

A few words by Dr. Mariano Rivera, about Drs. Michael and Kate Bárány

I first met Dr. Bárány twelve years ago when he hired me on as a research assistant. I had never heard of him before my interview, so didn't know what to expect. When I met him, he appeared to be a frail old man. But as I worked with him in the lab, he wasn't frail at all – he was a strong figure who had a deep knowledge and one who worked diligently in the lab where I always watched in amazement.

I got to know Michael on a personal level one winter afternoon. He was working late in the lab, like he usually did, and got a call from Kate where she said she was going outside for a walk, like she usually did. He was worried about her walking in the cold all alone, so he quickly grabbed his coat, and raced out of the lab. While hurrying home, he slipped on ice and hurt his lower back. After that, during his rehab, I got to see an even stronger side of Michael.

I helped supervise him, when he went swimming every day. He was slow at first, but quickly regained his strength; in a few, short months, he was back to his old self. His motivation: To get back to the lab, and most of all, to be healthy enough to help Kate with anything she needed.

Michael and Kate were truly great scientists and teachers. They molded many great minds, including their two sons George and Francis. But they were much more than that. They were two of the most compassionate people you could ever meet. They always held hands as they walked outside in the courtyard. Kate always reminded me of how she first met Michael – he offered her a bandage for a cut she had, while proclaiming he was a doctor. She always said that if she had to do it all over again, she would choose Michael – every time! They loved each other so much, that, even after 62 years of marriage, they still said “I love you” to each other each day.

With the time I spent with Michael and Kate in the past few years, I didn't feel like just a friend or a student to them, but as a surrogate member of the family. From watching Michael work in the lab, I gained a strong work ethic. From watching him take care of his wife, I learned how to be compassionate, as well as how to have a good marriage. These are all qualities that I apply to my life as a husband, as a father, as a doctor, and as a person.

My wife and I miss them dearly, and I'm sure the same is true for all of you. But for as long as we live, they will always live on in our memories.