirley Ann Duhart-Green



"I wouldn't be alive today
if not for Emory's care
and support.

My gift is a way to help
someone else the way
Emory has helped me."

SHIRLEY DUHART
POLIO PATIENT AND
MEMBER, BOARD OF ADVISORS,
REHABILITATION MEDICINE

Dr. Dale Strasser

You have made

a

positive

difference in

so many lives ...

I pray you will continue to support the Atlanta
Post-Polio Association.

Many blessings to you and your lovely family.

Respectfully,

Dr. Shirley Ann Duhart-Green

Dr. Shirley Ann Duhart-Green

3840 Pebble Beach Dr.

College Park, Ga 30349

July 1, 2021

Dear Dr. Dale Strasser,

Congratulations on your retirement. I am happy for you and your family. However, I am selfishly sad for myself. During the 70 years I have been receiving professional medical care for the Polio and other illness, you have by far been the most capable, caring, encouraging physician. You have been my doctor over 25 years. I will forever be grateful for the support you provided me doing my fight for my long term medical benefits from my employer.

I pray you will continue to support the Atlanta Post-Polio Association.

Many blessings to you and your lovely family.

Respectfully,

Dr. Shirley Ann Duhart-Green

Dr. Strasser,

Thank you so much for the difference you make in the lives of your patients! Your kindness, sincere caring, and concern make everything better and are a great encouragement.

Thank you so very much for taking care of me and being so skilled at what you do. Every day of my life will be better because of you.

Thanks,
Charlotte Terry





Dear Dr. Strasser,

When I was informed of your forthcoming retirement it was a bittersweet moment for me, even though I must admit that you are most deserving of planning to enjoy this phase of your life.

Prior to becoming your patient I had heard some of the APPA members sharing their heartfelt experiences of having you as their polio specialist physician and were eager to recommend to any other members in need of medical care, to consider you as their medical provider.

It was during and following your presentation on the history of polio and its effects at the Shepherd Center that I observed your sincerity, concern, and humanity in relation to those of us who are polio survivors. The thoroughness of the information, the manner in which you explained the details, and readily answered questions from the members exemplified to me your character, quiet spirit, and commitment to your patients.

Dr. Strasser, since becoming your patient, I've been most pleased and have benefited greatly from your medical expertise. I have admired your approach when interacting with me, including your attentiveness of being in the moment rather than appearing to be preoccupied with the previous patient or the patient following my appointment. You have always provided time to listen to my concerns and questions, of which you answered in a professional manner and then would proceed to inquire of me what or how you could help facilitate in maintaining my physical health. Thank you for those many years of health therapy.

And now Dr. Strasser, at this time I would like to extend my warmest congratulations as you prepare to retire. May your years be filled with much happiness, rest, and time to enjoy all that life has to offer. You will be missed, irreplaceable, and yet always remembered.

