

COUNTDOWN TO BOSTON

5 DAYS



## "G" is for Generations

Here's a chicken and egg question: Was I drawn to characters Jimmy Stewart played in films of the 30s and 40s because of perceived parallels to the Child Neurology Society, or was it the other way around? Or, does it even matter, really?

I remember that for the longest time, before I really knew any of the CNS members, or they knew me, I would get through a tough day by quoting Stewart from his Oscar-winning performance as Macaulay Conner in *The Philadelphia Story*: "With the rich and mighty, always a little patience." I don't remember how or why that came up in conversation with Mike Painter, but it prompted a rebuttal in the form of one of his favorite – and my least favorite – lines: "You know, you have to take a vow of poverty to be a child neurologist."

When the CNS met in Washington, DC in 2002, I drew on another classic Stewart film for the brochure and show look, framing everything as "Dr. Smith Goes to Washington." To Mike Painter's point, the character played by Jean Arthur, like so many in Frank Capra's films, grew up in genteel poverty as the offspring of a doctor-father who cared more about taking care of his patients than taking their money. That same mix of low income and high ideals reached its apotheosis in Capra's 1946 masterpiece, *It's A Wonderful Life*. Stewart plays George Bailey, "the brightest of the bunch" growing up in Bedford Falls, NY, the boy most likely to succeed and most determined to "shake the dust of this crummy little town" off his feet and see the world. After which, he crows, "I'm gonna build airfields, I'm gonna build skyscrapers a hundred stories high, I'm gonna build bridges a mile long."



As nearly every film-loving American of a certain age knows, he did none of those things. Instead, he stayed in Bedford Falls keeping the family business running through the Depression and World War II, and running himself headlong into depression and suicidal despair. One of the greatest film scenes of all time finds him at the dinner table with his father, Peter Bailey, hours before he passed away from a sudden stroke and George's grandiose dreams passed with him. When his father expressed hope that he might still change his mind and stay home to take over the business, he reflexively protests, "No, no I couldn't stand staying cooped up for the rest of my life

in a shabby little office,” then catches himself, and in a moment of pure heartbreak looks his dad in the face and says, “Pop, you want a shock? I think you’re a great guy.”





I think of that scene often when looking over the small, but growing list of child neurologists whose sons and daughters have followed in their footsteps. I have 8 names on my list; perhaps you know of more. The fathers – and they come from a day and age when, by and large, they were bound to be fathers – include Roger Brumback, Peter Camfield, Richard Friederich, Bill Gaillard, Kenneth Huff, Gordon Millichap, Doug Nordli, and Don Shields. The 2nd generation child neurologists have, in a sense, not only taken up their father’s calling, but in a larger sense, now represent, albeit in loose confederation, a reboot of the original “Lacrosse 8” who founded the CNS. This new cohort of 8 child neurologists, four male and four female, are incomparably more connected and collaborative and are advancing toward a far vaster and more hopeful horizon made possible by breakthroughs in genetic research that their forbears never dreamed possible. The new cohort includes Audrey Brumback, Renee Shellhaas, Katie Friederich, Jonathan Gaillard, Hanalise Huff, John Millichap, Douglas Nordli III, and Justin Shields. Together, they will lead child neurology into the next 50 years. Who knows whether any might have children, a 3rd generation, who will follow them? If they do, one thing seems all but certain to me, knowing many of them as I do: for all the undoubted other, and possibly more lucrative options they might have chosen to pursue instead of pediatric neurology, they will each, in time, and deservedly so, be toasted as George Bailey was in *It’s A Wonderful Life* as “the richest (person) in town!”

The screenshot shows the Child Neurology Society (CNS) website. The header includes the CNS logo and the tagline "Bringing CNS Members Together to Make Children's Lives Better". Below the header is a navigation menu with options: COLLEAGUES, CAREERS, CALLING, and COMMUNITY. The main content area features a yellow banner with the title "HISTORY, MENTORS AND MENTORING" and a sub-header "Home / Videos / Two Generations of Child Neurologists: Richard & Katie Friederich". A video player is embedded, showing a man and a woman in conversation. To the right of the video player is a "VIDEO AND PODCAST LIBRARY" section with a list of categories: "CNS Conversations", History, Future, Training Programs, Mentors and Mentoring, Research, Advice, The Society, and Community/Partners. Below this is a "CNS CALENDAR" section with a "VIEW ALL" button and a calendar entry for "TUE Pellock Resident Seminar on Epilepsy".

***Click here to view.***

(Note: I try as much as possible, to shield members’ children from exposure on the CNS website/internet. In one instance today, however, I have film footage of a father and daughter – Richard and Katie Friederich – that I find so compelling I can’t help but post it and bid you enjoy it by clicking the link.

Until tomorrow (the Letter “E”, having touched on “F” yesterday)  
Roger

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## On-line Registration is Open!

Registration is now open for the long awaited 50th Golden Anniversary Meeting of the Child Neurology Society in Boston. Registrants attending this milestone meeting live and in-person in Boston will want to register early (some sessions are limited and reservation-only). You may also use this link to modify your registration as needed, including switching from live in-person to Virtual, or vice versa.

[Click to Register](#)

## 2021 CNS 50th Annual Meeting

For more information, click button below.

[Click for More Info](#)

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