The Friday Four: Surgeon Who Operated On MLK Passes Away

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The Friday Four seeks to highlight some of the people behind some of the interesting stories I stumble upon during my daily search for relevant content. You didn't ask for it, but you got it anyway. You're welcome.

1. Dr. John W.V. Cordice -- Dr. Cordice wasn't on duty the night when Martin Luther King Jr. ended up at Harlem Hospital Center in 1958. The Civil Rights leader was making an appearance at a nearby bookstore when a mentally disturbed woman stabbed him with a letter opener. King was rushed to the hospital with a 7-inch steel blade stuck in his chest and just millimeters away from his aorta. Cordice eventually ended up at Harlem Hospital Center, and he and another surgeon quickly took immediate action. The two men, along with a third surgeon, performed an operation to remove the letter opener from the 29-year-old King's chest. He was discharged from the hospital 14 days later. This amazing story came to light last week when Cordice died at the age of 95 [1]. Health and Hospitals Corp. President Alan D. Aviles, whose agency oversees the facility where Cordice was formerly an attending surgeon and chief of thoracic surgery, had the following to say about him:

"*He was a brilliant clinical practitioner, a wise and thoughtful teacher, and a man of deep and abiding kindness and quiet modesty. It is entirely consistent with his character that many who knew him may well not have known that he was also a part of history.*"

Aviles's comment stuck with me. It's not often I see someone described as both brilliant and quietly modest in the same breath. It's certainly a rarity in today's age of self-promotion, hype, and bravado. Based on the comments I read about him over the course of the past few days, Dr. Cordice was a truly exceptional surgeon and man, one who truly let his actions speak louder than his words.

2. Rebekah Bradford -- With the Winter and Summer Olympics scheduled for every four years, most athletes with a realistic chance of realizing their dreams of competing against the best in the world have one or two chances to make it happen. That's why when the 2010 U.S. Olympic speedskater was diagnosed with a pulmonary embolism last year, it looked like her bid to secure a second consecutive trip to the Olympics was very much in doubt. According to a recent Associated Press article [2], dangerous blood clots developed in Bradford's lungs. As her condition worsened over the course of six months, Bradford found even the most basic daily tasks difficult to complete. To make matters worse, she was only a few years removed from a pair of knee surgeries that took place in the wake of her 2010 Olympics in Vancouver. However, Bradford was undeterred in her efforts to get herself back into shape for the 2014 Olympics in Sochi. All of the challenges, hard work, and uncertainty culminated with her appearance at last week's U.S. Speedskating Trials in Utah.

Unfortunately, Bradford fell just short of making the team in the 500 and 1,000-meter events. She finished one-tenth of a second behind the final qualifier in the 1,000, and she fell just .05 seconds shy of a personal best in the 500. Despite the disappointing on-ice results, Bradford should be lauded for her strength and determination as a world-class athlete unwilling to give up in the face of extraordinary health issues.

3. Jim Malloy -- As an actor working with students at the University of Virginal Medical School, Jim Malloy had no trouble with his assignment as a patient suffering from an abdominal aortic aneurysm. That's because the medical student tasked with diagnosing his "condition" found... you guessed it... an abdominal aortic aneurysm during the examination. It was an incredibly lucky break for Malloy, who had no symptoms at the time. He discusses the experience in the video below:

4. Dr. Steven Curley -- Prominent surgeon and leading cancer researcher, Dr. Steven Curley, is accused of using a very popular spying software to track his estranged wife's computer [3] during their divorce proceedings. Prosecutors charged him with unlawful intercept, a second-degree felony. Dr. Curley faces up to 20 years in prison. It sounds like the plot description for a Lifetime Movie Network flick [4]. Nope, this is real life. The video below shows some of Dr. Curley's appearance on CBS's *60 Minutes* a few years back, where he discussed a potential cure for cancer:

Have any nominees for The Friday Four? Email me at mike.schmidt@advantagemedia.com *[5]. Check out more news, blogs, and product content at* www.surgicalproductsmag.com *[6].*

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