Foreword

It is said, "He who works with his hands is a laborer; he who works with his hands and his head is a craftsman; and he who works with his hands, his head, and his heart is an artist." Neurosurgery is, indeed, an art form that requires the hand, the head, and the heart.

In 1972, Peter Jannetta invited me, fresh out of residency, to assist him in forming the first department of neurosurgery at the University of Pittsburgh. He told me that three qualities were essential for an academic neurosurgeon: (1) demonstrated research capabilities, (2) competent administrative skills, and (3) surgical ability. He emphasized the "sine qua non" (without which nothing) for a neurosurgeon is to be a skilled operative surgeon and an empathetic physician. Operative competence has remained a primary focus at the University of Pittsburgh for over five decades.

In this book, Dr. Nitin Agarwal and his colleagues have compiled and synthesized the absolute essence of neurosurgical procedures and techniques. Clifton Hillegass, in 1958, introduced "Cliff Notes." Initially, these were a series of study guides used to simplify understanding of more complex works and designed to provide the main points without all the details. It is now expanded to hundreds of works. This book serves as a unique compilation of neurosurgical "cliff notes" to help residents and faculty quickly, understandably, and efficiently acquire knowledge of the essential elements required for the most frequent operations performed by a neurosurgeon. It provides the neurosurgical student, at all levels, with a concise and understandable overview of what to prepare for and how to perform procedures from carpal tunnel operations to the most complex skull base surgery.

Traditional learning methods and static didactics are no longer sufficient in an era of rapidly advancing neuroguidance, surgical tools, and increasingly complex operative approaches. No practical, handy reference exists for real-time use in clinical settings. This operative handbook has been thoughtfully crafted to address the demands of contemporary neurosurgical education, providing clear, concise explanations and focused procedural guidance.

It is highly recommended for all those seeking what will become the "Cliff Notes" for operative neurosurgery. Embrace this resource as a meaningful step forward on your path to becoming a capable, confident, and thoughtful operative neurosurgeon.

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