



ACNP Bulletin

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DECEMBER 2017

SPECIAL EDITION – RONNIE WILKINS RETIREMENT



Since I first started attending ACNP meetings, I noticed Ronnie Wilkins's quiet presence as a silent yet vigilant observer. He is omnipresent yet discreet, as he scans the environment with a contained smile, ready to solve any problem that may arise. Yet, I did not fully appreciate Ronnie's talent until I joined Council and became President. During these two years, I have closely watched Ronnie in action. He is a man of few words, but each one of his words matters! Whenever there is a tough question, Ronnie has the answer, which he delivers in an understated, dispassionate and concise way. His input reflects his years of cumulative experience, his wisdom, and also his big heart. One particular talent he has is his ability to deliver disappointing news in a positive way using respectful, gentle and constructive messages. He leaves the recipient almost grateful for receiving such disappointing news! Unlike many other successful and accomplished executives, Ronnie avoids attention to an extreme degree and redirects it onto others. He is the most down-to-earth, highly effective executive that I have known.

Ronnie has been instrumental in defining the trajectory and success of ACNP. In 1999, he left a very successful career as founder and leader of a rehabilitation group, which he made wildly profitable, to take on the role of Executive Director of ACNP. In 2008, he became CEO of Parthenon group. Ronnie transformed both of these organizations. His vision and creativity have brought financial security and wealth to ACNP, which allowed the organization to remain true to its mission and core values and play a larger role in the scientific community, supporting research, education and advocacy efforts. In retiring, Ronnie can be proud of his legacy, with a career well spent making a difference at many levels. We will all miss his presence and his contributions, but he certainly deserves his well-earned retirement. The only consolation I have is that he is leaving us at a great time for ACNP, after setting the foundations for a robust College and training a wonderful successor. Ronnie, I thank you for your incredible legacy and your parting gift in Sarah Timm and the great team that you have put together. When you find yourself gazing at the horizon peacefully while fishing, please know that you are also here with us, in everything we plan and execute, as we will faithfully follow the traditions and practices that you have set up for ACNP.

-Dr. Anissa Abi-Dargham

Congratulations on Your Retirement!



The success of a professional organization relies on ongoing sustained effort of the members and the staff working together closely.

ACNP has been fortunate to have Ronnie as our Executive Director for two decades. Ronnie's vision, commitment and contributions to our College have been outstanding. He has demonstrated a deep understanding of advancing our agenda and being in tune with changing needs. His dedication is matched by integrity and a sense of humor. He can make even people who do not know their hooks from their sinkers laugh at his fishing stories.

Thank you and be well Ronnie!!!

-Dr. Raquel E. Gur

It was always a pleasure dealing with Ronnie. Over many ACNP years, my frequently outraged critiques, mostly of ACNP inaction, have been sent through Ronnie's office. He was always informed, took no sides, pleasantly gave objective advice about how to pursue my usually unattainable goals, and by his manner toned down my more counterproductive eruptive moments. Others will speak to his administrative creativity. My point is that Ronnie has set high standards for an Executive Director's interpersonal management in a friendly objective context.

-Dr. Don Klein

At the 75th anniversary celebration of the ACNP, at which Eric Nestler will deliver the history address, youngsters will speculate about the secret to the vitality of the College. Clearly great science and warm collegiality are essential ingredients. However, others will point to the fact that the ACNP is a place where everything works. The professionalism of the ACNP staff, their attention to detail, their willingness to go out of their way to assist members, and their friendliness have created a space where the other attributes of the ACNP could work their magic.

Ronnie, thank you for helping ACNP grow from a gathering of pals to the foremost translational neuroscience organization in the world. Your collaborative spirit, sage advice, sense of humor, patience, and leadership were extraordinarily important to me during my presidency and to every ACNP president with whom you interacted. Thanks to you and Sarah, Parthenon has secured the financial stability of ACNP into the future.