Your most appreciative patient,

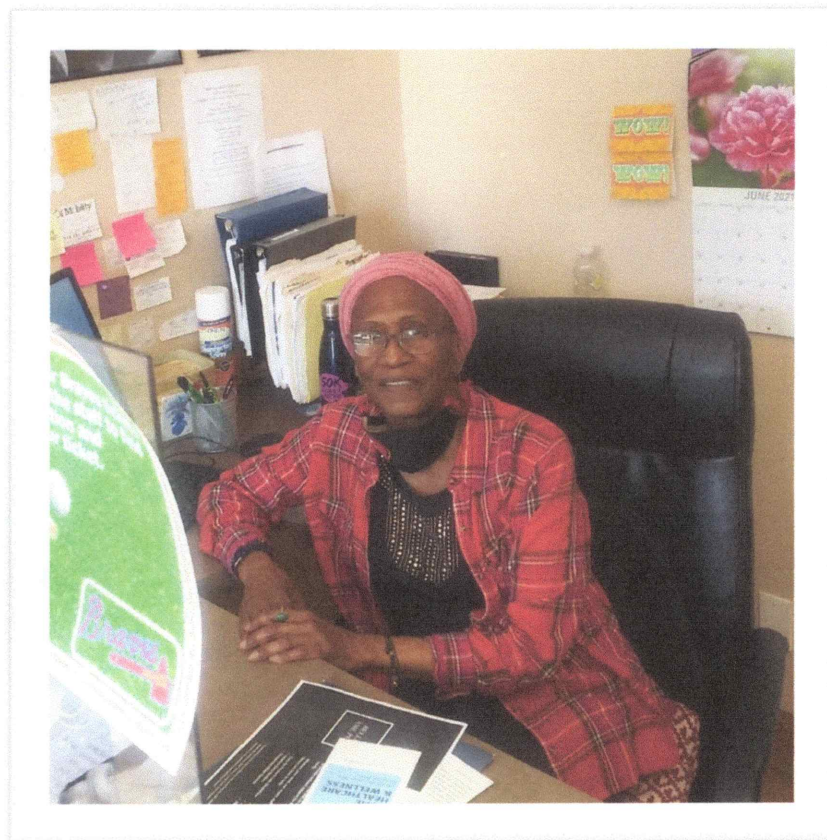
Gloria J. Mims

Best Wishes on your retirement Dr. Dale Strasser!

You deserve as much thoughtful care, attention, and, of course, rest as you have always advocated for your patients. I appreciate your encouragement to reconnect with APPA members. They have been just as instrumental to my overall good health and well-being as any prescription you may have written.

Thank you for the lives you have touched, and all that you do.

Best Regards,
Bosede' Yasin
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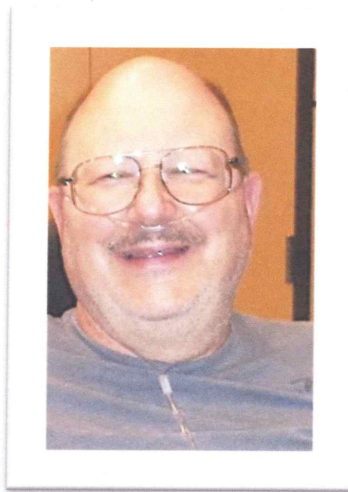
Belinda Whittaker

I had heard about postpolio syndrome years ago, but I just knew that would never happen to me. Imagine my surprise when I broke my left leg and had surgery. At physical therapy, a lady asked me who my polio doctor was and recommended Dr. Strasser. I called and left a message for him if he thought I should come to see him. Surprise again when Dr. Strasser himself called and said I should see him. It was one of the best days of my life. I had someone on my side and he understood me. Each time in his office, I never feel rushed or unimportant. I never caught him looking at his watch or hurrying to get done. He was just there for me. Dr. Strasser's retirement is bittersweet, but that's what happens when you really care for someone.

Thanks for all you have done.

