

Oration from 2004

Oration Title:

The Most Important Patient of Our Time

Orator:

William G. Lavelle, M.D.

Abstract of Oration:

Dr. Lavelle begins with a brief summary of Winston Churchill's early life--a succession of concussions and illnesses culminating in an appointment as a cavalry officer and a journalistic assignment to Cuba. After his return from Cuba and a subsequent trip to India, Churchill returned to the United Kingdom and involved himself in conservative, then liberal politics for eighteen years. During this time, he underwent an appendectomy, and shortly after this political stint ended he took to an unhealthy lifestyle of excessive cigar smoking and heavy drinking, punctuated by depressive episodes. During World War II, the British Prime Minister suffered cardiac pain, shortness of breath, and severe pneumonia. After the war and his loss of the Prime Ministerial position, Churchill "complained of chronic digestive problems and was diagnosed with diverticulitis." He also began to lose hearing and developed a skin disease that caused severe itching. He underwent surgery for a groin swelling. His depression continued throughout his life. Years later, at the age of ninety, and after many strokes, Winston Churchill died.