Chapter XVI

Special People

Miss Pauline Cranny

"After von Schulte died," Dr. Alfred C. Andersen recalls that, "the Dean's position became more part-time. Someone had to be there to take care of the details." That someone was Pauline Cranny, "Miss Cranny" to several generations of Creighton medical students.

Pauline Cranny came to the medical school in 1918, about the same time as Dr. von Schulte. She was Medical Librarian for two years, then is listed as Registrar in the 1920-21 Annual Announcement of the College of Medicine. Finally in 1922, she was Secretary to the Dean. She held this position for the next 33 years, and from it she wielded much influence. Every Creighton medical graduate of her time remembers Miss Cranny.

Pauline Cranny was "a large, angular woman who had the habit of speaking with her lips whatever you were saying." She was "tall and slender, with a piercing gaze." She never married, but rather made the medical school and its administration the center of her life. By all accounts, she was liked and well-respected, but would brook no nonsense. "If she liked you, you did well. If she didn't like you, you were in big trouble." Dr. Silvio J. Giovale (M.D. 1938) remembers: "Miss Cranny, the Dean's Secretary, was a good-hearted soul. She was a disciplinarian and did not stand for any unnecessary frivolity, [but] was kind and considerate in her own way."

Miss Cranny took care of everything. "She ran attendance, she ran scheduling, everything came out of Miss Cranny's office. She knew everyone by name." Students stood in line to get grades from her, they were counseled by her, and if necessary, were disciplined by her. She was the one constant, the one figure of authority with whom generations of students had day-to-day contact. She represented the real power to students on a practical basis.

But the forces of change brought the end of her role. In 1955 when Dr. Frederick Gillick became Dean, he acted as a full-time Dean, with definite opinions about how to run a medical school. It seems he felt there could be only one Dean, and that was not to be Miss Cranny. At any rate, Miss Cranny was dismissed, rather summarily, at age 60.

She was not, however, forgotten by the students she had befriended over the years. Dr. William Reals (M.D. 1945) noted that she was guest of honor for his class at their twenty-fifth reunion in 1970. In her later years, she became somewhat reclusive, living with a brother and sister and rarely venturing out, even when invited to lunch or dinner. She died in July 1979 at the age of 84. After her death, Creighton School of Medicine's alumni advisors passed a resolution that a plaque honoring her memory be placed.

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in the Medical School. Miss Cranny would have approved. As Dr. John Hartigan (M.D. 1943) expressed it, “She was a good scout.”

Nicholas Dietz, Jr. — “Meticulous Nick”

Dr. Nicholas Dietz, Jr. is another legendary figure that stands out in the memory of School of Medicine graduates. He received his education at Columbia University—a B.A. in 1924, an M.A. in 1926, and a Ph.D. in 1930. Before coming to Creighton in 1933, he taught for four years at Columbia as an Assistant in Chemistry, and from 1929-1933 as an Instructor in Chemistry at the University of Pittsburgh.

From 1933 until 1966, Dr. Dietz taught in the Biological Chemistry and Nutrition Department at the School of Medicine, advancing from Assistant Professor (1933-1946) to Associate Professor (1946-1956) to Professor (1956-1966). He was Acting Chairman of the Department from 1959-1961 and was named Professor Emeritus of Biological Chemistry in 1969.

From July 1942 until May 1946 Dr. Dietz served in the Medical Corps of the U.S. Army, primarily in Europe, earning two battle stars and the rank of Captain. His duties included teaching Preventive Medicine at the Medical Service School Center outside of Paris and doing nutritional survey work in France, Italy, and Germany.

In 1966 he retired from teaching, but remained active. For years following, as an Emeritus Professor he did animal research and worked on the history of science and medicine. He also acted as audio-visual coordinator for the School of Medicine. In 1979 he was appointed Special Assistant to the Dean of Medicine, Dr. Holbaur. Besides special ad hoc projects, Dr. Dietz aided in developing the Introduction to Clinical Medicine course and was to begin compiling a history of the Creighton School of Medicine. He continued to act as official liaison between the Surgeon General of the Army and the Dean of the School of Medicine for medical procurement for the Army.

Dr. Dietz’s professional activities outside the Creighton community were even more numerous. After retirement, he was made President of the Nebraska Academy of Sciences and Co-chairman of its history and philosophy of science sections. He was on the National Committee on Constitution and By-Laws of the American Chemical Society. He was a Board member of the national organization, Catholic Scholarships for Negroes, and was personally responsible for securing scholarships for several black Creighton medical students.

Dr. Dietz was selected by students in 1966 to receive the Distinguished Teacher Award. In 1982 he was presented with Creighton University’s Distinguished Service Award. Beginning in the late 1970’s, The Dr. William A. and Ethel Perer Annual Biochemistry Award was presented to a “graduating senior best exemplifying..."
fying excellence in both basic and clinical biochemistry." It was awarded first in honor of, and later in memory of Dr. Dietz. He was a religious man, and another group of his activities centered on the Catholic Church. He was an active member for more than 40 years in the Catholic Central Union of America, a pioneer organization for social action, and he served as editor of their journal. As national chairman of this organization and of the National Catholic Women's Union, he was largely responsible for the microfilming of perishable library materials at their Central Bureau Library in St. Louis, Missouri. At Creighton, he was the moderator of the Xavier Forum and was sacristan of St. Luke's Chapel within the Medical School. In 1959 he was awarded the Benemerenti Medal by Pope John XXIII for his lifetime of service to the Catholic Church.

Dr. Dietz died suddenly on May 30, 1984, of heart failure at the age of 83. A fitting memorial to him was established when a study room used for daily Mass at Crisis II, named St. Luke's Chapel, was renovated into a formal chapel. Dr. Dietz was a daily Communicant at the noontime Medical School Mass, and made it his project to begin this renovation. The Christ the Healer chapel was formally opened and dedicated in memory of Dr. Dietz on April 30, 1985.

Several generations of medical graduates remember "Meticulous Nick," as Dr. Dietz was known because of his attention to the details of his subject area and the depths of understanding which he expected of students. Dr. Clarence Moran (M.D. 1928) recalled of his colleague and friend, "He just sincerely felt if they [medical students] didn’t know every bit of biochemistry that he was teaching them, he couldn’t possibly let them be doctors."

Despite the nickname, Dr. Dietz was not so meticulous in matters of housekeeping. He is remembered by many for his disorganized office and living quarters. Drs. Moran and Alfred C. Andersen, among others, recalled Dr. Dietz’s hotel rooms. He was a lifelong bachelor and lived in residence hotels, which had only a single path leading through them, with books, papers and belongings stacked high on every side. He threw nothing away. Yet upon his death, the history of the Creighton School of Medicine, which he had been known to be compiling, was nowhere to be found. Unfortunately, especially for the authors of this book, his material may have been discarded by others as old papers of no value.

Graduates have fond memories of him. Dr. Robert Luby (M.D. 1952) remembered an expression of Dr. Dietz when speaking of fatal toxicological combinations. Referring to well-known Omaha morticians, Dr. Dietz would say, "If you do this, or this, it’s Heafey & Heafey for you!"

Dr. D. E. Baca (M.D. 1939) recalled this event concerning Dr. Dietz, who at the time was starting one of his first years of teaching at the Medical School. Dr. Dietz arrived at class the first day of the term to lecture on Biological Chemistry and Nutrition. He brought with him an armload of vegetables. According to Dr. Baca, the first thing he did was to hold up a potato and say, "Gentlemen, this is a "pot-a-to". That set the mood. Everyone looked at each other and said, "Who is this..."
character?” Then Dr. Dietz turned around and put “potato” on the board. He picked up a tomato and proceeded with the same ritual as with the potato. “By the time he turned around a second time, a bunch of spitballs hit.” Everyone started laughing uncontrollably and throwing things at him.\(^2\)

In spite of his spitball shower, Dr. Dietz stayed on at the School of Medicine for many years and was much beloved by all. As one graduate, Dr. Vincent J. Carollo (M.D. 1962) said of Dr. Dietz and his cohort, Dr. Levine, “They were teachers and friends. God bless them both.”\(^2\)

**Herbert F. Gerald — “Pop” Gerald**

One medical graduate termed Herbert Gerald “a cornerstone in the Basic Sciences” at the School of Medicine.\(^1\) Indeed, he is one of the personalities that generations of Creighton medical students remember with great fondness. He had a long history at Creighton, teaching in various capacities for thirty-eight years. After receiving a Ph.G. from the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy in 1902 and an M.D. from Tufts College in 1909, Dr. Gerald came to Creighton in 1912 as an Assistant in Pharmacology. In 1914 he was promoted to Assistant Professor of Physiology and Pharmacology. From 1916 to 1917 he was an Associate Professor of Materia Medica and Pharmacology. He then served for three years, 1917 to 1920, in the School of Dentistry as Professor of Pathology, Bacteriology, Histology and Pharmacology. Returning to the School of Medicine, he spent the next ten years as Professor of Pharmacology. In 1930 he became Professor of Physiology as well, and head of that department. For the next 20 years, he remained chairman. In 1950 he was named Professor Emeritus and retired from active teaching.\(^2\)

An important aside should be noted. Pop Gerald’s son, Park S. Gerald, a 1947 graduate of the Creighton School of Medicine, is a member of the medical faculty of Harvard, and received the Creighton University Alumni Achievement Citation in 1985.