Belinda Whittaker





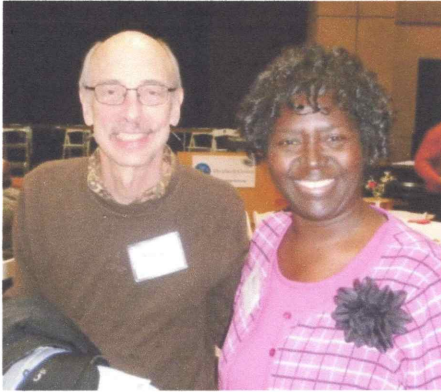
I was incredibly grateful to hear from APPA that Dr Strasser was going to be honored for his many years of service to our community, what I was distressed to learn was that he was retiring. I immediately acted & communicated with my VA healthcare providers, and set up an appointment for as soon as was possible. Perhaps like some of you, my VA providers rely heavily on Dr Strasser's expertise, what he says goes. And what he says about my use of Gabapentin is critical for my pain management – I take a 'butt-load' of it ,4800 mg/day, and without his recommendation my VA docs, nurses, and pharmacy would knock it waaaaay back. For me, the quantity is key, knock it in half and you may as well stop it. And unlike you all, I didn't have the decades of stamina in dealing with pain and weakness and limitations. I was probably in decline for years before my critical moment in 2006, but my injury in mile 17 in the Marine Corps Marathon was my first obvious indication that something was amiss. I've been blessed to come across host of health providers since 2006. I was able to recover from my injury but my ability to run ended in 2007. Then in Jan 2008 I couldn't walk down a hill without a cane or I'd fall on my face, and a month later couldn't walk uphill without a cane to help. All this time I'd been under incredible stress, the administration of my school wanted me gone, but the year before I'd been chosen teacher of the year for the school so my denial of contract had to wait. Be that as it may, Spring 2008 was filled with appointments trying to get a diagnosis for what was happening, most of which were in Gainesville, 65 miles away. I have to give about a dozen vials of blood for testing, always taken in Gainesville, with no clear result. My neurologist ran all the tests, thought he detected the indications for PPS but wasn't positive. Until this moment I had feared having PPS more than anything, but when the diagnosis was not given my fear became NOT having it, because the not number of tests and visits to doctors would've grown in number and cost exponentially. I came across Dr Strasser's name and was able to arrange an appointment for a visit and he rescued me, he could see the classic signs of PPS immediately. His support has been critical for my success ever since. He is a great guy, a mainstay for our community. He will be missed. He's also earned a rest and chance to spend more time with his family.

Thank you all for honoring Dale on Saturday. He has been the best doctor I've ever had, and I'm sure many of you could say the same.

Ivy Stiles

Rabun Gap, GA. [In beautiful Wolfork Valley & the headwaters of the Little Tennessee.]

Retirement Tribute to Dr. Strasser



At APPA Website Launching

Dear Dr. Strasser,

We first met when you came to speak at our APPA meeting, January 2009. I asked if you would be my doctor, you agreed... and the rest is history.

During each check up, you would observe my gait as I walked, determine the strength in my limbs, and give needed advice.

Each check up was more like a visit with a friend. You had this uncanny way of making me feel important, like I was the only one that mattered, (I'm sure all your patients felt the same way). Through the years you've recommended physical therapy and written prescriptions for orthotics that greatly aided my walking and stability.

With every visit you gained my trust. So at the end of 2013 when you suggested that I retire, I was a little baffled. "But Dr. Strasser, I want to wait until I finish another year" I pleaded. And I'll never forget your response, "I know you love your students, but if you want to enjoy your retirement, you must leave the classroom now while you still have some strength and mobility." Once again you were right.

By March of 2014, I said goodbye to my class, parents, and colleagues. Sure, we were all sad, but it has proven to be one of the best decisions I've ever made. But, then began the arduous task of applying for disability and being approved. Next, there was the endless paperwork each year, proving that I was still unable to work. Thank you for faithfully hanging in there with me and filling out all the necessary medical forms. I am truly enjoying my retirement.

Maya Angelou once said, "I've learned that people will forget what you said, they will forget what you did, but they will never forget how you made them feel." Dr. Strasser, you have been an excellent doctor. Your kindness has inspired me to be a better person and my life has been enriched because of you!

You encouraged me to retire; now I'm happy you get to go and do likewise. I pray that you will enjoy all the new adventures that await you!

