

# *Honoring Steven R. Schwid, MD*



*1964–2008*

This past fall, the multiple sclerosis community lost a stalwart and steady advocate for improved patient care through careful research when Steven R. Schwid, MD, professor of neurology at the University of Rochester Medical Center, died on November 3 of cancer at age 44. Steve was associate chair for clinical research in the Department of Neurology, co-director of the Rochester Multiple Sclerosis Center, and associate director of the Clinical Trials Coordination Center. He was an MS expert whose research emphasized not only the testing of new treatments for the disease, but also how best to perform clinically meaningful research trials. Steve was an important figure in the Consortium of Multiple Sclerosis Centers' spearheading of a consensus meeting on cognitive issues in MS in 2001 and a member of the steering committee that led to the establishment of the CMSC Cooperative Studies Project. He was also the founding principal investigator in MS-Core, another cooperative venture to improve performance of clinical trials.

Steve was a friend of many, a colleague of many more, and a compassionate physician to hundreds of lucky patients who always felt his dedication and kindness. Steve's patients talked of his consistent ability to make them feel that he had all day to think about their problems. We, his colleagues, remember his even temper, thoughtfulness, and keen eye for the essence of science. His focus and attention to detail were enviable, as was his apparent ability to meet any deadline. As the father

of five children who were never far from his thoughts, as was his wife Mary of 21 years, he seems to have somehow compacted extra time into his 44 years of life.

To continue Steve Schwid's legacy, we are pleased to announce two funded Foundation of the CMSC (FCMSC) projects in his honor. Acorda Therapeutics has pledged funding for an annual FCMSC/Steven Schwid Memorial Summer Scholarship for the next three years. This award will provide a medical student the opportunity to work with a CMSC member research center on a two-month research project, and to present the results in poster form at the next year's annual CMSC meeting. Through these MS Workforce of the Future projects, students gain exposure to MS research and clinical care, as well as access to expert mentorship. The first Steven Schwid Memorial Scholar will be announced in April 2009. In addition, Teva Neuroscience has generously provided funding for a CMSC Collaborative Research grant named in honor of Dr. Schwid and his contributions to MS research and patient care. Applications for CMSC Collaborative Research grants are currently under review, and the awards will be given soon.

We mourn the passing of an esteemed colleague, but we know that his contributions will live on in his publications, in his influence on students and colleagues, and now in the training of future MS specialists and the performance of high-quality, clinically meaningful research.