



GENERAL ACUPUNCTURE

In Memory of Acupuncturist Al Stone

Eric Brand, LAc

On May 24, 2013, the Traditional Chinese medicine community lost one of its most treasured and tireless supporters, Al Stone, to a rare and unusually aggressive form of ocular melanoma. Al was a pillar of the Chinese medicine community and a friend to all that knew him, and he will be deeply missed. Happily, Al's legendary sense of humor was with him to the end, and he passed peacefully, surrounded by those who loved him. He was 54.

Al Stone was highly active in the herbal medicine community, and many knew him as a prolific contributor to online forums for practitioners. He saw the Internet's potential for spreading information about Chinese medicine back when many people still lacked an email account, and his award-winning site www.acupuncture.com had received millions of hits by the time he graduated from Emperor's College of Traditional Oriental Medicine in 1997. He also founded Gancao.net and several other popular sites, and his articles and written contributions reached students and practitioners around the world.

Al later returned to Emperor's, where he completed his doctorate degree in 2007 and served as an instructor and clinical supervisor. Al was a co-author of two books with Qiao Yi, the *Traditional Chinese Medicine Diagnosis Study Guide* and *Traditional Chinese Medicine Formula Study Guide*, and also worked as a co-author of *The Clinical Practice of Chinese Medicine: Pain*, published by PMPH in Beijing.



Photo of Al Stone courtesy of Eric Brand

Like many in the TCM community, I initially knew Al from reading his articles online and following his comments in discussion groups such as the Chinese Herb Academy. I first came upon his writing in the late 1990s when I was still a student, and I remember voraciously taking in his articles and admiring his knowledge, which at the time seemed inspirationally advanced to my novice eyes. Like many who first knew Al in the virtual world, I already felt like he was an old friend by the time I actually met him in person. As time went on, Al and I ended up at the same table in numerous committees and conferences, and his infectious sense of humor could even transform a discussion on FDA regulations into a good time.

Al was highly active in the AAAOM, and preserving practitioner access to Chinese herbs was a core goal of many of his recent efforts. Al spearheaded major projects related to good dispensing practices for practitioners, and we have a dedicated team that is committed to seeing his vision reach its full fruition.

In particular, Al worked hard on a guidance document for good compounding and dispensing practices for Chinese medicine practitioners, and he hoped that by establishing such standards from within the profession, we would be able to strengthen our ability to preserve practitioner access to herbs over the long-term future. The more that we stay united and work hard to protect access to Chinese herbal medicine, the more that Al's spirit lives on within us.

In honor of Al and his work, the AAAOM is founding the Stone Memorial Fund to raise money for a prominent and informative web presence for our field. For more information, please visit www.aaaomonline.org.

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