

For the Common Good

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In accepting this great honor as a recipient of the Medawar Prize, I wish to chronicle a history of The Transplantation Society (TTS), which was conceived by its scientific pioneers with a logo depicting the covenant sculpted by Rodin ---the joining of two humans' right hands---as symbolizing the bond of an organ donor with an organ recipient.

Permit me to propose respectfully another symbolism of the logo of TTS: the right hand of the scientist bonded with (and needing) the right hand of the humanist—a humanist defined as embracing and propelling values of human welfare-- to accomplish the work of our society.

In his 2002 Medawar Prize presentation Dr. Joseph Murray said: *"I believe that all of us in transplantation work for the common good and are privileged to be part of a scientific endeavor that combines science and humanity"*.

His reflection becomes the narrative of how we have changed --- not solely a society of scientists but now a society robust with humanists. That change began with the vision of TTS President Kathryn Wood, collaborating with Luc Noel of the World Health Organization (WHO) for TTS to become an NGO of the WHO. The field of transplantation had become widely corrupted by the sale of human organs.

Appointed by President Wood to be TTS Director of Medical Affairs, I traveled with Luc Noel to many countries to determine that the trafficking of human organs comprised 10% of all transplantation performed annually. That experience led to the development of a multicultural group of individuals that would ultimately draft the Declaration of Istanbul (DOI) for the common good.

The Declaration of Istanbul Custodian Group (DICG) was formed to promote and to monitor the implementation of DOI principles. The effective work of influencing governments to comply with the DOI has subsequently transitioned to a Task Force on Organ Donation and Transplantation to sustain the involvement of the WHO in the field of organ transplantation.

The framework of donation and transplantation practices is now well-established worldwide by the DOI with its humanist values --- for the protection and well-being of the living donor and the safety of the transplant recipient.

These concluding thoughts come from those who have given their lives to preserve humanist values in the struggle of civil rights ----here paraphrased in the context of organ transplantation: *"while you cannot bend all of what is the reality of transplantation today with its continuing unethical practices to your own will, you can see to it that its moral arc bends towards justice"*.

For the generation that now ascends into leadership of TTS, this epitaph of direction comes from human rights champion John Lewis: *"neither fate nor nature nor the irresistible tides of history, but the work of our own hands (your right hands scientist and humanist), ---matched to reason and principle, will determine our destiny"*.

Our society that evolved to combine the work of transplantation as an endeavor of science and humanity, must remain as a beacon of principles for the common good.