From 1922-1950, Dr. Gerald was on the Administrative Board of the School of Medicine, and from 1924-1950 was Chairman of the Junior Council, which oversaw pre-clinical instruction. He was a longtime influential member of the School of Medicine Admissions Committee. Dr. Richard Egan (M.D. 1940) said that Gerald “was the Admissions Committee.”\(^2\) He also found time to earn a B.S.M. (Bachelor of Science in Medicine) from Creighton in 1927.

According to Dr. John Hartigan (M.D. 1943), Dr. Gerald “looked about seventy-five, although I don’t suppose he was. He was a short, kind of dumpy little fellow, baldish, with a Meerschaum pipe which he smoked continuously.”\(^2\) Dr. Hartigan remembered him as he one with whom students discussed problems during their first two years.

Dr. Hartigan also noted Dr. Gerald’s gentleness, which earned him his affectionate nickname, “Pop.” This gentleness and genuine concern for students on the part of Dr. Gerald is mentioned often by graduates reminiscing about “Pop” Gerald.
A 1937 banquet honoring Dr. Gerald for twenty-five years of service to Creighton also emphasized his gentle and caring ways. Dr. Charles M. Wilhelm quoted Cardinal Newman and applied his words to Dr. Gerald:

He is tender toward the bashful, gentle toward the distant, and merciful toward the absurd; he can recollect to whom he is speaking, he guards against unreasonable allusions or topics that may irritate, he is seldom prominent in conversation. He makes light of favors while he does them and seems to be receiving while he is conferring. He has no ears for slander or gossip—he is never mean or rude in his disputes, never takes unfair advantage. He has too much good sense to be affronted at insult; he is too busy to remember injuries and too indolent to bear malice.27

As often as graduates note Dr. Gerald’s gentle qualities, they mention his high, squeaky voice. Mentioned even more often was his pronounced New England accent, unchanged despite forty years in the Midwest. Two graduates, Dr. John Hartigan (M.D. 1943) and D. E. Baca (M.D. 1939), (“Baakei' to Pop Gerald) remembered exactly the same quote from a Pharmacology lecture: “Gore’ powder, pronounced exactly the way it’s spelled, G-G-A, ‘Gore’ powder.”28

Dr. John William Vincent (M.D. 1944) noted, “Pop Gerald also taught us prescription writing and in his inimitable voice and Boston accent, the correct pronunciation of “Novoxon” Correctly, according to Pop Gerald, it was “Nerox Vomial.”29 Dr. William Reals recalled that Pop Gerald taught “Materier Mediker.”

Dr. Richard Egan (M.D. 1940) emphasized the high standards and principles which were typical of Dr. Gerald. He said that long before there was a Department of Medical Ethics at Creighton, Dr. Gerald “emphasized in his own actions and teachings the ethics that should govern the members of the profession.”30 Dr. Egan shared a reminiscence illustrating Dr. Gerald’s basic sense of honesty. At the time, the MMPI (Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory) was one instrument used to judge candidates for admission to some medical schools. The test included questions designed to single out individuals who were answering questions the way they felt they should, rather than with complete candor. One such question was, “If you were at a movie, and both the ticket seller and ticket taker were nowhere around, would you go in anyway?”

The test was structured so that if the student answered anything except that he would sneak into the movie free, he was being less than honest. Pop Gerald, however, objected to this reasoning. “Not where I come from,” he said. “You’d wait for the ticket seller to come back.” Dr. Gerald would have waited. He was that kind of individual.32
Other graduates remembered humorous incidents. Dr. John William Vincent (M.D. 1944) wrote:

Dr. "Pop" Gerald taught us clinical physiology which consisted of smoking a drum, which in turn was used to register muscular contractions of the frog, when said muscle had an electrical stimulus. We were, of course, taught how to pith the frog before the experiment, but one student of my time was running behind and tried substituting a manual record on his smoked drum. He very deliberately and with finesse rotated the drum manually and then, periodically, at appropriate intervals, moved the needle to record on the drum. As the student persisted with diligence in [faking] a near-perfect pithed frog experiment, using his bi-manual technique, Pop Gerald chanced to be a very attentive observer. When the experiment was done and the forgery could have been classified as excellent, Dr. Gerald interrupted the whole procedure with his scratchy, squeaky, sonorous voice, saying (and I quote): "Umph, (some appropriate expletive of that time), that wasn't exactly the way I wanted that experiment done. Now would you please do it my way?" Many of us then thought there was a truth to the old saw — "What a terrible web we weave when first we practice to deceive."33

Dr. D. E. Baca shared this reminiscence about Pop Gerald, whom he called "a very lovable character." During lab exams Dr. Gerald would separate the students so they couldn't cheat. One student in Dr. Baca's class, an older gentleman, always wore a suit with a lab coat over it. During exams, he had crib notes on index cards scattered through his various suit pockets, and he had a "master" index card in the pocket of his lab coat telling him the location of his crib notes. During one Pharmacology exam, students stole his crib notes, substituting blank cards. Once the exam started, he began, more and more frantically, to search for his crib notes. By the end of the exam, his paper was still essentially blank. Pop Gerald had been in on the whole thing, and let the student know in no uncertain terms that "honesty was the best policy."34

Graduates will tell you there was never another personality quite like Herbert "Pop" Gerald at the School of Medicine. He retired in 1950 and in 1954, after the death of his wife, moved to Barrington, Illinois, to live with a son. It was there he died on October 18, 1957, at the age of 76.

Victor E. Levine — "Vitamin Vic"

A personality universally remembered by graduates of the School of Medicine between 1918 and 1959 was Dr. Victor E. Levine, or "Vitamin Vic," as he was affectionately known. Dr. Levine, although a 1928 Creighton medical graduate himself, never practiced medicine but chose to be a Biochemist with emphasis on nutrition — thus the nickname "Vitamin Vic." A special area of interest was the Arctic, where he studied the nutritional patterns of the native Eskimos.

Victor Emanuel Levine was born in 1891 and educated in New York City. He earned a B.A. degree from the College of the City of New York in 1909 and from Columbia University an M.A. in 1911 and a Ph.D. in 1914. Before coming to Creighton, he served as an Instructor in Biological Chemistry at the Columbia
University College of Physicians and Surgeons from 1913 to 1916, as an Assistant Professor of Organic Chemistry at Fordham University from 1916 to 1917, and as Director of the Clinical Lab at Beth Israel Hospital from 1917 to 1918.

In 1918 he was employed by Creighton University as an Assistant Professor of Biological Chemistry and Physiology. After two years he was made a full professor and (before age 30) Head of the Department of Biological Chemistry and Nutrition. He remained in this position from 1920 to 1959, and it was in this capacity that many School of Medicine graduates came to know and respect him. He took classes in the School of Medicine on a part-time basis, while teaching Biological Chemistry, and received his M.D. degree from Creighton in 1928. He did not serve an internship and never practiced medicine in a clinical sense. Perhaps the study of medicine gave him the background he felt he needed to understand the needs of the future physicians he taught for so many years.

Having been granted a leave of absence, Dr. Levine also served in the U.S. Army during World War II, enlisting August 12, 1942, and being discharged March 6, 1946. He attained the rank of Lt. Colonel, having served as Executive Officer at the Northwestern Service Command Medical Laboratory at Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, and Commanding Officer at the Ninth Service Command Medical Laboratories at both Ft. Lewis, Washington, and the Presidio in Monterey, California.

Dr. Levine never married but appeared to have had two lifelong loves: One was the teaching of medical students. The second was first-hand scientific investigation of the nutrition of Eskimos living in the Arctic regions. Dr. Levine made at least ten trips to Alaska and other points north, beginning in 1921 and spending as long as a year and a half on some of these expeditions. He took leaves of absence from his academic duties for the longer trips, some of which were sponsored by the United States Public Health Service. The shorter ones were conducted over a summer, and on these he took medical students with him as assistants.

