

President's Blog



LDA LymeLiteracy

Pat Smith, President, Lyme Disease Association, Inc.

Dr. Neil Spector, Inspiration Extraordinaire, Passed Away



*Neil Spector, MD
2018 Lyme Disease
Association/ Columbia
Conference (LDA
archives)*

From LDA President Pat Smith's Blog:

It is with great sadness that we in the Lyme community say goodbye to someone whose life was dedicated to helping others through his work as an oncologist and a researcher, Dr. Neil Spector.

Dr. Spector devoted his life to saving the lives of others, first through his work on therapies for cancer patients then

his subsequent work on Lyme disease, using the knowledge he gained from his cancer work and from his personal experience with Lyme disease.

He suffered for many years from undiagnosed Lyme disease, a diagnosis that was not even considered in the state he was then in, Florida, where Lyme was not on the radar screen, thanks to government control over where Lyme exists in the US. While his search for a diagnosis was ongoing, he went from a marathon runner to someone who could barely walk 20 yards.

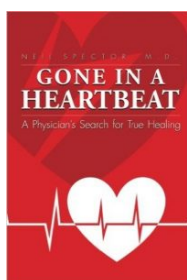
When finally diagnosed with Lyme, he was able to receive treatment, but it was too late for his heart. It had been severely damaged. He lived a number of years with 10% heart function. One day, he was told he had 72 hours to live without a transplant. He was able to get one, and that began a new chapter in his life. He now understood that the medical community in the Lyme world failed patients. They did so by adopting a dogmatic approach to Lyme that created an environment where hundreds of thousands of people, if not millions, heard: there is nothing wrong with you. If enough people tell you there is nothing wrong, eventually you say, maybe it is not Lyme disease. That perception was communicated to higher levels of government and funding agencies. Thus, there has been a lack of urgency about Lyme disease. People with Lyme are dying all the time and committing suicide. Dr. Spector understood and articulated these observations and truths to all those who would listen and to all those who should listen. (*view his video below for his story & statements*)

I knew him as the man he was, a kind, compassionate, knowledgeable human being, a doctor and researcher who cared for others—not as text book or laboratory specimens—but as real people who were sick and needed medical help, help he provided without the bias and callousness that millions have faced over the past 46 years in the world of Lyme disease.

The biased dogmatic medical science out there cost him and his family dearly. He understood that but took that understanding and turned it into something else, an opportunity to use the humanitarian medical science that he practiced to work on saving countless thousands of lives. He was never too busy to help a patient going through what he went through, sharing his insights on Lyme and heart transplants with patients and their families. He was always ready to share his knowledge with other researchers and physicians, and in 2018, he spoke at the Lyme Disease Association/ Columbia University Lyme conference on [*Applying the Lessons From Cancer Research to the Diagnosis and Treatment of Tick-Borne Diseases.*](#) He used his own life experiences to positively shape the world around him.

Goodbye Neil, we will miss you and the heartfelt dedication you brought to truly making the world a better place in which to live. We thank your family for sharing you with us and know that your life will continue to inspire others throughout the world.

[*Watch Dr. Spector in “Lyme & Reason” – Fox 5 News Lyme Special*](#)
Renowned Oncologist Neil Spector, MD shares his own personal story of his transition from doctor to patient, and how Lyme disease led to an emergency heart transplant.



[*Gone in a Heartbeat: A Physician's Search for True Healing*](#) by Neil Spector, MD