Sincerely,

Patricia Harris

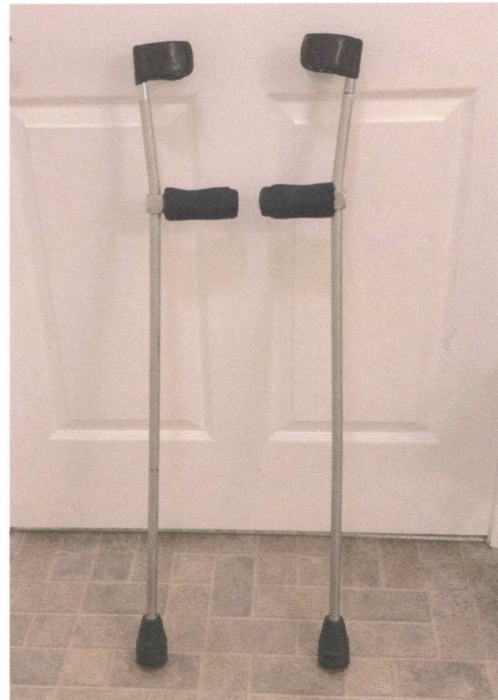
I first met Dr. Strasser in 2009 at the International Polio Conference held in Warm Springs. I was sitting at a round table with some APPA members whom I had just met. I was very impressed that Dr. Strasser recognized some of the APPA members and came over to the table to join us. I was pleased when I learned that he was accepting new patients and a short time later I had my first visit with him and have been seeing him every year since then.

Dr. Strasser, you have kept me on the “straight and narrow” with my post-polio. With each visit, your gentle and patient suggestions allowed me to move at my own pace with decisions related to my polio. When it became evident that I could no longer work due to increasing weakness, your documentation regarding my physical ability made my disability hearing go smoothly and quickly, and for that I will be forever grateful.

You always ended my appointments by looking at and examining my crutches in amazement, and most years you had a colleague come in to also look at my crutches. As a reminder, my dad made my crutches when I was 7 years old. As I grew, my dad would add length to the end of the crutches. I must have thousands of miles on those crutches since I have been using them for 62 years. At the end of my appointments with you, you would take a picture of my crutches. Even though you must have at least 10 pictures of them, I have another one for you.

Although I will miss seeing you at my annual appointment, I wish you the best in retirement. Enjoy your time and your family.

Barbara Mayer
June 2021



July, 2021

Dearest Dr. Strasser,

When you came to Emory Rehab as the chief Post-Polio physician you had very big shoes to fill. At first I wasn't really sure about you - you seemed caring enough but kind of nerdy.

In time I saw you to be more than 'caring enough'. In fact greatly concerned for the well being of your patients. It seemed like whatever I thought might benefit me in living a full life, you were willing to help me achieve that goal. I remember being in tears in your exam room when forced back to work when my employer no longer qualified me for LTD. You quickly had a solution, which was not instantaneous, but certainly lightened my load.

As I sit here now thinking about how greatly you have impacted my life, I am brought once again to tears. Thank you so very much for the sacrifices you (and your family) have surely made to touch my life as you have.

With Much Love and Admiration,
Cheryl Hollis



Memory -

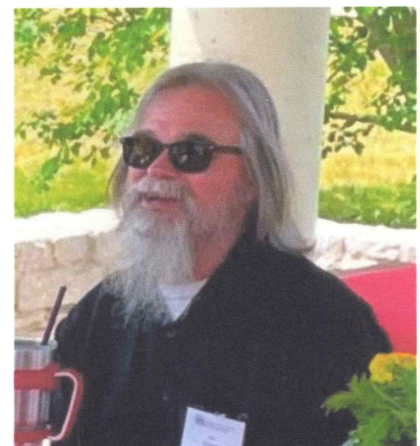
It was about the 2nd time I saw you as a patient that I was diagnosed with a torn right meniscus. I was physically in crisis and only wanted you to snap your fingers and make it all go away - totally unrealistic on my part. Your question was 'Does it hurt here?' as you pressed on the inside of the knee. Although I wanted to jump 3' off the table, my composure was maintained as I replied, 'Yes.'. After a bit of conversation you once again pressed on the knee. Again my composure was maintained, but I decided if you did it one more time my left leg (the good leg which was nearest you!) was going to hit you where it would hurt! Thankfully I did not have to carry out my plan. In looking back later, I realized you were wanting feedback from me which I was not able to give. You are a doctor who wants to 'listen to his patient'. An outstanding quality, indeed.