We will miss you. I will miss hearing about your hunting trips. You leave ACNP in Sarah's able hands, so you have no worries on our account. I wish you all the best with your well-earned retirement.

With gratitude and warm regards,

-Dr. John H. Krystal





It has been my privilege to work with you these many years – and it has been a lot of years, but who's counting! We could not have had a better public face for our College than yours. In your dealings with those both outside and within the College, you have demonstrated attention to detail, respect for all individuals, good judgement, even-handedness, and a sense of humor. No wonder you are beloved. I have been particularly impressed by your foresight with respect to both “societal” and financial issues that were likely to impact our College negatively. Pre-emptive actions suggested by you have contributed greatly to our success. And of course, you have assembled the best consumer-oriented staff in the entire galaxy. In following your lead, they facilitate our having, year after year, a dynamic and enjoyable meeting.



I hope to be able to stay in touch with you (Facebook?) and to visit you in your new capacity as Master Distiller at Jack Daniels.

-Dr. Alan Frazer

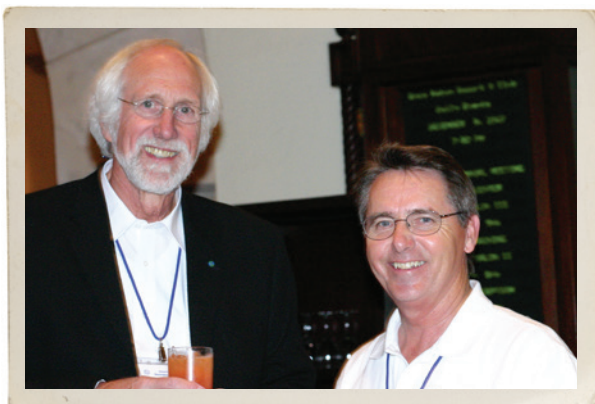
I never had a bad day with Ronnie. Always a good day. He had major ‘big shoes’ to fill during important transitional years for the College. I’ll miss his smiling face at our annual meetings.

(Be of) good cheer, Ronnie!

-Dr. Jim Anthony

In my view, Ronnie has made extraordinary contributions to the ACNP operation over the past twenty years. He is exceptionally skilled and has always predicted the next critical steps necessary to continue the national and international reputation of our College. His interactions with the ACNP Council, Officers, and Members has always been cordial, enthusiastic, and insightful. Ronnie’s financial and organizational advice has been well received and implemented. I anticipate that Ronnie will continue to make highly successful and important impact in his future endeavors.

-Dr. William Bunney



I have loved my friendship with Ronnie all these years and worked closely with him several years before and after my 2007 year as ACNP president. These years were especially challenging with major issues of moving ACNP to financial independence, of relocating the annual meeting from San Juan, and of vexing issues relating to ethics. Ronnie clarified each issue, structured the solutions, worked out all the details, hired fantastic individuals to attend to all ACNP needs, documented progress and success, and moved on to the next opportunities and challenges. The success with finance and relocation of meeting sites has been terrific. Establishing a fully owned subsidiary, Parthenon Management Company, has provided a valuable service to other

societies in the conduct of their meetings while providing financial support and career advancement opportunities for gifted ACNP staff. Serving as president was easy. You could spend time with wonderful colleagues and occasionally be called upon to say things such as “ready to vote” or “all in favor”.

Ronnie took charge of an ACNP that was deeply challenged in management and finance. He built the solid structure that supports us. He leaves us in the hands of the best person imaginable--Sarah Timm. I will miss seeing Ronnie and Elaine each year and miss the frequent phone calls. I hope the fly fishing is successful and the motorcycle is safe.

