

## Paul Meyer Wood, M.D.

1894–1963

The unknown adolescent oracle who wrote the future history of the 1912 Senior Class of South Bend High School, Indiana, recorded, “When Paul Wood was asked the time worn questions of what he would do, he answered

remember the blond-haired lad that spent so much time in the chemistry laboratory.”

In this vignette seen through the eyes of a classmate we, who came to know Paul later, understand how well his adolescent colleagues



Paul Meyer Wood

vaguely, ‘Oh live, I guess.’ We were all surprised, but then he said he was considering college and would like to study medicine. Some day in the list of alumni will appear the name, Paul Wood, M.D., and we shall all

even then appreciated him. We, the colleagues of his adult years, remember how he budgeted his life—time for living, time for family, time for earning a livelihood, and above all, time for his specialty, anesthesiology.

He appeared to enjoy each portion to the utmost.

He commenced his work-day by giving anesthesia for one of "his" surgeons from 5 a.m. to 11 a.m. He would then return to his apartment and plunge into the activities of the anesthesia society. In the late afternoon he would make hospital rounds or administer anesthesia for an emergency operation. Evenings, he attended meetings of the numerous societies to which he actively contributed during his life or he was back at his desk.

His career in anesthesiology was a busy and productive one. In the course of time he was an active staff member of at least twenty hospitals and served as consultant to a like number. He was Assistant Secretary and Secretary of the New York Society of Anesthetists from 1930 to 1944. This organization became the American Society of Anesthetists in 1936 and the American Society of Anesthesiologists in 1945. He was a founding member of the original Fellowship Committee of the New York Society of Anesthetists which later became the American College; a founding member of the Travel Club in 1927, which later became the Academy of Anesthesiology; a founding member of the American Board of Anesthesiology, its Secretary-Treasurer from 1937 to 1947 and President in 1948. He was the Business Manager of ANESTHESIOLOGY from its inception in 1939 to 1944, and was the first recipient of the Distinguished Service Award of the American Society of Anesthesiologists in 1945. He also was one of the founders of the Postgraduate Assembly in Anesthesiology, its business manager for ten years, and later its Honorary Chairman. He was profoundly interested in the Wood Library-Museum of which he was founder and curator.

Paul M. Wood was born in Frankfort, Indiana, on June 8, 1894. His father, John A. Wood, held a Ph.D. in Education and taught school in Frankfort, La Porte, and South Bend, Indiana, where he was City Superintendent of Schools. In 1913 he gave up teaching and came to New York to train missionaries at the Biblical Seminary. He was an unusual man of many talents and interests. Paul exhibited these same characteristics. After graduation from South Bend High School in 1912, Paul entered Notre Dame in 1913 but finished his

training for a B.S. degree at Columbia in 1917. He started medical school at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University, but his studies were interrupted by World War I. He recruited and commanded an ambulance unit at Columbia and was stationed at the Italian Front. He received the Croce d' Guerra and the Medalie Di Valore in 1918. He then returned to Columbia and received his M.D. degree in 1922. He served an eight-month internship at Bellevue on the First Surgical Division, and served as House Surgeon at Grenfell Mission, Saint Anthony, Newfoundland. In 1923 he returned to New York and was House officer for two years at Roosevelt Hospital. There he came under the influence of the surgeon Charles H. Peck and Lewis Booth, Tom Bennett, Tom Buchanan, Malcolm Munkittrick, James Gwathmey and Paluel Flagg. These men were the stalwarts of anesthesia in New York at this time, and each left his mark on this impressionable and capable young physician. During this two-year period as House officer at Roosevelt Hospital he received more than nine months of instruction in anesthesia.

He married Harriet Amelia Muller in 1924, although it was against the rules for interns to be married and caused some consternation among the hospital authorities.

He started to make his livelihood in anesthesia immediately after his internship and was appointed Junior Attending Anesthetist at Roosevelt Hospital in 1925. He joined the New York Society of Anesthetists in this year; here he met Erdman, Ferguson and Lumbard and soon after, McMechan, when he joined the International Research Society. The almost 40 years of his clinical practice and organizational activities in anesthesia were among the most prolific in the development of the specialty, and this remarkable man had an important role in all of it.

What else was there in this man's background which contributed to the many talents he possessed? His wife describes him as always straight-laced, which no doubt stemmed from parental influence. He was modest and self-effacing. He helped many boys through college, giving whatever he could toward their tuition. Harriet Wood willingly gave her con-

sent for this. Medical school students came to their house to "baby-sit" and sometimes to mop a floor in order to provide a reason for the substantial help given them. He liked having youngsters around him, and when his own children were "teenagers," often involved them in the annual meetings of the American Society of Anesthesiologists and the Postgraduate Assembly, where, in those early days, they functioned as registration personnel.

At the age of 37 he suffered what was thought to be a coronary occlusion; it was believed he might have to give up his clinical work. During this period of illness he conceived the idea of a permanent Anesthesia Library-Museum. The Library-Museum grew and moved to the E. R. Squibb building in 1933. In 1947 it was given space with the New York Component Society. The present collection of books and museum items will shortly be fittingly housed in Park Ridge, Illi-

nois, in a building of its own, sponsored by the American Society of Anesthesiologists. Dedication exercises will be held November 3, 1963, at the time of the Annual Meeting of the Society. It was comforting for Paul Wood to know that this collection—the results of more than thirty years of dedicated work toward the preservation of the materials of the history of anesthesiology—would be housed permanently. His foresight made certain that our heritage is preserved.

Ralph M. Waters, one of his long time friends and a co-worker in the development of the specialty of anesthesia, responded to the news of Wood's death by saying, "What a loss to anesthesia is the going of Paul." But this man who "fell in love" with his specialty, by his words, his actions and his accomplishments, has left us a heritage which is boundless in its influence.

ALBERT M. BETCHER, M.D.

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**HYPNOTICS** Six hypnotic drugs and a placebo were coded and administered at random, one dose at 8 p.m. to twenty patients. A special evaluation scale was used, studying average duration of sleep, quality of sleep and side effects. Secobarbital sodium (Seconal) and methyprylon (Noludar) were significantly more effective than the placebo. The other drugs, glutethimide (Doriden) and three quinoxalinone derivatives, were not statistically different from the placebo in their effects. It was clear that some hypnotic agents do have a real pharmacological action but that the end result involves a marked placebo effect. This placebo effect is especially marked on the quality of sleep. In this respect there are no significant differences between drugs and the placebo but a significant difference between all preparations and sleep without medication. A positive correlation was found between onset of sleep and length of sleep indicating that a drug that causes earlier sleep produces longer sleep. A similar finding was observable in the relations between onset of sleep and quality of sleep, and quality of sleep and length of sleep. (*Le Riche, W. H., and Van Belle, G.: Clinical and Statistical Evaluation of Six Hypnotic Agents, Canad. Med. Ass. J. 88: 837 (Apr. 20) 1963.*)