As a teacher, Vitamin Vic was demanding, believing that his subject must be learned in toto for physicians to be competent. Yet he was beloved by the students and thought of as a friend as well as a teacher. Many also remember him as an eccentric character. Dr. Clarence S. Moran (M.D. 1928), who knew Dr. Levine as a teacher, a classmate (receiving his M.D. the same year as Levine), and later as a friend and colleague, made these observations:

He [Levine] was a very peculiar character. He was short... and I suppose you’d call him a little vain, most of us are. He was starting to show his age a little. To compensate for his height, he wore shoes with high heels. And for his gray hair, he used hair dye... He'd be at school, and he'd have strands of purple stuff running down the back of his neck and maybe staining his coat collars.37

Dr. D. E. Baca (M.D. 1939) has similar memories: “He used to dye his hair, and at times the dye he used would start running.”38

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Dr. Levine’s teaching methods, also, tended toward the unusual. Dr. Novella A. Schafer (M.D. 1958) remembers her father, Dr. Leander Herman Schafer (M.D. 1925), telling her stories of Dr. Levine:

On the first day of class, he reviewed all of Organic Chemistry. He wrote all over the blackboard and then started writing on the walls when there was no more room on the blackboard. The walls were as black as the blackboard because of the soot from the trains across the way.39

The younger Dr. Schafer noted that thirty-two years later, Dr. Levine also taught her. “The walls were painted then and we had diesel engines, instead of steam,” but Dr. Levine was still writing on the walls and the floor.40

Dr. John William Vincent (M.D. 1944), recalled, “I was amused and amazed by Vitamin Vic Levine, who would carry his lecture in writing from the blackboard to the wall and to the floor, all an effort to get our attention, I guess.”41

Dr. Clarence Moran recalled several stories from his student days about Dr. Levine: James John Duffy (M.D. 1926) was a student of Dr. Levine’s, who Dr. Moran recalled as having lost an eye, wearing an eye patch, and being a “pretty abrasive individual.” Dr. Levine flunked Duffy, who became considerably upset.

Duffy was pretty angry, so when we got out of school about four o’clock in the afternoon, Duffy was going to speak to him [Dr. Levine] so he sat on the front steps of the school building or maybe on the roof of his car, but he sat there waiting and Levine realized he was down there and what the trouble was and he thought “Oh, well, he’ll go home”; but Duffy never went home. It got to be about six o’clock and Levine looked out the window and said, “You passed, Duffy, you passed. You can go home.”42

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Dr. Moran reported a personal experience with Dr. Levine. He did so reluctantly, for he said he didn’t want any praise, and he wasn’t trying to “polish the apple.” Dr. Moran’s class assignment for the day had been a chapter on thyroid function and thyroid disease, which happened to diagram the elaborate structural formula for thyroxine, and for some reason that had caught Dr. Moran’s eye. He traced it, then quit studying for the night. On the quiz for that day, Dr. Moran got a 100. Dr. Levine said, “I went over this paper twice and I can’t find a single mistake. Where is this person, Moran? Stand up!” After standing, Dr. Levine asked Dr. Moran if he could go to the board and draw the structural formula for thyroxine. Dr. Moran was, almost by accident, again able to reproduce it perfectly. The next two quarters, Dr. Moran was never asked another question or even spoken to by Dr. Levine; but he received a 100 for each quarter grade. At the end of the year, in a
chance meeting with Dr. Levine, Dr. Moran was told, “I can’t give you a 100 for the year – I just can’t. I’ll give you a 99.”

Dr. Peter DeMarco (M.D. 1962) remembered “one teacher who kept us laughing almost on a daily basis with his quaint stories as he taught Biochemistry – Dr. Vic Levine.” Other medical graduates, too, remember some of the pearls dropped by Dr. Levine in the course of his teaching. For example, Dr. James T. Dresser (M.D. 1941) remembered Dr. Levine telling them that in Alaska “coldness was judged by the number of dogs that one had to sleep with to keep from freezing.”

Dr. Ethel M. Waters (M.D. 1940) writes, “I have eaten a bowl of parsley regularly since Dr. Levine told us parsley contained every vitamin there was.” And a quote of Dr. Levine’s recalled by Dr. John R. Moore (M.D. 1951): “To have a good liver, you must be one.”

Dr. Richard L. O’Brien (M.D. 1960), Creighton’s Medical Dean, remembers that Dr. Levine made his classes outline the entire Biochemistry textbook and hand in the outline. Dr. O’Brien thought it was “really stupid” at the time, but it turned out to be a great teaching method. It forced the student to read and understand the material well enough to digest it. Dr. O’Brien still has visual images of some pages of this textbook. “Some things you can never escape.”

Dr. Levine was, by all accounts, brilliant but absent-minded as well. Dr. D. E. Baca (M.D. 1939) recalled a story of a long-ago Saturday night and a prank played on Dr. Levine, who at the time was the physician-in-residence at the Fontenelle Hotel, “the hoity-toity hotel in Omaha in those days,” according to Dr. Baca. Four Phi Chi brothers with their dates decided to pay Levine a visit at the Fontenelle. He was flattered. As previously planned, the group engaged him in a conversation as a diversion, while one of them called room service for several bottles of expensive whiskey. One of them kept a lookout for room service, while the others kept Dr. Levine off guard. The lookout grabbed the liquor, signed for it (using Levine’s name) and stashed it in the hall, while Dr. Levine was totally unaware of any of this. After they visited for awhile, they left with the loot. Several days later Dr. Levine received a rather large bill from the hotel for the liquor. He put two and two together but was so absent-minded that he could not remember who had paid him a visit. Dr. Baca concludes, “They really took him to the cleaners that time. He was good for a laugh, because he was always a busy little bee and always forgetful.”

Dr. Levine brought back souvenirs from his Arctic expeditions. After his trip in 1941, he returned with a frozen fox. In 1950 Dr. Levine was the featured guest on WOW-TV’s “Creighton University Presents,” showing Eskimo clothing from his Arctic travels and comparing it to the clothing worn in Korea by American soldiers.

In 1935 one of the souvenirs from his Alaskan adventure was a Husky puppy. Dr. Clarence Moran recalled an incident concerning this animal. As mentioned, at one time Dr. Levine served as the Fontenelle Hotel physician, for which he was remunerated with the penthouse as living quarters, free of charge. He brought back this Eskimo dog from Point Barrow, Alaska, in 1935 and kept it with him in the penthouse.
of the Fontenelle. Before one out-of-town ten-day speaking trip, he left food for the
dog, locked the door and left. "I don't know what kind of bathroom facilities he left
for the dog or how well trained it was," Dr. Moran noted, but when Dr. Levine
returned from his trip, he lost his job at the Fontenelle and the penthouse had to be
redecorated. Dr. Alfred Andersen (M.D. 1941) recalled this dog also, which he called a
malamute, and remembere living in Dr. Levine's offices at the Medical School,
apparently after the hotel incident.

At any rate, Dr. Levine was a most memorable character. Although eccentric,
he was a brilliant man, well regarded in national and international scientific circles.
He published extensively, writing hundreds of articles for professional journals. In
1935 he published a vitamin chart. In addition he authored several books including
*Treatise of Anemia* in 1929 and *Introduction to Toxicology*, published by the Univer-
sity of Madrid in 1962. He also authored a chapter, "Analysis of Residual Pesticides
in Food" in the 1961 *Toxicology, Mechanics and Analytical Methods.*

He was included in the 1956 edition of *America's Young Men*. He was the subject
of an April 18, 1944 *Time* magazine article, in connection with a paper he presented
to the American Association of Physical Anthropologists. He served on various
civic boards, among them the Board of Public Welfare of Omaha, as its Chairman in
1934, and the Omaha Conservation Committee, as its Chairman in 1947.

The list of his honors is extensive. In 1921 he was named a fellow in the
American Society for the Advancement of Science. In 1935 he was elected to the
Explorers Club of New York, in 1939 to the American Polar Society, and was a
charter member of the Arctic Institute of North America. In 1937 he was awarded
an honorary scroll from the Columbia Graduate School Alumni Association for
"distinguished contributions to the human race" and for "splendid work as a
biochemist, nutritionist and author." (He absentmindedly mislaid the unopened
letter announcing his selection and found out about it only when a friend saw
Levine's name in a *New York Times* story.) In 1941 he was named an honorary
member of the National Association of Authors and Journalists, in 1948 elected
President of the Nebraska Academy of Sciences and in 1954 elected to the American
Writer's Association. In 1958 Levine was given Creighton University's Distin-
guished Service Award. The following year, a banquet was given in his honor by the
freshman medical class, and he was also named Professor Emeritus of Biological
Chemistry and Nutrition.

Dr. Levine continued to be active in scientific endeavors, serving from 1960 to
1963 as a Visiting Professor to the Spanish Universities of Madrid and Valencia
under the Fulbright Exchange Program. Dr. Levine died September 29, 1963, at the
age of 72, of coronary disease.

**Charles W. McMartin**

Another mainstay at the Creighton School of Medicine, remembered by a
number of graduates, was Charles W. McMartin. After receiving his M.D. degree
from Rush Medical College in 1906, Dr. McMartin came to Creighton in 1913 as
Professor of Dermatology/Genito-Urinary Diseases. In 1916 he became head of the
Department of Surgery but retained his Professorship of Dermatology and Urology
as well. When Urology became a new department in its own right, Dr. McMartin
became head of that department as well. For an overlap period of two years, he
served as head of both departments, ending his Surgery chairmanship in 1950. He
remained head of Urology until 1953, when he was succeeded in that capacity by his son, Dr. W. J. McMartin. He was also a member of the School of Medicine Administrative Board from 1931-1950. He died September 14, 1954, at age 74 of a heart attack. Dr. McMartin was a nationally known urologist and highly regarded surgeon-educator. Besides being a fellow of the American College of Surgeons, he served as President of the Omaha-Douglas County Medical Society, President of the Nebraska State Medical Association, President of the Mid-West Clinical Society and Vice President of the Southwest Branch of the American Urological Society. In 1947 he was elected to national Presidencies of the American Urological Society. A precedent was set when his son succeeded him as President of the American Urological Society, the first time a father and son had been elected consecutively to this office. Dr. McMartin, too, left some vivid memories among medical graduates, many regarding his partial deafness and his hearing aid. More than one graduate has suggested that he used his hearing impairment and the cumbersome hearing aid contraptions of the day to his advantage. For example, Dr. Alfred C. Andersen (M.D. 1941) recalled that many times Dr. McMartin became weary of listening to problems and complaints, of which he heard many as Chairman of the Surgery Department. When this occurred, he would quietly turn his hearing aid off and let the complainers ramble on until they had gotten it out of their systems. Dr. D. Arnold Dowwell (M.D. 1931), too, recalled Dr. McMartin:

People would ask him questions and he wouldn’t hear a word they said. But then someone would say, “What’s my bill, doctor?” and he would perk right up. He never missed hearing that.