-Dr. William Carpenter



During my time on the ACNP Council as well as when I had the privilege to serve as President, we began to focus on the organizational structure of the organization. This naturally led to a discussion of the officers, some of whom had been serving for decades. As with many professional organizations, the ACNP had grown and matured considerably by this time, approximately 20 years ago. Although there was, not



surprisingly, some resistance to change, we were fortunate in having a forward-looking Council that moved ahead with succession planning. This included the creation of the Executive Director position quite separate from the Secretary. We were fortunate in recruiting a young, energetic and experienced young man, Ronnie Wilkins. Oh, how I remember those many conversations with him when he would discover one or another somewhat irregular procedure that had become ensconced in the ACNP DNA. He would ask in his usual phlegmatic style, why certain things were the way they were. Whether it was about how we booked hotels for future meetings, travel arrangements, counting the ballots post-election and a myriad of other processes now under his bailiwick, he was always courteous, open minded and at times just plain incredulous. As we all know, leadership positions require both expertise in content and a style that is suitable for interactions with the membership. Ronnie always exuded these two characteristics. He never displayed the kind of breakdown in ego boundaries confusing himself with the organization and he never imposed his own views of any situation onto the membership. He truly believed that he and the staff served the membership and the leadership of ACNP and that is one of the major reasons he has been so successful. Part of that success is his remarkably good judgment in hiring staff members; he could have been a fortune 500 executive search guru. Be clear about the fact that he leaves our organization in far better shape than the day he joined us.

On a personal note, Ronnie has become a good friend and we have spent several days together fly fishing. Again, and not surprisingly, he is very, very good at this sport, no small task. Ever humble, both professionally and personally, he is always a great pleasure to be with. I can attest to his friendship through both good and bad times. He is a welcome constant in an ever-changing world.

-Dr. Charles Nemeroff

My appreciation for Ronnie grew by the year, but it was during my time on the Council and then as President that my respect for him grew exponentially. To call him merely competent is to do him an enormous disservice. Simply put, he is extraordinary, truly a gifted executive with a kindness and sensitivity to the people around him that made him a pleasure to work with. Ronnie is wished all the very best and will truly be missed.

-Dr. Kenneth L. Davis





Although I can speak certainly to the many ways you enlightened the ACNP and its annual meetings, I will here solely reminisce about the unique relationship we established when I approached you that pivotal day for advice about the society I had co-founded and was running from my dining room table. I was thinking about the future of the *Schizophrenia International Research Society* (SIRS) and how much work it had become. I was struggling through, not only keeping its finances on track, but organizing meetings and embarking on almost single-handedly launching the 1st of its congresses in Venice, June 2008—Preparations for this event totally exhausted me, despite its enormous success. My question to you was how can I ensure that nothing would happen to the society if I could no longer run it? You gave me some leads about professional society management companies and the annual meeting of society organizers that I never could imagine existed. However, it was only a short time later that you called me back and let me know that you thought you could help me instead. What you meant was that you had actually discussed our organization with the ACNP leadership and let me know our discussion had come at an opportune time, when ACNP was looking for creative ways to increase its funds. Establishing a society administration company was what was born out of our phone meetings, something you eventually named *Parthenon*. As I sat at home on my lounge chair facing the Hudson River, I took in your excitement for this role in our developing society. Shortly afterwards, I brought your proposition to the other SIRS officers, and was able to convince them, despite competition, that you and your staff were unique and would bring our society up a few notches, incorporating the professionalism that I was lacking on my dining room table. We then partnered—I as secretary, you and staff as secretariat, and adventurously explored Italy for our next coming years of meetings. Never forget that symbolism behind those dinners with our newly found Italian chef sipping his famed “John Travolta Sauce” on top of Pasta...and how exciting it was to develop such a successful society together. I fondly look back on our conversation one morning at breakfast in a Venice hotel anxiously planning how to return to the USA with airports closing because of Icelandic volcanic ash in the skies. I always remember your smile, assuring me that things could be much worse than extending our time in Venice.

All the best as you move on to a new and exciting chapter in life.

—Dr. Lynn DeLisi

Ronnie brought a needed measure of efficiency and professionalism to the College. His creation of Parthenon, the best entity of its kind I have ever encountered, raised ACNP's visibility, greatly enhanced its financial position, and put our organization on solid footing. I wish him a long, healthy, and gratifying retirement.

