



## A loss to the profession: Celebrating the life of Mark Gignac, ND

It is with deep sadness that we share news of the passing of our colleague Mark Gignac, who passed away suddenly on September 20th.

Mark graduated twice from Bastyr University, first in 1992 as a doctor of naturopathy and again in 1996 with a master's degree in acupuncture. Mark has been my close friend and co-worker for the past 20 years. He was one of the first NDs hired by the Cancer Treatment Centers of America and helped to develop the model of care later adopted throughout the CTCA hospital system leading to an explosion of oncology jobs and residencies for many of our colleagues.

Mark served as the Director of Integrative Medicine at Seattle Cancer Treatment and Wellness Center. He was a generous teacher and had a multitude of preceptor students, many of whom later went on to pursue careers in naturopathic oncology. Mark was one of the first ND's to take his oncology board examinations and become certified as a naturopathic oncologist (FABNO)

One of Mark's amazing gifts was the ability to blend a deep understanding of biochemistry and physiology with an equally deep understanding of mind-body medicine. He frequently taught us new ways of looking at cases and ways to use the tools of naturopathic medicine to better help our patients. His well thought out and in-depth explanations of cases and problems at oncology conferences and study groups left all of us with a lasting impression of brilliance and a desire to learn just a bit of what he knew in order to help our own patients.

He worked collaboratively with many oncologists, but none more than Dr. Nick Chen, who worked with Mark for over 20 years. Together they built a track record of remarkable success in helping cancer patients thrive for years and even decades past their prognosis.

Mark was originally attracted to natural medicine while working with an herbalist when [he] lived in Canada. Mark never lost his love of herbs and frequently traveled to the Brazilian Amazon to continue learning from traditional healers.

Mark was a lifelong learner and could quote research and philosophy with equal facility. His compassion and understanding led him to be loved by friends, co-workers and patients equally. I am glad to have known Mark, called him a friend and will miss him dearly.

Paul Reilly, ND  
September 22, 2018