Dr. D. E. Baca (M.D. 1939) recalled the following from his school days. Dr. McMartin rarely lectured, leaving that to his assistants. One Saturday morning, he held a class for students, including Dr. Baca. He read something to the class, mumbling low and quite incoherently. There were some brown noses in class, Dr. Baca said, who always sat in front and who recorded absolutely everything in their notes, down to the comma. As McMartin stumbled, they kept trying to get his attention to clarify this or that. They kept calling, “Doctor, Doctor, repeat that, please. Repeat that.” Dr. McMartin completely ignored these requests, and all assumed that he couldn’t hear them. A classmate, sitting in the back of the room with his chair leaning up against the wall, half asleep, said rather quietly, “The S.O.B. is deaf.” Dr. McMartin looked up suddenly, and barked, “Who the hell said that?” The student in the back was so startled that his chair fell over and he hit the floor, to the accompaniment of his classmates’ laughter.
Dr. John Hartigan (M.D. 1943) remembered Charles McMartin talking on the phone with it upside down. But he also called him “a crafty old fellow” who would wine and dine the inspectors when they came around.64 Whatever the extent of the hearing problem, Dr. McMartin was a well-respected professional who gave forty-four years of his life to educating medical students at the Creighton School of Medicine. Those who were fortunate enough to come in contact with him have never forgotten him.

Angela Mitchell

Dr. John Hartigan (M.D. 1943) is one of the many Creighton medical graduates who remember Mrs. Angela Mitchell, “Mrs. Mink Coat,” as she was called, at first derisively but later with genuine affection and respect.65 Mrs. Mitchell served as a volunteer at the Creighton Clinic on a full-time basis, eight hours per day, five days per week, fifty weeks per year, for thirty-two years. In doing so, she came in contact with generations of Creighton-educated physicians. She first came to Omaha from her native Neola, Iowa after graduating from high school. While working as a receptionist in a medical office, she met and married Rolla Mitchell, freight traffic manager for the Union Pacific Railroad. After only three years of marriage, in 1940 her husband died, leaving her a well-to-do widow with time weighing heavily on her hands. She asked a priest at Creighton if she could be of help to the University in some capacity. He took her to the Clinic, and thus began her thirty-two year career.

At the Clinic it was predicted she would last “two or three weeks at the most.” She stayed considerably longer, answering the phone, scheduling appointments, explaining clinic procedures to patients, filing medical records, calling hospitals for referrals, and directing patients to the right department within the Clinic itself. Mrs. Mitchell noted that she was kidded by doctors about her snap diagnoses. She said, “Of course, when I do miss, the patient gets sent to the wrong clinic, and I get properly razzed.”

Mrs. Mitchell approached her job in a most professional manner. Her philosophy was that “every volunteer job should be treated as a paying job, with regular hours, notification when the worker can’t be present and a substitute lined up for off days.” Mrs. Mitchell took a two-week vacation each year, but in keeping with her convictions, it was scheduled in advance in regular rotation with other staff members.

Mrs. Mitchell was like every other Clinic staff member, with the exception that she worked for thirty-two years without one cent of remuneration. Sometimes her patients showed their appreciation to her with a cake or flowers. One elderly Indian chief gave her a beaded dress belt as a sign of his gratitude. But her greatest reward was simply the satisfaction of helping, of doing a job that needed doing. It was estimated that Mrs. Mitchell helped approximately one and a half million patients and contributed at least $150,000 in services to the Clinic by the time she retired in October 1972.
Her contributions did not go unrecognized. In 1961 she received a Creighton Honor Citation "for dedicated service to her university and her fellow men." In 1971 she was named the Adult Volunteer of the Year by the United Community Services and honored at an awards luncheon. Also in 1971 she received the National Enquirer Good Samaritan Award. In 1972, upon retirement, she was made an honorary alumna, and presented an Honorary Alumna plaque at the annual Creighton Medical Alumni dinner. The citation noted that she was "a receptionist and registrar par excellence, a true humanizer through personal service, and a person unfailingly kind and sympathetic to the sick who came for help." Angela Mitchell will not be forgotten by these patients or by the thousands of physicians and medical students she helped and befriended.

Adolph Sachs

Another "character" mentioned often by Creighton graduates is Dr. Adolph Sachs. Born in Cheyenne, Wyoming, on December 31, 1885, he received his M.D. degree from Creighton Medical College in 1907, after which he interned at St. Joseph's Hospital in Omaha. During his internship, from 1908-1909, he also served as an Assistant in Anatomy at the Creighton College of Medicine. For about eighteen months in 1909 and 1910, Dr. Sachs traveled to universities and clinics in Vienna, Berlin, Frankfurt and London, studying and taking advanced postgraduate courses.

He returned to Creighton and served as an Associate in Medicine until 1912, then for the next four years on the Dispensary Staff. In 1916 he became an Associate Professor of Medicine, in 1917 added Professor of Physical Diagnosis to his titles, in 1918 became a Clinical Professor of Medicine and in 1920, Professor of Medicine. In 1933 he became Chairman of the Department of Medicine, in which capacity he served until 1950.

Dr. Sachs also served on the Administrative Board of the School of Medicine from 1921-1950, most of these years as Secretary. He was a member of the Creighton University Board of Regents beginning in 1939, serving as Chairman from 1950 until his death. In addition, he served as a physician for the Union Pacific Railroad for many years, becoming their chief medical consultant in 1942. He conducted one of the leading private practices of Internal Medicine in the city, which spontaneously and informally came to be called The Sachs Clinic, in recognition of his preeminence.

Dr. Werner Jensen (M.D. 1932) called Dr. Sachs "The kingpin of medicine in Omaha." Dr. Arnold Lempka (M.D. 1941) recalled that Dr. Sachs "probably had more to say about the Medical School, and in particular, the hospital, than did the Dean." Dr. Sachs was a mover and a shaker in the organized medical community as well. At various times, he was President of the Omaha Mid-West Clinical Society, the Nebraska State Medical Association and the Omaha-Douglas County Medical Society. In the American College of Physicians, he was a Fellow and life member, serving as Governor of A.C.P. for the state of Nebraska from 1927-1938. He served
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on various appointive political committees, including the Family Welfare Association of Omaha. He was also a prime organizer of the Nebraska Heart Association. In an age when few physicians were certified in a specialty, Dr. Sachs was board certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine and in the subspecialty of gastroenterology. Dr. Richard Egan (M.D. 1940) noted that Dr. Sachs conducted ongoing scientific investigations to determine blood and serum iron and copper. He did this in a lab in the Medical School which he maintained with his personal funds. He also paid medical students a small stipend to work part time in his lab. He published a number of papers and articles which elaborated on these studies.

A singular honor bestowed on Dr. Sachs came in 1948 when Pope Pius XII invested him as a Knight Commander with Star in the Order of St. Gregory the Great, one of the highest honors the Catholic Church bestows on a layman and the fourth time in history that it was bestowed on a non-Catholic. It was given "to a man of charity, humility, wisdom and loyalty . . . for exceptional contributions toward the welfare of man."

Dr. Sachs was a short Jewish man who spoke with a lisp. Two details about him have implanted themselves in the memory of observers. One is the large entourage of followers who accompanied him on his hospital rounds; the second, his medical bag. Dr. D. Arnold Dowell (M.D. 1931) recalled: "He always had at least three people following him, one of them carrying his bag... He really made a ritual out of medicine." Dr. John Hartigan (M.D. 1943) called Dr. Sachs "an extremely good clinician, a showman." Dr. William Reals remembered Dr. Sachs making rounds with a retinue of students, interns, residents, nuns, nurses and assistants trailing in his wake.

According to Dr. Arnold Lempka (M.D. 1941), "As an intern, you were assigned to him [Dr. Sachs] personally for one month. You watched carefully the front door every morning and when you saw him coming you quickly went to grab his briefcase and carry it for him." Dr. Sachs kept all of his records of active patients with him so he could refer to them on rounds. He had between thirty-five and forty patients hospitalized at any given time, and tried not to send one patient home until he had another one to fill that bed. So the number of his patients remained fairly constant.