—Dr. Alan Gelenberg



I never got to go fishing with Ronnie, so don't have the best stories to tell about him. But, I did get to work closely with him on a few projects over the years. Ronnie is the heart of the ACNP and one of the most thoughtful people I have ever had the pleasure to work closely with. He was always on call to be as helpful as possible, and was prescient in his ability to know what people needed to make decisions about the ACNP. No one could have possibly performed a finer service to our organization over the last decades. We'll miss you!

Ronnie, have fun in retirement, and there are large bass in Lake Glenville if you want to come up and help me catch them.

—Dr. Peter Kalivas



Having already been an active member and officer of ACNP for more than 20 years, I was excited when Ronnie took the helm some 20 years ago. In reflecting on various turning points in the college's history, the period between 2008 and 2010 stands out for me in demonstrating Ronnie's wisdom, initiative, leadership and willingness to take risks. This period included the founding of Parthenon Management, the purchase of our own building, and the move to a contemporary view of how we should invest for the College. All of these efforts have enabled the College to all but eliminate our dependence on external support. Ronnie's sustained efforts in these areas, in turn, have allowed the College to more systematically carry out the full mission of the College to keep our membership abreast of the latest and most important developments in the area of neuropsychopharmacology, broaden the appreciation of the importance of our science and bring the most promising new investigators into the field. He has set us on a great path.

-Dr. David Kupfer

Ronnie Wilkins turns the adage, "Nice guys finish last," on end. You'll never find a nicer guy, nor one who has been more effective, more successful, more influential, or more generative. I continually marveled at Ronnie's ability to sit back and permit those of us on Council to imagine that we were steering the organization, only to have him then gently introduce precedent, common sense, and a particularly sophisticated understanding of people, which then made clear the path forward. One of the most outstanding ACNP success stories of the last decade – Parthenon – is almost entirely a product of Ronnie's concern for the professional development of the ACNP staff. This staff, which deservedly is the envy of most organizations, is by design a reflection of Ronnie and his protégé and successor, Sarah Timm. (Unlike Tito, Ronnie has left the ACNP with a brilliant succession plan.) Consequently, each staff member takes pride in those qualities that Ronnie embodies: dedication, creativity, efficiency, humility, generosity, and concern for the well-being of others. While always the consummate professional, Ronnie is among the most affable and joyful persons I've ever met. Whether its describing his Harley trips or a Pappy Van Winkle tasting (at 11PM no less) or David Braff's latest dystopian communique, Ronnie clearly enjoys life and approaches it with equanimity, a wonderful sense of humor, and a genuine fondness for people. Thanks for all that you've done for all of us, Ronnie, for your guidance, and for the pleasure of your company.

-Dr. David Rubinow





Although I am well aware of your many accomplishments, which have benefited our College in so many different ways for two decades, I am convinced that many of our colleagues will describe them more eloquently and comprehensively than I can. So I decided to use my brief message – yes, Sarah explicitly mentioned that it must be brief – to let the reader know how privileged I have been to get to know you as an exceptional friend and human being. No, I am not talking about your willingness to listen to despised liberal worldviews for hours on end. Nor am I thinking of the time, during one of our memorable fishing trips, when you risked your life to prevent a grizzly (or was it a sheep?) from tearing me into pieces. While silent suffering and physical heroism are laudable qualities for sure, what truly sets you apart in my eyes is your unwavering dedication to help and support the less fortunate among us neuropsychopharmacologists. I am of course referring to your unwavering enthusiasm for instilling a love for motorcycles, fishing, hunting – and killing

in general – in me and others who grew up in a different universe. I will always be grateful to you for opening my eyes to the world, and for doing it compassionately and gently.

You are a true Mensch, as they say in New York and Vienna. We all love you for it and are sad to see you leave. I wish you and your wonderful boss Elaine all the very best for the road ahead and hope that we will stay in touch one way or another.