Dr. Strasser has to be my favorite doctor ever. Of course I've seen a bunch of them in my life but he stands above all the rest. In addition to providing the best Post-Polio Syndrome (PPS) advice and overall medical advice he has been incredibly patient filling out the myriad of status update forms my insurance companies require on a regular basis. As most of you know PPS is permanent and progressive. As such it has to be frustrating to fill out the same paperwork each year repeating what was said the previous year. Yet Dr. Strasser never complained about it. It's probably safe to say that as PPS patients we surely made him earn his money in many ways.

Speaking of money, here is a funny story. I had just become APPA President and was at an office visit at Emory with Dr Strasser. As we were wrapping up the visit he asked me "As the new APPA president maybe you should consider having APPA pay me some sort of a finder's fee for all the members I have sent you over the years?" I knew he was kidding and having seen APPA's books I simply replied "Hmmm, what about all the new patients we've sent you and given the huge difference between our membership fees and Emory's office visit charge, maybe it should be the other way around 😊 We decided to call it even!

Happy Retirement Dr. Strasser you have surely earned it.

Joe Drogan



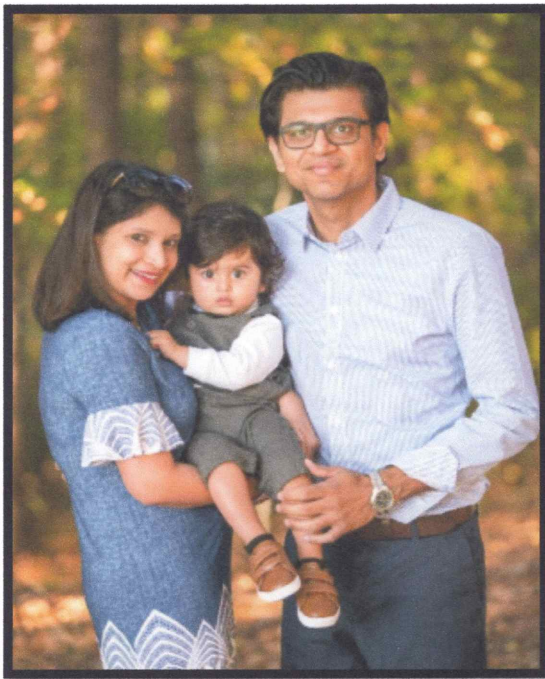
I'm at Dr Strasser about 6 years ago at the age of 35. Before meeting him the last time I saw any doctor who had any experience with polio was when I was around 16 years old at Shriners hospital. It was amazing to meet someone in my adult years who knew polio more than the person living with it.

Between his knowledge, experience, expertise, "bedside manner", etc, it's hard to pick 1 thing to focus on since there are multiple.

I have to say though - the time he afforded me/us was amazing. It didn't matter if I had 5 questions or 50 questions he always took the time to listen to them, think about them and answer them in depth. He would follow up our appointments with words of wisdom, people to get in touch with, cautions, etc etc etc.

Thank you Dr. Strasser. You truly have been a godsend.

