

Builders They Were All

Ladies and Gentlemen

Tonight we gather together at this Testimonial Dinner to give expressions of our gratitude for the services given by Professors Bobier, Fisher and Lyle as teachers, practitioners and sages: and to pay tribute to them and to express the esteem in which we hold them for their achievements.

In so doing I wish to avoid a common pitfall that attends such occasions. I do not wish to leave any impressions with them or with you that, in some way, this Testimonial Dinner foreshadows the end of their careers. Knowing each one of these men as I do and, by reason of their temperament, health and knowledge, and our recognition of their capabilities, I know that this is not to be the case.

It may well be that their careers as professors at the School of Optometry of the University of Waterloo will officially end this year, their careers — and I choose to use the word 'career' in this context to mean their achievements and advancements in optometry — will not end.

In the preparation of these remarks, I was struck with the tremendous impact these three have had upon us individually and collectively, and how their influences have affected each one of us as health care practitioners and our profession in general.

How then to say what should be said and then, how to say it?

I think I solved the question when I recalled the title of The Right Honourable Vincent Massey's book, "What's Past is Prologue". For here was a clear case of past achievement foreshadowing future events for them, for us and for our profession.

Our honoured guests tonight began life in different parts of our Country: Clair in Moosomin, Saskatchewan, Bill in Summerside, Prince Edward Island and Ted in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

While their beginnings were different their careers are interestingly parallel and similar, and liberally salted with "firsts".

In each case they graduated from the College of Optometry of Ontario and initially entered private practice, Ted and Clair in Toronto and Bill in Winnipeg.

They established successful and busy practices, and even in those earlier days, began to show their interests and inclinations in areas of their practices in which they later became acknowledged as experts.

Clair's practice offered and provided orthoptic care, Ted was pioneering contact lens therapy (and, those were the days of the moulding technique) and Bill was avidly reading the scientific literature, and using and disseminating information regarding pathology as manifested in the eye.

Each, on his own, subsequently chose to follow a career of teaching. Whatever their reasons were, there is little doubt that their personal decisions were to our everlasting benefit.

Ted became a full-time faculty member of the College of Optometry of Ontario on the 1st day of January, 1946 and became the second Dean of the College on the 21st day of September, 1948, and became the first Director of the School of Optometry of the University of Waterloo in the Fall of Canada's Centennial Year, 1967. During this time he earned his M.A. Degree ('48) from the University of Toronto and was awarded the honorary degree Doctor of Science in 1969 from the Pennsylvania College of Optometry.

Clair joined the part-time faculty of the College soon after he graduated in 1948 and, subsequently, became a full-time faculty member. During that time he took leave from the College and earned his M.Sc. ('56) degree in physiological optics from The Ohio State University.

And Bill, before becoming a full-time member of the faculty of the College, completed his Ph.D. at Indiana University in 1965.

During World War II, Bill served for four years with the Winnipeg Rifles and later with the Regina Rifles and was severely wounded. Clair served with the R.C.A.F. in Africa for 43 months, and Ted not only was director of clinics at the College during this time but also was responsible for organizing and providing optometrical services for men entering into the armed services.

All are Fellows of the American Academy of Optometry and Ted was the first (and only) non-American to serve as its President; and, Bill is presently serving as the Editor of The American Journal of Optometry and Physiological Optics. This Journal, for those who are not optometrists, has been and is to-day, among the most prestigious and eminent scientific journals in the field of vision.

Not only have these three rather remarkable people "paid their dues" in the world of academia, but also they have paid them, and are paying them, in the wonderful world of optometrical politics. Whether the organization is a Provincial or National Association or a Provincial Governing Body they have been there, and they continue to make their talents freely available to them. I have personally never known them to turn down a reasonable request to serve. They have dutifully and enthusiastically served in many elected and appointed offices and have represented optometry's position with candor, integrity and distinction.

It may be seen from my few remarks, and undoubtedly from your own personal experiences with them, that they have not led normal lives. That is, unlike most of us, they have not simply worked from nine to five nor failed to research, detail and prepare, nor failed to share with others their delight when they fully understood a subject or unravelled a problem.

In other words they have found the key to success and accomplishment and earned the right to be listened to. Sir William Osler has stated it more eloquently when he expressed it this way — "There is an old folklore legend that there is some mystic word which will open barred gates. There is, in fact, such a mystic word. It is the open sesame of every portal. The great equalizer in the world, the true philosopher's stone, which transmutes all the baser metal of humanity into gold. The stupid man it will make bright, the bright, brilliant — and the brilliant steady. With the mystic word all things are possible. And the mystic word is work." Benjamin Franklin stated it more tersely when he said "Never was one glorious who was not also laborious".

In my eagerness to impress upon you the achievements and character of these three real human beings and, knowing our fondness, as vision scientists and practitioners, for formulae to describe principles and phenomena, I would respectfully submit a formula — for your consideration — which describes, in a rather over-simplified way, the elements which make up these three men and account for their success.

The Fisher-Bobier-Lyle formula (and which may be suitably applied by others) is —

large L is the amount of labour expended,
large S is the amount of available stamina,
large D the amount of determination applied, and
large A is the index of achievement; therefore
the formula may be stated as — $L^2 + S + D = A$.

It is apparent to all that their A indices (achievements) are very high, and that they have reached this level of achievement by extremely hard labour, and sustained stamina and determination.

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