-Dr. Robert (Robbie) Schwarcz

Of the many things I have appreciated about Ronnie Wilkins over time I have known him, the one that stands out for me is his consistent support for women as members and leaders of the College and as leaders of Parthenon Management. When he took over as Executive Director, ACNP truly was an Old Boys Club, even if some of the boys were not that old. Very few women had sat on Council or been officers of the College. And there was essentially no recognition that, in order to be able to take full advantage of what the College has to offer, women might benefit from some special services. We now have a long list of women who have had leadership roles in the College, a vibrant Women's Task Force, a typically over-subscribed networking lunch for women, and the availability of child care at our annual meeting. If Ronnie has facilitated women's leadership within the College, it's nothing compared to what he has done within Parthenon Management. Having built Parthenon into the international powerhouse that it is in organizational and meeting management, Ronnie is now happily handing over the leadership of his brilliant creation to supremely competent...woman. Thank you, Ronnie, for all you have done to recognize women's potential and then ensure that it was put to good use.

-Dr. Ellen Frank

You are a miraculous person who performed miracles for the ACNP. It was an inspiration to work with you (as well as often a lot of fun!). With great respect, admiration and warmest wishes for the future,

-Dr. Judy Rapoport

Ronnie practically invented the concept of carrying an organization like this on the backs of a staff dedicated to enhancing the multiple missions of a high-powered group such as the ACNP (and without going bankrupt).

He served, or should I say steered the college, thru "think and thin," controversy and triumphs as the leading professional organization in the multiple fields it covered.

He thoughtfully and calmly brought out the best in everyone he touched, was a pleasure to work-with and his staff reflected his generosity and sensibility. He was "family" for all of us.

He may have let -loose with Tweets at night-but I never saw them.

-Dr. Ira D. Glick



The thing I remember most about Ronnie is that every year at ACNP he seemed so incredibly calm. A lot of Executive Directors of societies run around like their hair is on fire, but Ronnie always appeared so collected, which seemed to affect the entire ACNP staff and helped all of the members feel that everything was going well. And given the membership and how difficult and demanding that many of us are, that was quite an achievement each year!

-Dr. Richard Keefe

I had the great pleasure of working with Ronnie during my tenure on Council and as ACNP President. I greatly admired, and learned a great deal, from three of Ronnie's many attributes and talents. First, he is extremely smart and creative, able to discern the core issue in a seemingly complicated problem and to devise and communicate clearly an innovative solution. Second, he has recruited and trained very talented team members, set the "tone at the top" about expectations for excellence in performance and conduct, and devised ways to enhance the career development of staff while promoting the success of the College. Third, he is quick to ascribe his successes to others and to accept immediately responsibility when (on the very rare occasions) things did not go as planned. Thank you, Ronnie, on your many highly valued and lasting contributions to the ACNP!

-Dr. David A. Lewis

What will it be like to hold the ACNP without Ronnie? I know that Ronnie's diligence and skill in setting up the PMG pipeline will ensure that the meeting itself will run well (don't we all appreciate Sarah!). But, who will be standing in the hotel lobby, smiling and chatting in the place of Ronnie? He had such a pleasant greeting, always with a good story, to make the weight of the 5+ hour trip to the conference drift away. Ronnie made it all look easy, as if anyone would think of all of the necessary things to make the College run well. He knew the schedule so well ahead of time that no one could catch him off guard, even though he appeared completely relaxed. He knew all of the personalities and how to treat them to keep them at their best. And no one caught him 'not working' at a meeting having his own fun, even though he looked like he never wanted to do anything better than chat with ACNP members. Everyone has their favorite 'likes'; mine was the standard, by the day, shirt colors that everyone wears. And Ronnie's stories.



Retiring at a time when he can still go off and have fun sounds just like Ronnie. We can only imagine that he will master new hobbies, fish alot, hunt new fields and that we will see the tail light of his motorcycle in the distance as the rest of us are discussing our science. My very best wishes for you Ronnie in your retirement. You are the best!!

