

November 13, 2018:

To the members of the South East Section of the AUA.

For many years I have been a very active participant, particularly in matters of Health Policy, within our section. Every six years we have the privilege of voting for someone from within our section to represent us not only to other sections within the United States but to other Urological organizations throughout the world. Because of my years of service to organized urology on the local, state and national level, I had given very serious consideration to “throwing my name into the hat” and running for the position of AUA president. I have watched the AUA president year in and year out however and they have to accomplish a lot in a rather short period of time. That said I have come to believe that the position requires so much time, that one cannot realistically still be in active full time practice and serve both masters well. Noting that two other very active members of our section would seek the presidency and believing that I am NOT ready to retire for another 7-8 years, I withdrew my name from consideration.

So our section is fortunate to have two members who wish to be considered for this office: Tom Stringer and Raju Thomas. For many years the three of us have worked together for the betterment of Urology. Raju has focused on the Academic environment and will leave an outstanding legacy of many well trained residents when he retires. Tom worked for many years in the world of private practice urology before retiring from that arena here in central Florida and then sought a position to “help the residents in training” at the University of Florida in Gainesville. Before too long, through a series of unfortunate events, Tom found himself the “acting head” of the Department of Urology. This was not a position he sought, but others who asked him to take on this responsibility saw in Tom his natural leadership skills. So for nearly a decade now he has come to understand the academic world in a way that few in the private practice realm are able. And although there are similarities between the two worlds, they are not the same. This unique experience makes Tom Stringer the obvious choice to represent urologists, both private and academic, to our medical peers not just here in the United States, but to the international community as well.

For the past four years Tom has served as our section’s representative to the AUA board of directors. Since the early 1990’s I have seen the activity of the BOD become increasingly consequential. Others have pointed out and I concur, that this position probably ought to be considered a prerequisite to running for the office of the presidency. There simply is no other position within our national organization that will allow an individual to acquire such in depth institutional knowledge of the AUA. We are divided into many “silos” with many members not really knowing what is going on in the silo next to them. In fact I have been critical for some time that a problem within our national organization is the “inmates are running the asylum”. It seems almost that we work for the staff of the organization instead of the other way around. A good bit of this comes from the lack of knowledge to which I refer and by the time a person acquires that knowledge his one year term as President is over. This is NOT Tom. Dr Stringer has shown a willingness to take on the status quo from his first days on the BOD. It was Tom who pushed for, and continues to promote a more equal representation for positions apportioned to the various sections. The young leadership positions started as 2 people per section. The SESAUA with some 2500 active members had dozens apply for the position. Out of frustration we drew two names out of a brown bag – all of the applicants were just that qualified. At the same time a section that will remain nameless in the New England area had trouble getting two people to even seek the positions. Tom pushed for more equal “opportunity” for members and was rebuked for that. He nonetheless has stood his ground and although I still don’t think that the matter has been settled in an equitable fashion, we currently have three representatives to the group.

I have learned a lot over the years by working with Tom. He brings an uncanny ability to “listen to the opposing side”, understand their concerns and reach a compromise that all can live with – a true leadership skill. He knows something about making a payroll having worked in the private practice realm for so many years. He understands the issues of residency training, work force shortages, and frustrations on the part of our academicians without whom we have no future. He is an honest man who truly cares for all with whom he works as well as those he (and the rest of us) works for, our patients. It has been an honor to have known and worked with Tom all these many years. I will vote for Tom as our next American Urological Association President. You should too.

Marty Dineen, MD