**If These Walls Could Talk**

*If these walls could talk*…… we would hear whispers of their stories of comfort. Of hope, sorrow, relief, desperation. We might hear their soft prayers. If these walls could talk we might hear laughter, fear, exhilaration, pain, ambivalence, new beginnings, endings, comfort. If these walls could talk we would hear stories of generosity of spirit, of kindness, of the need to give back, of doctors loved, of the public good. We would hear stories of pride. Pride in family, community, education and legacy.

*If these walls could hear*…… they would listen to story after individual story, of amazing doctors: boldly advancing pioneering research to cure diseases never cured before, using ether for the first time, working to end the HIV/AIDs Pandemic, developing uniquely targeted cancer therapies, and honing proton beam elegance. They would hear the sound of the voices that carry the stories of the motivations behind these transformationally generous gifts. 524 Visionary Donors spanning the distance of two centuries, on the heels of the founding of America, 524 donors who heard “the call to action” of Drs. Warren & Jackson and look…. look how the people of Boston and around the world heard your call, gentlemen…… and responded.

*If these walls could see*….. they would need a telescope to view how far the reach of this institution has gone in responding and healing those caught under the weight of global disasters – on 9/11 and in Haiti, Bam, South Africa and Indonesia. They would need an MRI to reveal the layers and reach of this hospital's scientific, clinical and research brain trust. Each day these walls would see our founders "call to action" -- in action – throughout the Boston community. “When in distress, every man becomes our neighbor” echoes in our core, fueling our care to the poor and underserved here in our own backyard.

*If these walls could feel*…. they would exude “bust your buttons” pride thinking about the fruits of their collective effort, along with the thousands not listed here, but who firmly stand with them. They would feel the legacy they’ve created, the innovation they’ve helped foster, the lives they have saved, the generations that have benefited. The emotions they would palpably feel as passers-by in the White Lobby move through their day – adrenaline, calm in crisis, apprehension, hope, cool headedness, exhilaration, compassion and pride again. Every donor feels their contribution would make a real difference….and it has. It really has……

While the names on this wall start with Abbott Laboratories and end with Zussman, my eye is drawn to panel 5 where the R’s reside. And I think about my in-laws, Gene and Corky Ribakoff, and I pause…. because it’s our family’s story. I know it well. I know their diseases, their doctors and nurses, and the brilliance and expert skill in the medicine they received coupled with unending compassion, abundant knowledge and with the profound and deep humanity in their care …. and the care of our family since then, and for generations to come. It’s in all of this, that my love and work for this institution was inspired.

*If these walls could touch* … they would embrace the scores of patients that have passed through these doors, carrying the multitude of ailments that would bring one to a hospital. They would touch the shoulders of patients, here now and for generations to come, and say, “you are safe because every resource available for your care, bar none, is here.” They would hold your hand in empathy and love. They would embrace you tightly in gratitude for the part you and 523 other donors played in building this extraordinary enterprise.

*If these walls could talk* …. they would say…Thank you.