-Dr. Carol Tamminga

Congratulations on your retirement as Executive Director of the ACNP. The College has benefited enormously from your twenty years of extraordinary service. You professionalized the management and organization of the College, revitalized its annual meeting which remains one of the best venues for neuropsychiatric research worldwide, strengthened the College's journal, and created a very strong pool of leadership within the College's home office to ensure continuity of excellence upon your retirement. This is an exceptional track record and we are all most appreciative of your strong leadership.

Having had the privilege of serving on ACNP Council in the 2000s, and as ACNP President in 2011, I have also enjoyed working with you tremendously. Never taking yourself or others too seriously, always providing sound, stable, and measured leadership, and making the College and its activities enjoyable and fun, you provided a model for us all—personally and professionally—and will be missed.

Best wishes for the future,

-Dr. Eric Nestler



Congratulations on your retirement. Your plan to become a gentleman farmer sounds fascinating and great for the environment and for increasing the quail population. Our recent conversation brought back memories of my boyhood in Louisiana when quail were still plentiful. The conversation also brought back memories of your earliest year with the College when I was President.

As the first non-scientist to become executive director, you had to deal with traditions that had become rigid but were not necessarily rational. The Council and I wanted you to initiate sound business procedures and when you did exactly that, you met with resistance. Getting three bids on the annual meeting was what we asked you to do to obtain a better deal, even though that meant changing a long-standing prior relationship with a travel agent. I recall that you responded to the resistance with patience and politeness. At a critical point, I needed to fly to Nashville to intervene and practice “family therapy” with you and the existing office staff. I think the critical asset that caused the situation to calm down was your maturity and good nature.

Since you began, your long term outstanding results have been far better than anyone could have envisioned at the time. Under your leadership, we have reduced our dependence on big pharma. You and subsequent Presidents and Councils have shown outstanding judgment and management skills. I marvel at the efficient and productive organization that you have built together over the past 20 years. I predict that you will have a similar success with your farm as you apply your management skills in a new environment.

Warm wishes for a happy retirement,
-Dr. Charles O'Brien



First, let me thank you for your years of service to the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology. When you began, we were not in optimal shape to say the least. Your effective and always affable leadership, your ability to hire and groom excellent people and your “can-do” spirit rejuvenated many critical aspects of our organization. We owe you a great deal and have been truly blessed to have you be with us.

I do not really have anecdotes, but I have some clear impressions that I would like to share. The words that come to mind are unflappable, entirely transparent, and “other promoting”. When surprises would pop up, as was often the case in the early days, you would simply say something like “we can solve that” ... or “we can fix that” and with this kind of steady leadership, the organization was transformed in many positive interpersonal as well as financial ways.

Secondly, your transparency and willingness to share things as they are rather than things as we wish they would be built an atmosphere of trust and credibility that was much needed and that has served us very well as an organization, and frankly as individuals.

But most important to me, Ronnie, is that you have identified, hired, groomed, promoted and widely advertised skills and qualities of your staff. Yours is a habit of giving credit rather than taking it. As a result, you have not only honed a terrific organization with highly effective people, but they themselves make us all feel as if each of us is a special customer on that day and at that time.

I wish you could stay on longer, but I understand the need to move on, and make way for the next generation. So, thank you again for your years of terrific service to the College and for being a great friend to all of us.

-Dr. A. John Rush



A Japanese proverb reads, “Better than a thousand days of diligent study is one day with a great mentor.” I have been lucky enough to have 12 years with an exceptional mentor. I cannot even begin to count the lessons in both life and business that I have learned from Ronnie. In 2005, Ronnie took me in and apparently saw a teachable young woman. He never promised a training manual or easy path in learning association management. He put me in multiple situations where I could learn and grow by keeping my mouth shut and watching how he and the leaders in the College handle business. I learned quickly by striving to emulate him and living up to a high-set bar of excellence he expected from all staff. Ronnie allowed me to make mistakes while never fearing the consequences, but knowing the lessons learned would not be forgotten. I will always go to him for advice since he never tells you exactly what to do, but offers his opinion of the situation and allows you to be quietly lead in the right direction; a people whisperer of sorts.