Dr. John Mitchell, former chairman of Pediatrics, recalled hearing that in the large bag, Dr. Sachs carried check blanks from almost every bank in the State of Nebraska. When presenting his patients with the bill, he would ask which bank they used and whip out the appropriate check blank to facilitate payment on the spot. Dr. D. E. Baca (M.D. 1939) also has a story regarding Dr. Sachs' large bag. He would hand this to his assistant, who would pass it to the other assistant, then to the U.F. physician, then to the resident, and finally to the low man on the totem pole, the intern. The intern would then have to tote the bag around for the duration of rounds.

One intern said to Dr. Baca, "I'll be damned if I'll ever carry that bag when I'm on his [Dr. Sachs'] service." The intern was finally assigned to this service, and when given the bag, simply placed it behind a door and the entourage went on rounds, unaware of the bag's location. Dr. Sachs would then say, at some later point, "My bag, plumbs," and the order would proceed down the line, "His bag," "His bag."
bag,” until it got to the intern, who would say, “I don’t have it, I thought you had it.” The search would start for the bag, which would be traced, and someone would go to retrieve it.

After a few such episodes, Dr. Sachs said to the new intern, “Dr, ever sinths you’ve been on my thervice, I’ve THO confused.”

Finally, Dr. William Reals recalled a story showing that despite his intimidating presence, Dr. Sachs had a sense of humor:

He [Dr. Sachs] always had a little list, and the first thing he would ask the patient was, “How are your bowels?” On one occasion, the nurse told him, “Dr. that patient hasn’t had a bowel movement,” to which Dr. Sachs replied, “Wait till he gets my bill. He’ll have one.”

Dr. Sachs suffered a heart attack in March 1955 and without fully recovering died May 2, 1955, at the age of 66.

Frederick J. Schwertley

It seems that every institution at one time or another has a character larger than life, who does things so out of the ordinary or so outrageous, as to become a legend in his (or her) own time. Such a personality at the Creighton School of Medicine was Dr. Frederick J. Schwertley, a 1914 Creighton medical graduate and a faculty member for over 40 years.

Dr. Schwertley’s career at the School of Medicine alternated between the Departments of Anatomy and Surgery. He started at Creighton in 1919 as an Assistant in Anatomy, becoming Instructor in Anatomy and Surgery in 1924. In 1929 he became an Associate in Anatomy, in which position he remained until 1937. At that time he was made Assistant Professor of Surgery until his retirement in 1960. He also found time to earn a law degree from Creighton in June 1936 after four years of attending night Law School.

By all accounts, Dr. Schwertley was extremely dapper but with a language as full of four-letter words as his clothes were stylish. He had the ability to intimidate students, making even the head of the class stammer in confusion.

Dr. Arthur Gore (M.D. 1940) has these memories of Anatomy and Dr. Schwertley:

I must admit I was scared to death to go into the Anatomy class. It was on the fourth floor. The elevator opened right into the dissecting room, around the corner from where they stored the stiff s. We all knew when Dr. Schwertley got on the elevator on the first floor, because a red light over the door would go on; besides the elevator was so noisy and clanky and slow.

He was always well dressed when he got off that elevator, with a vest and a red carnation in his button-hole and a sailor straw hat tipped ever so slightly to the side and a well-kept moustache. [He had] a fancy cane and a cigarette in a holder. Mind you, all this had been described to us, but to see it was almost unbelievable.
At first, he turned around the corner to the left, walked straight back to his office where he put on a long white coat to teach us Anatomy. Later, sometimes he'd go from the elevator to a table where we'd be dissecting with our heads down, hoping he wouldn't stop at our table because even if you knew your lesson, you were intimidated and the words wouldn't come out right.

Some of the guys would memorize Gray's Anatomy and spell it out verbatim, which was about the worst thing you could do because he would stand back, look the person in the eye, and say, "Ba— and all, huh, Fred?"

Dr. Schwertley was a Phi Rho and occasionally came to the fraternity house for dinner or for other occasions; and he turned out to be the best friend you could have if you got a traffic ticket or happened to have too many, he'd bail you out. Great guy, and somebody we'll never forget.

Dr. George P. McArdle (M.D. 1940), a classmate of Dr. Gore's, recalled:

The class of 1940 was the last class to have Dr. Fred Schwertley as a professor of Anatomy. He was a great teacher and a real character. He would come to class with bright yellow socks and a Derby. He would stop at St. John's and go to confession for he swore like a trooper. At exam time he would get up on the desks and walk back and forth, looking at our answers. He had the eyes of a hawk and would say, "You don't want to write that, Chippy, you know it's not right." He was also a fine surgeon. I remember watching him remove an appendix in six minutes.

Dr. D. E. Baca (M.D. 1939) noted, "He [Dr. Schwertley] could cuss like a trooper, but he didn't mean it... He wasn't a mean man, he just tried to act like a mean man."

Dr. Richard Egan (M.D. 1940) recalled, "He was a surgeon who taught Anatomy as a surgeon would teach it. He made Anatomy the plebe year course... But it was part of the tradition at the time. He was the one who weeded out the faint of heart and the individual who could not learn to think on his feet under pressure... We were hazed in Gross Anatomy."

He could certainly be earthy when he wanted to be. Dr. Baca recalled that Dr. Schwertley taught Anatomy his way, with one lecture at the beginning of the year and one at the end. At the beginning of the year, the lecture was primarily his warning to the farm boys concerning the pitfalls of the big city. He let them know that on Saturdays he would be making the rounds, checking to see what dives everyone was frequenting. He warned them of wild women, and told them that if they did get involved with one and got a disease, they should see one of the doctors immediately. He would take care of it, free of charge. He advised them that the best prophylactic was to wear two pairs of pants, buttoned in the back.

In the last lecture of the year the students were told, "A third of you have already passed, and don't need the final exam, one-third of you need this exam and need to do well. A third of you have already junked, so you may as well pack up you sh— and go home!"
Dr. Leon J. Numainville (M.D. 1936) recalled that “The Little German Doc,” as Dr. Schwertley called himself, talked with him when he found out Numainville had just married.

When [he] heard I had gotten married, [he] became philosophical and quaintly expressed his opinion (all in four-letter words, more or less), a translation of which would be “The connubial pleasures obtained are not commensurate with the problems and responsibility you have taken on.”

Dr. Schwertley could also be a very exacting taskmaster when it came to Anatomy. Dr. D.E. Baca recalled that about once every two months, Dr. Schwertley called a group of students back into The Star Chamber, as he called his office, and gave them an oral exam on the subject matter, which was excruciatingly difficult. He also kept a list of all students and all of his assistants on a chart on the wall in the dissecting room. When anyone left the room, he had to indicate on the wall chart the reason for his departure, whether for a cigarette, to use the bathroom, or anything else. Even his colleagues, his assistants, had to do this to please Dr. Schwertley.

He had a sense of humor and enjoyed a good prank, usually at the expense of the medical students. Again, according to Dr. Baca, Dr. Schwertley told students that if they were unhappy with their grades or were having trouble with the course material, they could come to his office in the Barker Building to discuss their problems. Dr. Baca’s office faced the main entrance on 15th Street and enabled him to see who was approaching or leaving. Some students made the mistake of going to Dr. Schwertley’s office to discuss matters with him. He’d meet the students, explain their grades or the material, and generally be quite pleasant and helpful. After they left, he’d watch for them to leave the building and from his upper-story windows, would drop sacks full of water on them.

Father James Quinn, S.J., Jesuit Counselor to the School of Medicine, heard this story about him: Dr. Schwertley powdered himself all over until he looked quite pale, put a tag on his toe, covered himself with a sheet and laid down in line with several other cadavers on the first day of Anatomy class for freshmen medical students. As the unsuspecting freshmen walked by, he began, ever so subtly, to wiggle his toes.

Many of Dr. Schwertley’s antics took place at the hospital, where he was attending in Surgery. Again, Dr. D. E. Baca’s memories illustrate how he behaved:

He acted like that in Surgery ... cussing, trying to shock some of the doctors and nurses ... Once, in Surgery, he was operating with a very young nurse who was a neighbor of his. He asked her, “Honey, how’s your love life? Would you like me to fix you up with ...
Once Dr. Schwertley was to do an appendectomy on the President of a bank in Pisgah, Iowa. The patient’s wife, mother, and father were in town with him for the surgery. The surgery was completed successfully, but the waiting family wasn’t aware of it. The patient was wheeled out of surgery, in front of the family. Dr. Schwertley leaned on the patient’s stomach, and said to Dr. Baca in a stage whisper, “You know, we’re supposed to take the gallbladder out of this fella. Just where in the hell is the gallbladder, anyway?” The patient’s wife almost fainted.

During surgery, to shock student nurses, Dr. Schwertley had a habit of requesting that the circulating nurse scratch him on a private part of his anatomy, causing her great embarrassment, and which sometimes sent her retreating tearfully from the room. One nurse who later became a nun confided to Dr. Baca that if she ever became circulating nurse, she would certainly surprise Dr. Schwertley.

