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MY BIG BREAK: Inspiring mentor aided pain management career

Who: Dr. Ed Kowlowitz, owner and medical director of the Center for Pain Management and Center for Special Surgery.

One out of every five Americans suffers from some sort of chronic pain – whether it's arthritis, back pain or migraines – which can limit their everyday activities, create emotional stress and reduce quality of life.

While every pain patient is unique, what they all have in common is a desperate need for relief. I decided long ago to dedicate my medical career to pain management. And I'm grateful that I learned early on that practicing medicine is not just a science – it's also an art.

I was first drawn to pain medicine while completing my residency in anesthesiology at Duke University Medical Center in the 1980s. It was there that I experienced one of many "big breaks" in my 25-year career – finding an inspiring mentor in instructor Dr. Bruno Urban, a German-trained neuro-surgeon and pain physician who had immigrated to the United States in the 1960s.

Dr. Urban had conducted pioneering research on treating and relieving pain through stimulation of the nervous system. Not only did he demonstrate his dedication to advancing the science of pain medicine, but he also imparted his philosophy to students that medicine also is an art. Practicing the art of listening, he said, is vital to being a successful doctor. He instilled in us that, in order to bring relief to our patients, we needed always to listen first, and diagnose and treat second.

After completing a chronic pain management fellowship under Dr. Urban, I had an amazing opportunity in Indianapolis to develop and lead a multi-disciplinary pain center. I worked with this organization for several years, and then decided to start my own medical practice in order to practice medicine in the manner I believed was most beneficial to patients.



Helping patients cope: Dr. Ed Kowlowitz, founder of the Center for Pain Management and Center for Special Surgery, lives by the credo that medicine is both art and science.

- James Yee / The Star

In 1993, I founded the Center for Pain Management and was able to put into practice much of what Dr. Urban had taught me. I've built the center upon two core fundamentals – first, listening to patients and showing compassion is vital; and second, we consistently provide the highest quality patient care possible. I'm proud to know that when doctors refer their patients to the center, it's because they know we offer their patients both time and expertise.

Managing pain is a complex process. It requires a team of professionals, several medical disciplines and a customized plan of care that may include interventional treatments (such as steroid injections) and physical, psychological and pharmacological therapies.

My passion – and the mission of the Center for Pain Management – is to get every patient back to functioning to the best of their ability, as safely and quickly as possible.

Inspired by Dr. Bruno, I've focused my career not only on patient care, but also on conducting research. Discovering scientific advances in the field of pain medicine still motivates and intrigues me. I continue to study to find more innovative ways to manage patients' pain through advanced methods, including spinal cord stimulation. But I never lose focus of the most critical lesson I learned years ago: practicing medicine is both an art and a science.

DR. ED KOWLOWITZ

» **Age:** 47

» **Title:** Owner and medical director, Center for Pain Management and Center for Special Surgery.

» **What he does:** Kowlowitz is a board-certified anesthesiologist with specialized qualifications in pain management and pain medicine. He is experienced in the implantation of spinal cord stimulators. He holds medical staff privileges at Community and St. Vincent hospitals.

» **About the center:** Founded in 1993, the pain center uses interventional procedures, physical therapy, medication management, spinal cord stimulation and psychological counseling to help patients manage and overcome pain.

» **Experience:** Kowlowitz previously was chief of anesthesiology at PhysiciansCare Outpatient Surgical Center and medical director of the Winona Hospital Pain Management program. He completed an internship at Danbury (Conn.) Hospital and a residency and fellowship at Duke University Medical Center.

» **Education:** Bachelor's degree in biomedical engineering from Columbia University and a medical degree from New York Medical College.

» **Personal:** He and his wife, Barbara, have two children.

About the Center for Pain Management

The Center for Pain Management is one of Central Indiana's most experienced medical practices focusing exclusively on treating patients who suffer from back, head, neck, joint or cancer-related pain. This includes spinal injury, herniated discs, arthritis, failed back surgery, chronic pain, migraines and fibromyalgia. The Center's team of clinicians and board-certified physicians specializes in comprehensive evidence-based diagnostic and multi-disciplinary treatment modalities that include interventional procedures, physical therapy, medication management, spinal cord stimulation and psychological counseling. Physician referrals and patient self-referrals are accepted. For more information on the Center for Pain Management, visit www.IndyPain.com or call 317-706-PAIN (7246).