Writing a tribute to Herman Beerman may be likened to writing a tribute to the Society for Investigative Dermatology, because the two have been so intertwined over the years. The single most outstanding and influential figure in the Society, Herman Beerman had the capacity to fulfill this role because he is a rare human being, completely devoted to any cause he undertakes to support, with fine organizational ability and integrity, and possessed of an extensive medical and dermatologic knowledge.

Herman Beerman has always placed the interests of dermatology and dermatologic organizations above personal considerations. He has fought and persevered for the causes and policies which he believes to be right, regardless of their unpopularity at the time. These attributes, in combination with his modesty, have made his colleagues in American dermatology look to him as an important leader. As a result he has been president of all the major dermatologic organizations in the United States, not in fulfillment of his own personal ambitions, but in response to his completely convincing effectiveness for and dedication to the goals of these organizations.

Thus Herman Beerman has been instrumental in bridging the gap between the “new” investigative dermatology and the traditional “old” clinical dermatology in this country. Here is a man, primarily a clinician and histopathologist, who is among those who have done the most in America to further the scientific aspects of our specialty through his works for the Society for Investigative Dermatology and the Journal of Investigative Dermatology.

Herman Beerman is not just a highly specialized specialist in his own field, but a man with wide interests. He is widely read, is an experienced globetrotter and even shines brilliantly as a chef in the kitchen where he turns out a superb chocolate souffle. He and his wife Emma, the bridge champion, have been wonderful friends to my wife and me. It has been one of the great rewards of being members of the dermatologic fraternity to be included among his close friends. When it comes to friendship nothing has ever been too much of an effort for Herman and Emma.

My profound gratitude, affection and respect go to this lovable man on the occasion of this special issue of the Journal of Investigative Dermatology.

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