Ravi Patel



Patricia Emerson

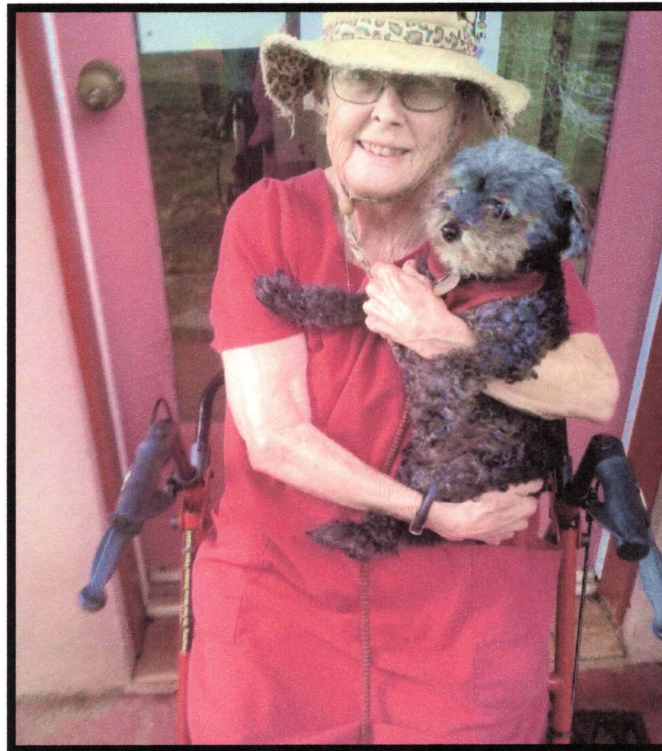
He was my doctor but I cannot think of something to say. I think I am too old. At 86 and one half, I may be the oldest or one of the oldest in APPA. When I first joined at the first meeting in the motel near the old Turner field, I joined as a professional (I was a psychologist) because I was too embarrassed to be a polio member because I had such a mild case. That all changed when post-polio hit later. When I started wearing leg braces, I felt I could be a member.

My memory is very poor, but it could be that Dr. Strasser reminded me about APPA when I visited him the first time. I may also be the only one who had a parent who had polio. My father had polio as a 6 year old and spent 6 years in Johns Hopkins Children's School and Hospital. In 1949 they thought that since my father had polio, that his children would have immunity. They delayed giving me the diagnosis until a spinal confirmed it. My father had a very tiny leg and as a child, he was operated on to place the back leg muscles in the front so his small leg wouldn't drag. He also was taught to put his hand in his pocket and pull up on his leg as he walked with his cane. He was unable to walk without his cane.

Sorry to say so much off the subject, but as I said, I am old.

Patrica Emerson

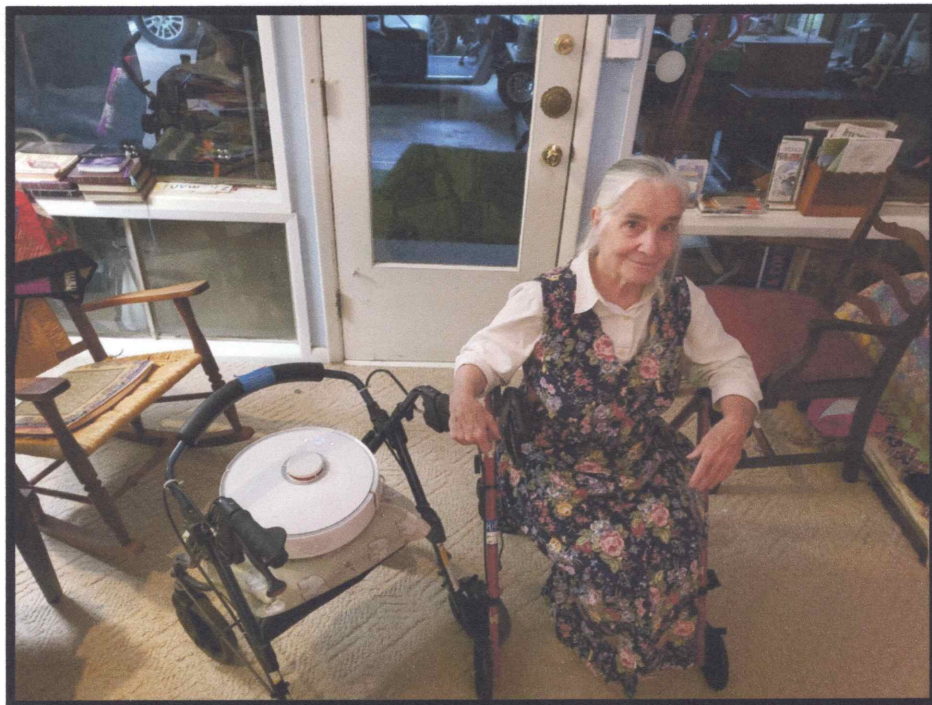
Patricia Emerson, 87 on August 1, 2021
Bobby Joe, 20 on August 7, 2021

