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Radiologists - essential members of the patient's team



Richard L. Baron

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Zoom On Richard L. Baron, past-president, Radiological Society of North America, 2016

Richard L. Baron, MD, FACR, was president of the [Radiological Society of North America \(RSNA\)](#) Board of Directors (2016). As RSNA president, Dr. Baron's priorities are to foster the development of new radiological innovations, and facilitate education into the daily practices of RSNA members. Bringing together RSNA members and participants from around the world to maximize their educational opportunities and experiences will be an important emphasis.

"Building bridges among radiology communities, based on providing collaborative opportunities, education and resources, is an important role for the RSNA," says Dr. Baron.

Dr. Baron is [professor of radiology at the University of Chicago Medical Center](#), where he has been since 2002, serving as chair of the Department of Radiology from 2002 to 2011 and dean for clinical practice from 2011 to 2013.

1. What are your key areas of interest and research?

The exciting advances in the field of radiology have afforded me many opportunities to move into different directions in medical imaging. In my early years when body CT was just beginning, most academic radiologists investigated and published on varied uses of the new technology, and I published in many areas in thoracic, gastrointestinal, and urinary tract imaging. With the increasing capabilities of body CT and MR I found it optimal to focus my research in hepatobiliary imaging, allowing me to maintain clinical knowledge of the disease processes and treatments and undertake more meaningful and impactful clinical research. In terms of my interest in medicine, the field of radiology has been a wonderful background to pursue extensive educational opportunities, which I enjoy as perhaps my greatest avocation. This would include mentoring young individuals to be the next generation of leaders in our field.

2. What are the major challenges in your field?

The necessary transition from a volume-based to value-based practice is a challenge, but RSNA's Radiology

Cares and ACR's Imaging 3.0, among other patient-centered initiatives, have provided valuable tools and insights to help radiologists convert to patient-centered practices. To truly offer value, however, the radiology community must move away from descriptive reporting and toward impactful reporting that provides answers to key questions. This will require us to expand our thinking beyond just the images we create and evaluate, to deepen our knowledge of clinical medicine, and to increase our level of participation in multidisciplinary teams. The very technology that helped us advance our field has resulted in a certain level of isolation among radiologists. It will take creativity and engagement to address this challenge; we must encourage meaningful discussions among radiologists, technologists and referring providers to deliver optimal patient care. In this way, radiologists will fortify their position as an essential member of the patient's medical team.

Another challenge that radiologists face is an increasing trend toward subspecialty medicine. Radiologists must maintain proficiency at the subspecialty level. This can be achieved via practice reconfigurations and through the pursuit of meaningful continuing education.

3. What is your top management tip?

If I can offer only one tip from my experience it is to show respect for all individuals at all times, no matter what your personal feelings or emotions might be toward the person. This of course encompasses many subcomponents, but it starts with listening with sincerity to differences of opinion and understanding the needs and unique circumstances encountered by individuals..

4. What would you single out as a career highlight?

My career and my personal life have been amazingly enriched by all the talented and creative individuals around the world that I have encountered through academic radiology. I can't imagine how limited my experiences and visions would be had I not been so fortunate. I am particularly privileged to have mentored so many individuals from countries near and far who worked with our teams at the University of Pittsburgh and the University of Chicago. I am delighted to see many of them grow to become leaders in radiology in their countries, creating a large international family experience.

5. If you had not chosen this career path you would have become a ?

I always enjoyed solving puzzles as a child and adult, and in medical school the two fields that I saw as puzzles were radiology (of course!) and nephrology (with acid-base problems). Little did I know how extensive and expansive the puzzles would become with radiology, but I'm glad I chose that career path.

6. What are your personal interests outside of work?

Family activities of any kind put a smile on my face and relax me (mostly!). Fortunately, my wife and two adult children enjoy similar activities, which include sports (skiing, hiking, tennis, basketball), cooking and fine dining, and travel.

7. Your favourite quote?

My favourite quote is a consolidation from two individuals, my daughter as a preteen and her coach (from one of her many sports, but I can't recall which!). In driving her to a practice she asked me to hurry, and I told her she was going to be five minutes early. Her response to me was "Dad, Coach says five minutes early is 10 minutes too late."

I have never forgotten the wisdom in this and I use it most every day in my administrative roles emphasizing that responsible individuals always arrive ahead of time to make sure that they are able to have time to prepare in advance on arrival, and not be late due to unanticipated problems. Interesting that a preteen could be so wise to teach her father.

Dr. Baron graduated from Yale University in 1972, and earned his medical degree in 1976 at the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, Missouri. An internship in internal medicine at Yale University was followed by his radiology residency and abdominal radiology fellowship at the Mallinckrodt Institute of Radiology at Washington University. Later in his career, he continued his education at the Katz Graduate School of Business at the University of Pittsburgh.

Before joining the University of Chicago, Dr. Baron served as chair of the Department of Radiology at the University of Pittsburgh from 1992 to 1999, and as founding president and CEO of the University of Pittsburgh Physicians from 1997 to 2002.

Dr. Baron has authored or co-authored 118 peer-reviewed scientific articles, one book and 53 book chapters and review articles. He has served on the editorial boards and as manuscript reviewer for multiple journals, including

Radiology, American Journal of Roentgenology, Journal of Computer Assisted Tomography, Liver Transplantation, Gastroenterology and European Radiology. He served as an associate editor of Radiology from 1991 to 1996 and Liver Transplantation from 2004 to 2009.

Dr. Baron has been an active member of several medical societies and organisations, including the American College of Radiology and the American Roentgen Ray Society (ARRS), and he is a past president of the Society of Gastrointestinal Radiologists and the Society of Computed Body Tomography and Magnetic Resonance. Dr. Baron served on the Board of Directors of the UPMC HealthCare System from 1997 to 2002 and on The Joint Commission Professional Technical Advisory Committee from 2007 to 2011.

Dr. Baron has been principal investigator on a dozen research projects and has earned research awards from numerous national radiology societies, especially in the area of diagnostic imaging of liver disease. The RSNA has presented Dr. Baron with two Magna Cum Laude Awards, and the ARRS awarded him gold and silver medals for educational exhibits. The European Society of Gastrointestinal and Abdominal Radiology awarded Dr. Baron honorary fellowship in 2008. The Asian Oceanian Society of Radiology awarded Dr. Baron its gold medal in 2014.

An RSNA member since 1978, Dr. Baron has served on many committees, such as the Scientific Program Committee, Public Information Advisors Network, Finance Committee and the Education Exhibits Committee, where he served as chair from 2006 to 2009. In 2008, he was elected to the RSNA Board of Directors and served as the Board liaison for education and international activities. He served as Board chair from 2013 to 2014, and president-elect from 2014 to 2015.

Note: Richard Baron passed away 4 May 2017. [The RSNA notice is available on their website.](#)

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