The day came. Dr. Schwertley requested this particular nurse to scratch him. She not only scratched, she pulled and yanked, hard. Dr. Schwertley dropped everything and screamed, “What are you trying to do, kill me?” He never tried that stunt in surgery again.

Another time, while suiting up before surgery, Dr. Schwertley showed others his brand new Valentine’s Day undershorts. They were a gift from his wife and had large, bright red hearts on them. Dr. Baca and the other interns decided to play a prank on the prankster. During surgery Dr. Baca repeatedly came close to Dr. Schwertley, asking questions about the procedure. With each question, he would gently tug on the tie string of Dr. Schwertley’s scrubs suit. Unbeknownst to Dr. Schwertley, little by little the tie loosened until finally the pants slid to the floor. There stood Dr. Schwertley in his red-hearted shorts for all to see as he continued operating.\(^8\)

Dr. Joseph Holthaus (M.D. 1947) recalled this story. Dr. Holthaus, as a student, was on Dr. Schwertley’s service observing him do abdominal surgery. When the patient was open, Dr. Schwertley moved his mask and spit into the peritoneal cavity, then put his mask back on, finished the operation and sewed up the patient. He made absolutely no reference to what he had done.

The next day on rounds Dr. Schwertley and the students walked into that patient’s room. Still nothing was said. The students were terrified of Dr. Schwertley and much too afraid to bring up the strange incident of the day before. After the examination of the patient, and out in the hall, Dr. Schwertley “raked us over the coals” for not asking questions. His point was that the peritoneum was such a wonderful organ that it can resist all sorts of infections and violations. The woman had no ill effects whatsoever, “but that was kind of a harsh lesson.”\(^9\)

Today Dr. Schwertley would not be allowed to perform as he did; but several generations of students learned, and learned quite well despite his intimidating behavior and bizarre antics. Dr. Schwertley died on July 1, 1977, at the age of 87 of coronary thrombosis. Of this we can be fairly certain – there will never be another like him at the Creighton School of Medicine.
Other Special People

Many other personalities woven into the tapestry of the 100-year history of the Creighton School of Medicine have helped to shape its character. Space limitations make it impossible to mention more than a small fraction of the total. Medical graduates and some associated with the School of Medicine were asked to share memories of people and events special to their experiences at Creighton. Of those responding with memories of people, some recounted anecdotes, some a favorite quotation, some reminisced about personality traits. In relating some of these, it is hoped that the reader may recall the persons or incidents, or find the stories humanly interesting.

The following individuals were a part of the School of Medicine at some point in its history. If they are Creighton School of Medicine graduates, the year of their M.D. is indicated. Their highest title at Creighton is also indicated, followed by the year in which they began service at Creighton, and if applicable, the year they left Creighton and/or the year of their death.

Dr. Lee C. Bevilacqua (M.D. 1961) - Assistant Clinical Professor of Family Practice; 1975-; Team Physician for the Creighton Blue Jays.

Dr. Vincent J. Carollo (M.D. 1962) remembers:

Lee as a second-year med student giving lectures with detailed drawings of Anatomy to first-year students at the Phi Beta Pi house. A total generous donation of his time and talent to others. I will never forget him.

Dr. Leo P. "Phil" Clements, Ph.D. - Professor Emeritus of Anatomy; 1928; died late 1970's.

Dr. J. Whitney Kelley (M.D. 1934) recalled Dr. Clements' nickname, The Axle Bender, while Dean Richard L. O'Brien could not recall Dr. Clements' first name. "Nobody dared think of him as having a first name." Yet as Professor of Anatomy, he was remembered as superb. Dr. James J. Shea (M.D. 1957) wrote:

One of my most memorable teachers was Phil Clements. He was a match for anybody's mountains. His final lecture saw the stairs lined with the medical students clapping him down the stairs to the lecture room. A fitting tribute to a truly wonderful man. We all loved him and were privileged to be his students.
Dr. John Philip Cogley (M.D. 1921) – Professor Emeritus of Surgery; 1923; died March 13, 1968.

Dr. Cogley, a prominent Council Bluffs surgeon, is remembered for his panache and sense of style. Dr. Werner Jensen (M.D. 1932) recalled Dr. Cogley arriving at the Creighton Clinic in his chauffeur-driven Pierce Arrow. Dr. John Gatewood (M.D. 1933) remembered Dr. Cogley arriving in his limousine at the Phi Beta Pi fraternity house on Saturday evenings for dinner. He dressed in a dinner jacket and striped pants and really made an impression on his younger fraternity brothers.

Dr. D. Arnold Dowell (M.D. 1933) – Professor Emeritus of Radiology; 1932- ; Department Chairman, 1963-1971.

Dr. Dowell has spent over fifty years teaching within the Radiology Department at the School of Medicine and touched the lives of thousands in a salutary manner. He has received numerous honors from Creighton University, including a 25-Year Teaching Plaque in 1957, the Alumni Merit Award, the Dedicated Teacher Award, and several Golden Apples, one of which was the first ever presented to a Professor Emeritus.

Dr. N. Patrick Kenney (M.D. 1956), a former student and Dr. Dowell’s successor as Department Chairman of Radiology, said of Dr. Dowell:

He’s been a fantastic teacher all his life... He’s been a father image to me, to the residents, and to the students. He spends a great deal of time with the students; he makes them feel important and lets them know he’s interested in them.

Dr. Dowell believes most of his former students remember “Dowellisms.” His personal favorite, he noted mischievously, is “Never outshine the master.”

Dr. John W. Duncan (M.D. 1912) – Clinical Professor of Surgery; 1911; died November 20, 1939.

Dr. D. E. Baca (M.D. 1939) recalled a favorite story about Dr. Duncan, whom he called a well-respected surgeon and gentleman. One day Dr. Duncan had the whole class for a lecture instead of the usual half, due to a schedule change. He decided to use this opportunity to lecture on how to take a history, and he sent several students, including Dr. Baca, downstairs to the Clinic to retrieve a patient. The students decided to bring back an old man, a known character about ninety-three years old and notoriously hard of hearing, who came in almost every day to get out of the cold. He had on an overcoat weighing more than he did.

The students brought him up, and Dr. Duncan was quite pleased. He said they could get an interesting medical history from such an elderly fellow and would...
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probably learn about his good genetics. Dr. Duncan told the class that no doubt the patient’s father had lived to a ripe old age, then proceeded to ask him, “How old was your father when he died?” The patient, quite unable to hear, replied, “Huh? What?” Dr. Duncan repeated the question. “Eh? What did you say?” Finally, the question got through to the patient, and he replied, “Twenty-two. My father died at age twenty-two.”

Dr. Duncan, now somewhat nonplussed, told the class that with such an early death, undoubtedly his father had contracted scarlet fever, malaria, diphtheria, or whooping cough. “People used to die of those things years ago, when they were quite young, Now, I will ask him, and you will see.”

“What did your father die of?” “Eh, what?” said the patient. The question was repeated. “Isaid, what did your father die of?” “What, huh...?” Finally, the old man understood, and replied, “Shot by an Indian.” Dr. Duncan had heard enough. “That’s it, take him back down.” The students had all had him as a patient in the Clinic, and all but Dr. Duncan had known of his background.

Dr. Benjamin F. Ewing (M.D. 1923) – Assistant Professor of Surgery; 1924-1940; died 1964.

Dr. Baca also remembered the time that Dr. Ewing came in to give the seniors their final exams and had a forcful method to stop cheating.

The first thing he did was to take out a six-shooter, loaded, and he slammed it on the desk. He said, “I’m going to give you the exam and the first S.O.B. I catch cheating, I’m going to shoot right between the eyes.” He gave them the exam questions and walked out, leaving the gun, saying, “I’ll be back when you’re through.”

James S. Foote, M.D. – Professor of Physiology and Pathology; 1895-1925; died 1925.

Dr. Foote was a member of the faculty at Creighton College of Medicine for 30 years, and was Professor of Physiology and Pathology for 25 of those years. He was born in Colchester, Connecticut, and took degrees from both Yale and Columbia Universities. He came to Omaha in the early 1890’s and was married to Miss Jean Goodfell in 1894. During those early years at Creighton, he was regarded as the Medical School’s “outstanding researcher.” His particular interest in research had to do with bone and tooth structure. He made very extensive studies of cross-sections of the femur bone, involving many animal species, humans, and Egyptian mummies. He also did extensive research work for the Scientific Foundation and Research Commission of the American Dental Association. His research on bone structure (an interesting prelude to the later studies of Dr. Robert Heaney) were published by the Smithsonian Institute, created much discussion and attracted world-wide attention. He was a member of the American Microscopical Society and
Dr. James S. Foote

Maurice Howard (M.D. 1919). He was the first Fellow in the State of Nebraska of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. On the faculty, he was remembered as an inspiring lecturer, and, at one time, he was an invited speaker at a Pan-American Congress held in Havana, Cuba.

Dr. Maurice Howard (M.D. 1919) - Professor Emeritus of Medicine; 1920; died April 21, 1969.