Not only is Ronnie a superb mentor, but he is also a visionary. Always sitting quietly and contemplating his next great idea. He has truly taken the College to a level of excellence that I think is unsurpassed in other associations. His vision to always improve the College’s bottom line by increasing revenues from other sources than industry has put us in a position to truly be able to put money into our mission. The development of Parthenon Management Group is the largest example. PMG not only is a source of additional revenue for the College, but it is a growth opportunity for dozens of early career association managers. It also allows other organizations to grow to meet their missions; many of which are shared missions of the College. His vision to purchase a building for the executive office rather than continuing to rent office space has allowed the College to have a growing diversified investment as well as additional rental income. The contributions he has made to the College are many. His retirement is well-deserved.

One of my favorite things about Ronnie is his quotes. You can always count on him for a great quote about a situation you are in that adds a bit of humor to what may seem to be a predicament. For years in his office, there was a print entitled “Ronnie’s Rules.” The staff truly loved these and would quote the number on his rules often in discussions...

RONNIE’S RULES

1. *Never wrestle with a pig. You both get muddy, and the pig enjoys it.*
2. *Never try to teach a pig to sing. It wastes your time and it annoys the pig.*
3. *It is better to keep your mouth shut and let people think you are a fool than to open it and remove all doubt.*
4. *If you want someone’s attention, whisper.*
5. *I would rather be lucky than good.*
6. *The harder you work the luckier you get.*
7. *Never use a word that might send your reader to the dictionary.*
8. *Success does not bring happiness. Happiness brings success.*
9. *If you want to succeed: Be a good person. Show up. Work hard. Don’t quit.*
10. *Above all, remember these things:*
 - a. *Psalm 19:14 – “May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.”*
 - b. *“There is no limit to what a man can do so long as he does not care a straw who gets the credit.” Charles Edward Montague*
 - c. *You never see a motorcycle parked outside a psychiatrist’s office.*

Ronnie, I wish you hours of fishing, hunting and time with your beloved family. I know no one that deserves it more. Know that for years, you will be quoted and respected by many here in the office.

“Ronnie: The Man, The Myth and The Legend” is how the executive office staff will remember you!

–Sarah Timm



I was fortunate to serve as President-Elect and President, of the ACNP when Ronnie was originally appointed. The Council had recognized that the growth of the College necessitated our having a permanent Executive Director rather than relying on our Secretary, Oakley Ray, or our elected officers to handle day to day activities, let alone the growth of the College. The Council recognized that rapid growth in the scope of activities, outside support, and size of the meetings necessitated having a larger staff and a full time, permanent leader. Unfortunately, Oakley was at best ambivalent about hiring an Executive Director who would after a transition period take over the reins of the College from him. Within the year, Oakley's view was that the situation was--as he had predicted-- not working out, staff was unhappy, and that we needed to revert to the former structure. The officers looked into the situation and did not concur with Oakley's view. Ronnie came out to Stanford to talk about resigning and I indicated we wanted him to stay and that we would back him totally. Not long after, Oakley called to tell me that Ronnie had indeed resigned for various reasons. Chuck O'Brien, then President-Elect, and myself had an emergency call with Oakley where we informed him that Ronnie was going to be the Director and that the transition in leadership was going to occur, regardless of his views or behavior. He was not happy, but did agree to the directive and was helpful for the ultimate change in leadership.

During my tenure as President, we made a number of changes to the program, many of which continue to this day. We moved up the start and ending of the meeting. We cut the Teaching Day to a half-day session and instituted a half day of Hot Topics that quickly became an exciting addition to the meeting. We instituted a number of other changes in the workings of the College. Throughout all of these, Ronnie was a great partner--always demonstrating loyalty, great judgment, and true collegiality. To this day, he remains a great friend and someone to whom I and other members of the College are deeply indebted for his terrific stewardship over the past nearly two decades.