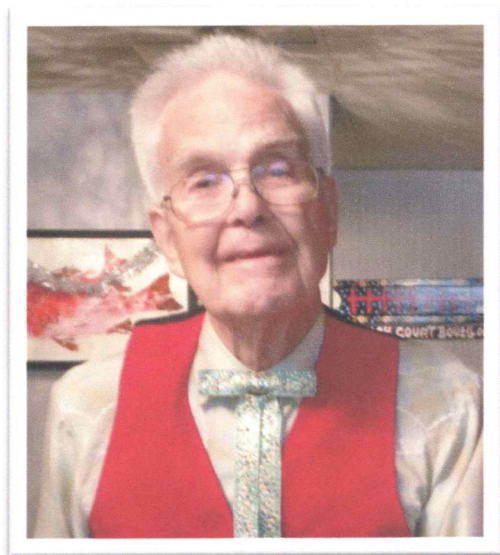


From Nancy Winter

I only saw Dr. Strasser one time when we first moved to Georgia. But it was an important visit for three things. (1) He made me a short list of good PPS books, some of which I have read more than once. (2) He told me about APPA and encouraged me to join, which I did. (3) I had just begun using a Rollator and he inspired me to see it as an advancement to my quality of life, and that's the way I see it. Recently I decided to name my various DME's:

Harvey helps me all around the house. He serves the meals, clears the table. If the phone rings, he has it handy. He carries pens, paper, books, tools, and even grandkids. When I want to sit and rest, he holds me. Outside on rough ground Harvey is getting a little old and I have to help him over gravel. If I need to do much outside, Elmer is there to help instead. For lots of field work, Tony goes with me. Then there is Rosita. She is always ready to go in the car. When we go somewhere, she often gets compliments on her rosy color. For long trips, Scott will go with me if I can find someone to lift him into the car. Scott is very strong and will carry me, Rosita, luggage and a small child all at once. Like Harvey, Scott will hold canes, cups, phones, and other useful items and he doesn't mind long trips. I should also mention cute little Flora who vacuums the whole house for me, while I sit here to write this. Together, we make a contented group. Here is a picture of Harvey, holding Flora, while he chats with Elmer.





Dear Dr. Strasser, I wish you well on your retirement.

Sincerely,

David Jordan

Memories and Comments

Dear Dr. Strasser,

It is with deep regret Marcus and I will not be able to attend the celebration of your retirement.

Here's to you and your family: success and a bright future with the time to do the things you have always wanted to do. You will be missed. All our best!

Sharon Gunter

Rita Carlson

Although He was not my doctor Dr. Strasser promptly replied to me as program director, that he would give a presentation to our group. I made him a quilt because I felt that he was so helpful to our group. The quilt is made specifically for him. Rita



Cathy McIntire

When I first went to see Dr. Strasser he was asking me questions to try and figure out my fatigue level. He asked if I felt like a "wet noodle" the day after a busy day. That was the first time I had heard that, so I always think of Dr. Strasser when I hear the term, wet noodle!



To: Dale Strasser

Please know that I appreciate the time you have taken with me during each of my visits with you!

May your retirement provide for you the deserved quiet time for self and especially time with your family. May chosen time periods give you peace, joy and happiness!