Dr. D.E. Baca was also able to share two stories about Dr. Howard. Dr. Howard had the entire class one day, including one student usually in the other section who was notorious for sleeping through class. Dr. Howard knew the student through the Phi Chi fraternity but never had him in class. A few students went to Dr. Howard before class, told him about Foley's sleeping habits, and together they rigged up a prank.

About midway through the class, Dr. Howard said that just the night before, he had read a book about Ireland and the Irish, which traced Irish ancestry back to the Jews. It seems there had been a pogrom against the Jews, who had gathered into a boat and paddled until they reached an island — Ireland, where they decided to settle. "That's how the Irish came about — from persecuted Jews," said Dr. Howard.

Foley awoke with a start, and shouted, "That's a lie!"

Dr. Howard used to visit the Phi Chi fraternity house, the old Yates mansion at 31st & Davenport, according to Dr. Baca. He would have a few drinks and visit with the students. One Saturday after having a particularly bad morning, he asked if the students had any dishes. They brought him some, and he threw them, piece by piece, into the fireplace, smashing them to bits. He eventually broke all of their dishes, then left. Later that afternoon, a truck arrived with a new set of dishes, courtesy of Dr. Howard.

Dr. J. Raymond Johnson - Professor Emeritus of Physiology and Pharmacology; 1953; Chairman of Department, 1953-65; Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, 1965-72; died April 8, 1990.

Generations of medical students remember Dr. Johnson, either in his role as head of the Physiology and Pharmacology Department or in his later administrative capacity as Assistant Dean. After reaching the mandatory retirement age for administrators in 1972, he continued his teaching and research career. The 1972 graduating class recognized him for his contributions to student academic excellence and he was further honored in 1974 with the Dedicated Teacher Citation.
In 1976, at the time Dr. Johnson was awarded Emeritus status, Dean Joseph Holthaus wrote to him:

Throughout all of the years that I have known you and worked with you, I have found your service to be characterized by intelligence, loyalty, diligence and patience. This was true as Chairman of a Department, as Assistant Dean, and as Chairman of the Admissions Committee. I hope the conferral of the rank of Professor Emeritus in some modest way conveys the depth of the University’s appreciation to you for this service.11

Dr. Johnson was known for his sense of humor and his enjoyment of good times. He befriended students at many fraternity parties as he joined in the often costumed fun. Students also remember him for his special way of tying his tie with no knot.14 Dr. Johnson died at age eighty-five on April 8, 1990. A large delegation from the Creighton medical community paid their respects, including Dr. Holthaus as a pallbearer and Dean Richard O’Brien as an honorary pallbearer.

Dr. Ernest Kelley (M.D. 1907) – Professor of Psychiatry and Neurology; 1911; died May 14, 1949; Head of Department, 1939–1949.

Dr. Joseph Holthaus (M.D. 1947) recalled Dr. Kelley as a very colorful character.

He used to smoke English oval cigarettes and had a little mustache. He was always as immaculate as he could be. He was the picture of what you thought of as a physician, so he was a kind of role model.17

Dr. William Reals (M.D. 1945) recalled of Dr. Kelley:

He put the absolute fear of God in us about drugs. . . He said, “I would lie on a bed having a gallbladder attack or passing a kidney stone but I wouldn’t ask for morphine. It’s been the ruination of more physicians than any other drug. . . [He] was ahead of his time in fighting drug addiction in physicians. In those days, if Dr. So and So was on something it was really hush hush.”20

Dr. Bohdan J. Koszewski – Associate Clinical Professor of Medicine; 1956–present.

Dr. Richard L. O’Brien recalled Saturday morning grand rounds held in the hospital library. On one such occasion, Dr. Koszewski was in charge of the
session on an ulcerative colitis patient. A resident presented the patient, followed by three discussants. A psychiatrist went first, talking at length on the psychogenic origins of colitis. Dr. Koszewski, an internist, listened and then said in his accented English, “Everything you have just heard is all wrong. Of course, people with ulcerative colitis behave strangely. If you shi—ing 40 times a day, you’d be crazy too”.

Dr. Herman E. Kully (M.D. 1929) – Assistant Professor of Otolaryngology; 1952; died September 15, 1950. Dr. Joseph J. Numanville (M.D. 1936) gratefully recalled a close call with Dr. Kully:

I got shook once—had just folded my paper in a Craniology final and leaned over to Sylvester Pawol and said, “Can you get your dad’s car tonight?” Quick as a flash, Dr. Herman Kully grabbed my paper and said, “You’re cheating. You may leave.” I thought for a minute, then walked up to Dr. Kully, told him what I had said to Pawol, and said, “You may ask me anything on the paper you picked up and I can answer it.” He thought a minute, then gave me back the paper and said, “Hand it in with the rest.”

Deo gratias!

Dr. Donal F. Magee – Professor Emeritus of Physiology, 1991; 1965; returned to Ireland 1990; Chairman of the department 1965–88.

Any Creighton medical student of the past 25 years has a clear recollection of Donal Magee, THE Professor of Physiology. Since he carried the M.D. as well as the Ph.D. degree, he had a distinctive skill in presenting Physiology from the clinician’s perspective. At the time of his retirement to Ireland in 1990, he had been Chairman of the Department and was still Director of the Division of Physiology within the recently created larger Department of Biomedical Sciences. This gave him the distinction of being head of a Department or Division many years longer than any other current or recent chief.

Born in Scotland but with parents from County Down, Ireland (his father was also a Physiologist hired by the Ministry of health), he received his medical education at Oxford and was doing clinical work at Middlesex Hospital in London when the terrible German “buzz bombs” of World War II began to fall. After the war he came to the United States to obtain his Ph.D. at the University of Illinois in Chicago, and has been “American” since, but admits that County Down may be calling him to stay in Ireland for some future years.
Dr. Magee described his research work as simple and unspectacular, but it has included much original work on the gastropancreatic reflex and recently some work on continuous gastrointestinal activity. This work was the reinvestigation of observations made by a Russian scientist 90 years ago, but publishing the results of this reinvestigation has meant the reinterpretation of studies done by many investigators over the past 30 years.

His academic studies have produced more than 50 published papers and articles, but it is not for these his students will remember him. He is known as a dramatic personality as well as a great teacher. An article in The Creighton University Window presents a good account of his background, his special points of view and some interesting habits, such as walking every day the four miles from his home to his office when he was at Creighton. The article gives the best summary of his character with the following:


Dr. Louis D. McGuire (M.D. 1917) – Professor of Surgery; 1924; died April 20, 1955.

Dr. William Reals (M.D. 1945) called Dr. McGuire, a member of one of the most prestigious surgical partnerships in the city, “a knuckle-rapping, hard-driving surgeon, a good doctor. McGuire, Johnson, McCarthy and Gatewood – that was the team.”118

Dr. McGuire was called the “Kingpin of Surgery” by Dr. Arnold Lempka (M.D. 1941), who remembers him as being rather short-tempered. Everyone feared him. He remembers as a first-year resident seeing Dr. McGuire angry because he needed something and a nurse wasn’t around. So he took a basin full of water, stepped outside into the hall and threw it down on the hard stone floor. The noise could be heard all over the hospital. When Dr. Lempka returned from the service, he was a little more brave, by his own admission, and knowing Dr. McGuire socially to be the greatest guy in the world, asked him, “How come you’re so mean in surgery?” Dr. McGuire replied, “You know, I was trained at the Mayo Clinic, and I noticed that up there the squeaky wheel got the grease.”121

An interesting anecdote was told in the September 1931 issue of the Creighton University Alumnus:

The mysterious patient of Room 323 in St. Joseph’s hospital during July [1931] was L.D. McGuire (M.D. 17), who directed his own hernioplasty under a local anaesthetic with the aid of a mirror. After officiating at two previous operations, and enjoying the discomfiture of nurses and attendants when the patient for the third scheduled operation failed to appear, Dr. McGuire mounted the operating table and directed Dr. A.C. Johnson, his associate, to proceed. Until notified by telephone that the operation was successful, even the doctor’s wife did not know the identity of the patient in Room 323.120
Dr. Beverley Mead - Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences; 1965-1977; Acting Chairman 1985-1987; Associate Dean, School of Medicine, 1980-1988.

Much has been made of Dr. Mead’s first name, which some think unusual for a male. Dr. John J. McGill (M.D. 1969) shared the following:

“My favorite story about Dr. Mead is about his arrival at Creighton and Sebastian (Subby) Pirrocello, the pharmacist in the old outpatient clinics at 14th & Davenport. Subby came running back to me one afternoon in Psych Clinic with a handful of scripts Dr. Mead had countersigned for me. “Hey, Doc, who’s this new gal, Beverley Mead?” Dr. Mead answered, “I am.””

Dr. R. Dennis Porch (M.D. 1971) recalled, “On the final exam in Psych, one of the questions was ‘True or False - Beverley is a pretty name.’”

Dr. Mead is listed in Who’s Who in America. However, he said that he is even more proud of the fact that he is listed in Who’s Who in American Women!

Dr. Vincent Moragues - Professor of Pathology; 1952-1988.

