IN MEMORIAM
John Weaver King, MD, PhD

The Cleveland Clinic Foundation has lost one of its oldest and dearest members, John Weaver King, MD, former chairman of the Department of Clinical Pathology, who passed away at his home in Cleveland Heights, October 9, 1996. Those of us who knew him loved him, and there are many who were privileged to be his students, colleagues and friends.

Dr King was recruited in 1960 to head the Cleveland Clinic's Department of Clinical Pathology, and in those early years, he was a one-man pathology faculty. He had the foresight to establish a school of medical technology soon after his arrival, and the John Weaver King School of Medical Technology (as it has been known since 1981) has trained 381 graduates. John was a dedicated teacher whose encyclopedic knowledge of medicine awed and inspired students.

The unexpected was no match for Dr King's ingenuity. When protein-bound iodine tests were first attempted at the Cleveland Clinic in the early 1960s, the chemistry lab could not get the test to work. Dr King traced the problem to iodine contamination in the walls of the room—a vestige of the fumes from the tragic Cleveland Clinic fire of 1929.

As the department grew under his leadership, Dr King increasingly focused his activities on blood banking. This was in the days when Cleveland Clinic surgeon A.W. Humphries would demand fresh warm blood, collected 30 units at a time, for one of his legendary aortic aneurysm cases. The success of the Cleveland Clinic Foundation's heart surgery program is due in no small part to John's quiet enthusiasm, which spurred all who worked in the hospital's blood bank to that extra bit of effort. He was a founding member of the Ohio Association of Blood Banks and served as its fourth president.

Serology was his favorite area, and he had a very active paternity testing practice, which he continued well past his retirement from the Cleveland Clinic staff in 1981. He personally performed the testing on every one of the investigations. Not all of his clients had the $16 for the blood test, but they could donate a unit of blood and have their fee excused. Times and needs were different back then.

John was born in Bakerton, Pennsylvania in 1915, and earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from Penn State. He went on to Yale where he was awarded doctorates in bacteriology (1941) and medicine (1944). After an internship and residency in pathology at Jefferson Medical College, he joined the faculty at the University of Vermont in 1946.

John was a veteran of the Korean War who stayed on in the reserves for the next 30 years, retiring with the rank of colonel. For commanding the 266th General Hospital unit headquartered at Mote Armory in Parma, he received the US Army's Legion of Merit in 1976.

Dr King's professional accomplishments are too numerous to list. He was a fellow of the American College of Physicians and of the College of American Pathologists, a member of the American Society of Clinical Pathologists, the Society of American Bacteriologists, the American Association of Blood Banks, and the American Medical Association. He was an inspector for the College of American Pathologists (directing its national standards laboratory) and the American Association of Blood Banks. Alas, these appointments fail to give a sense of how much of himself he gave to each of these organizations.

In his free time he taught at Cleveland State University (where he held the rank of associate professor in the Department of Biology), amassed one of the finest collections of blood-banking commemorative postage stamps anywhere, and volunteered much time to his Masonic lodge. His volunteer work continued to the end. He was a faithful helper several mornings every week at St Alban Episcopal Church in Cleveland Heights, answering the telephone and greeting visitors, and that is precisely where he was to be found on the morning of his last day.

Even though he had such a distinguished career, I know that John Weaver King would like best to be remembered as the loving husband and gentle father that he was. He and his wife Caroline celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in May. He is survived by Mrs King, four children, and eight grandchildren. He now rests near his family's farm in Brick Church, Pa.

So many of us are the richer because of him. ■

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