From: Thaddeus Lewis

Saturday, July 31, 2021

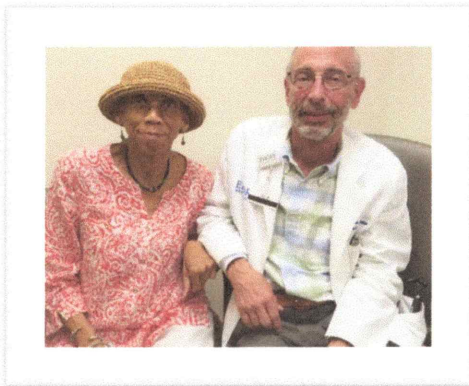
My Dear Dr. Strasser,

Subj: Many warm memories

When you read these letters, I hope they bring a smile to your face. You touched my life in so many ways. Although there are several points that I can share, here are my top three: 1) caring doctor, 2) conversation with my mom, and 3) APPA's friend.

1) Caring Doctor

In 2013, I attended my first Atlanta Post-Polio Association (APPA) meeting. I was seeking a support group for polio survivors and a doctor who could help me understand what was going on with my body. APPA met my needs by providing resources, support and education for members, family, and friends. At that first meeting, members were playing bingo. As I listened and met members, the question foremost on my mind – “Where is a doctor that understands the plight of polio ‘victims’? That word has since been replaced with ‘survivors.’” The name that I heard most often was Dr. Strasser at Emory and how wonderful you were. Not long after that first meeting, I made an appointment and met the infamous Dr. Dale Strasser. Oh, I was so glad I did. You have helped me navigate this part of my life's journey. In addition to treatments, you recommended that I read a couple of books, which a member, Belinda Whitaker recommended to me also. She loaned me the books. Later I bought my own reference material. Also, when my mother passed in November of 2019, I had a visit in December. I cried the entire time I was in your office; you and Peggy were very comforting. I was truly appreciative; I still am.



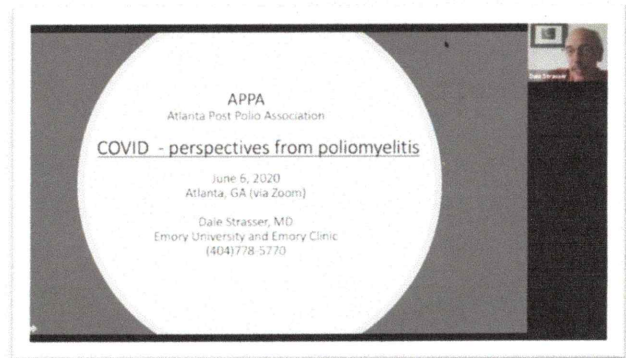
2) Conversation with Mom

My mother accompanied me to many APPA events and volunteered at times. At one of our luncheons, you sat and talked with my mother about what it is like to have a child that was stricken with polio. She shared her story with you and that conversation with me. In the nine months of rehabilitation therapy, only one parent could visit one hour on Sundays. I have included a picture of my mom and dad with me when I was released from rehab in May 1954. Many members of my family have supported me including my sister, aunt, niece, and cousin, who serves as APPA webmaster, however this memory will remain with me forever.



3) APPA's Friend

Not long after I joined APPA, you were a presenter at a general meeting. That is when I began to learn more about the history of polio. Later, I served on the APPA Board of Directors for five years of which three years I served as president, until 2019, when my mother passed. You have supported us by sharing APPA's story, brochure, serving as speaker and participating on the panel for the launch party of our new website. Many times, I shared APPA information with other polio survivors in your office.



Dr. Strasser, I cannot begin to thank you enough for all your support not only as a patient, but on the APPA Board of Directors, and later as the APPA president. You are a tireless advocate for APPA, sharing our stories and our brochure with patients and staff, alike. I wish you nothing but a wonderful, blessed retirement. Enjoy your life! You deserve it! I will miss you, and I know APPA will.

God Bless,

Carol

Carol A. Crumby (with Mom, Lucille)