Dr. Richard L. O’Brien (M.D. 1960) has a recollection of Dr. Moragues, a Spanish cardiac pathologist, who spoke with a rather heavy accent and was a very dramatic lecturer. Lecturing about the incidence of congenital heart defects, he stopped and said, “If you got it, the incidence don’t count. If you got it, for you the incidence is 100%!”

Dr. Frank P. Murphy - Associate Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology; 1920; died March 23, 1953.

Dr. Margaret A. Storkan (M.D. 1944) recalled that Dr. Murphy gave students an open invitation to Sunday night dinner at his home and that “he was a fine model for the fellowship of Creighton.”

Dr. Richard Egan (M.D. 1960) called Dr. Murphy an unassuming scholar with a broad range of interests, including an intense interest in medical history. He and Dr. Wilhelm founded the Caducean Society at Creighton, which was affiliated with the National Association of the History of Medicine.

One of Dr. Murphy’s projects was to learn the Hungarian language in order to translate The Concept, Etiology and Prevention of Childbed Fever by Semmelweis.

Dr. Augustus G. Pohlman, Ph.D. – Professor of Anatomy and Head of the Department; 1933-1939.

Graduates of the 1930’s and 1940’s may remember this Anatomy Professor. Dr. Arnold Lempka (M.D. 1941) called him:
the only genius I've ever known. He would come down at noon, play bridge with the students, and after one go round tell you what was in everyone's hand. He knew all fifty-two cards.19

Dr. B. Carl Russum
(M.D. 1916) - Professor of Pathology; Head of Department, 1947-56; 1922; died May 25, 1956.

Dr. John Hartigan
(M.D. 1943) called Dr. Russum "a poker-faced individual who never smiled, and who tended to frighten medical students rather badly."132

Dr. William Reals (M.D. 1945) said Dr. Russum was "a good service pathologist" and remembered: In those days, Dr. Russum read the EKG's as well, since the equipment was in his lab. He also did biopsies. Dr. Russum kept a little truck, which he used to pick up biopsies at the Medical Arts Building, for which he collected one dollar apiece and which he split with the nuns at St. Joseph Hospital. The nuns finally insisted Dr. Russum raise the charge to two dollars, and "It broke his heart...He wasn't gregarious, but he was a scholar."

Dr. John F. Sheehan, Ph.D. - Professor Emeritus of Pathology, Professor of Obstetrics & Gynecology, 1975-1989, Research Associate Professor of Clinical Cytology, 1940-1968, Professor of Biology, 1930-.

Dr. Sheehan began his long career at Creighton in the Department of Biology in 1930 and since has worked in various capacities with both undergraduate and Health Science students. He told the following story on himself. A few years ago, he was in his lab at Criss I when a freshman medical student entered to ask him for directions. She then asked who he was and how long he had been there. When he said about fifty-nine years, she replied, with wonder, "Oh, then you knew John Creighton." Dr. Sheehan retired soon after that.134

Dr. Thomas G. Skillman - Professor of Medicine; mid 1960's.

Dr. James L. Manion (M.D. 1966) spoke of his most impressive teacher:

The teacher who impressed me most was Dr. Thomas Skillman, an endocrinologist. He had an excellent manner with patients, and he could speak knowledgeably about many aspects of medicine and
He had an ability to draw students into participating and to draw answers from them they didn’t think they knew. He also had a Corvette. What a role model!132

Dr. Cleveland S. Simpkins, Ph.D. – Professor of Anatomy and Head of the Department; 1939-1950. Two things stand out in graduates’ memories of Dr. Simpkins: his book Man Alive, which he authored, and the melodramatic nature of his character, especially after a few libations. Dr. John Hartigan (M.D. 1943) called Dr. Simpkins “a frustrated actor, a John Barrymore type.”133 Dr. Howard E. Rudersdorf (M.D. 1943) vividly recalled Dr. Simpkins:

Next, into this set of circumstances came a new professor and new chief of anatomy (Cleveland S. Simpkins, Ph.D.) who was from the University of Kentucky. He was quite a different character. He was in the process of writing an anatomy book called Man Alive. It was his strong conviction that all previous anatomy books were in error in that the dissections were written and drawn at the dissection table in the prone position. Dr. Simpkins believed that anatomy, to be correct, should be written and drawn with the cadaver in the standing position so the organs would be in their natural position as when alive.

Dr. Simpkins had a certain southern graciousness, the personality of a frustrated actor and with a taste for John Barleycorn. So after a few drinks at the Phi Chi Fraternity House (formerly the Yates Castle) he would recite with appropriate gestures the whole poem “The Face Upon the Floor,” by H. Antoine O’Arcy.134

Dr. Simpkins never changed his ways. Dr. Robert Luby (M.D. 1952), who had Dr. Simpkins for Anatomy at the end of his career at Creighton, recalled him as the consummate actor who would attend fraternity parties, imbibe a little too freely and give renditions of his recitations to all who would listen. Dr. Luby thought that Dr. Simpkins acted in Omaha Playhouse productions and even ad libbed a little in those performances.135

Dr. John William Vincent (M.D. 1944) has these memories: “Dr. Cleveland Simpkins’ textbook Man Alive confounded me and I had to learn anatomy more from the standard texts, such as Gray’s and Morris. If he did develop in me a tenacity to find things for I was a long time looking for ‘The Axilla and its Contents.’”136
Finally, Dr. Alfred C. Andersen (M.D. 1941) also remembered Dr. Simpkins' textbook in a vignette illustrating both Dr. Simpkins' sense of humor and changing textbook price structures. Dr. Andersen recalled that while textbook prices from those days seem unbelievably low by today's standards, they represented a sizeable outlay for the student of the 30's and 40's. He remembers seeing the flyleaf of a student's anatomy text, *Man Alive*, written by the anatomy professor, Dr. Simpkins. Dr. Simpkins had inscribed the book for the student — $10.00 - MAN ALIVE!!

Sister Crescentia Wickenheuser — Superior and Administrator of St. Joseph's Hospital;

Many medical graduates recall the nuns who staffed and administered St. Joseph's Hospital. One of the administrators of the hospital, Sister Crescentia, was recalled as being especially strong and resourceful. Father William Kelley said,

> I think she had a mailed fist in a velvet glove. You got the impression when you talked that she was just waiting for your advice before she made a move. Then you discovered that she already had the whole plan all worked out. She was crazy like a fox.

Dr. J. Whitney Kelley (M.D. 1934) had similar impressions of Sister Crescentia:

> She was a barn burner, and you can underline that with three lines in red. She caught all the doctors by surprise. She took off and went to Milwaukee to Northwestern Mutual and floated a four million dollar loan [for the hospital's psychiatric unit, Our Lady of Victory]. She did it on her own. As I remember, she didn't even ask for permission from her superior.

Dr. William L. Sucha (M.D. 1908) — Clinical Professor Emeritus of Surgery; 1920; died September 6, 1970.

Dr. Arnold Lempka (M.D. 1941) remembered one of Creighton's first Orthopedic Surgeons, Dr. William L. Sucha. Most of his equipment was not available from supply houses, so he had to go to the hardware store for his equipment, which worked very well. He was the athletic doctor for Creighton's football team. Dr. Lempka recalled a story often told by Dr. Sucha.
Special People

Dr. Sucha had gone out to the Sandhills of Nebraska as a consultant to see Old Jules, who had been kicked in the leg by a cow or a horse. The leg had never healed properly. Dr. Sucha traveled hundreds of miles to the Sandhills ranch of Old Jules, walked into the living room where he was sitting propped up in an easy chair. His leg was wrapped, draining and stinking to high heaven. Dr. Sucha pulled up a chair, introduced himself and indicated he had come to look at the leg. He reached down to unwrap the leg, and Old Jules said, “Don’t touch that leg! I only want you to look at it.” Dr. Sucha traveled back to Omaha without ever touching the leg.140

Dr. Lempka also noted that Dr. Sucha, in the 1930’s, devised for the Creighton football team a knee brace to prevent torn ligaments. This received virtually no attention at the time. But in 1989, fifty plus years later, Sports magazine focused attention on the need for knee braces in football to prevent injuries to the players. Dr. Sucha was ahead of his time.

Dr. James F. Sullivan – Professor of Medicine; 1961; died Spring of 1980. Remembered by many, Dr. James F. Sullivan was, according to Dr. Raphael Osheroff (M.D. 1963), a wonderful clinician and a joy to have as your teaching attending. He had a leprechaun-like gleam in his eye and a wry sense of humor. Interested in magnesium metabolism in alcoholism, Dr. Sullivan also seemed to have a penchant for collecting stools for research purposes. He favored bow ties and always impressed me with his ability to make a rapid on-site spot diagnosis. He loved to smoke Lucky Strikes and we often would puff away during our discussions in the side rooms of the ward. (Parenthetically, we all seemed to use that weed in those days. Between classes, the student lounge used to be a haze of smoke.)142

Dr. Michael R. Kelly (M.D. 1969) specifically recalls Dr. Sullivan’s alcohol and lipid studies:

Several of us would go to his house, have blood drawn, drink Scotch for hours, then have blood drawn again. Usually by the time the second set of blood was to be drawn, we were too drunk to see straight!142
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