We wish Ronnie much continued success and best wishes for any of the many endeavors he is going to pursue.

-Dr. Alan F. Schatzberg

Ronnie was the single most dependable and reliable feature of the ACNP during my 30 plus years of membership. He has always been the go to guy, for information, advice and favors. This is pretty much standard lore about Ronnie. But for me, the special relationship I had with him when I was ACNP president is my most memorable experience of him. I know he did for every president what he did for me, but it always felt as if he were doing it just for me. That is Ronnie's special talent. He was always there when I needed him, which was often, and he handled the difficult things with aplomb and efficiency. Being president of the ACNP is a moment in time, a brief blip on the long trajectory of the college, and an incoming president has very little deep understanding of the workings of the college. Ronnie provided the depth and the guidance that made being president possible. During my early days in the role, I made a trip to Nashville to try to understand what Ronnie's and his staff did and how I could work with them. He took me under his wing and we soared together, through several storms, but always with a soft landing. Ronnie is a super star in the annals of the ACNP. We would not be where we are, in the good sense, without his extraordinarily effective and graceful tenure. He will be sorely missed.

-Dr. Daniel Weinberger



When I became a member of ACNP in 1997 and began attending the meeting regularly, I remember noticing Ronnie at every event and wondering "what is this guy's job?" Years later, I realize that the answer is "everything." Ronnie, it has been an honor to have the opportunity to watch you work, always speaking and acting with calm, purpose and precision. For me, you embody the ACNP at its best.

-Dr. Marina Wolf



Ronnie came aboard the Good Ship ACNP at a time of change and challenge. He skillfully and modestly guided ACNP through some turbulent financial and interpersonal challenges to its current secure and generative position. Some of the details are unimportant here, but Ronnie had the skill to always make sure the right thing was done by me and others in leadership roles and to also enhance our feelings of actually being “in charge”---which in many ways was simply not true: Ronnie, our steady Navigator, was in charge across the many yearly changes in ACNP leadership. When we decided Big Pharma was welcome at ACNP but we (and they) did not want so much financial support and possible industry influence on the ACNP plate, what did Ronnie (and Sarah as his trusted colleague) do? Created Parthenon, our association management firm and income generating organization. A terrific and generative idea that ensured the ACNP’s financial stability for years to come.

One day I kidded Ronnie and asked, given our strong financial position, if I could take the mythical “ACNP G5 Plane” to the annual meeting. He responded with typical modesty and humor “Down here our G5 is a crop duster.” Speaking of travel, one thing I do see in Ronnie’s future: He will smilingly and calmly ride his motorcycle into a well-deserved and happy retirement with all of our best wishes and heartfelt thanks for a job exceptionally well done.

-Dr. David Braff

Quite simply, Ronnie Wilkins is the face of our college. He has done so much more than getting us a rental property and creating an income-generating enterprise that handles the myriad of complex planning and problem-solving activities that result in successful annual meetings for ACNP and a portfolio of other professional organizations, although these are no small accomplishments. He has created a succession plan to assure that the business of our college will go on without interruption after his retirement. Moreover, he has selected, prepared and trained a cadre of outstanding successors that share his attentiveness to professionalism, customer service, genuine friendship and respect. I am personally indebted to Ronnie for a large number of favors, including making me a big hit with my wife! At each of our annual meetings, he would always come up to both of us with a big hello and personal welcome as if I enjoyed celebrity status. In fact, at the Miami meeting, he gave me a “celebrity pin” to wear, which assured that hotel staff were exquisitely sensitive to my wife and me. Thanks to Ronnie, the ambience of the ACNP annual meeting continues to facilitate and promote good science, while serving as the best excuse for an annual winter vacation in the sun. Ronnie will be missed!

-Dr. Stephen I. Deutsch



A positive attitude, dedication and hard work are only a few of the things that you have shared with us every day. Congratulations on your retirement and thank you for all that you have done for ACNP!

-ACNP Staff