

Acceptance of the Howland Award

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It is a great honor to join the roster of distinguished Howland awardees. My pleasure is increased by the lucky circumstance that this year marks the centenary of the founding of the APS. It is just 3 days short of 40 yr ago, almost half the life span of the society, that I made my first presentation before the SPR, the offspring of the APS. I bring that to your attention to show how young the society is, not how old I am. The subject was an experimental study of a patient with myotonia congenita that had attracted my interest as a resident. The presentation was made in Atlantic City to an audience of possibly 50. This was the plenary session, subspecialty sessions had not yet been introduced. The subject was peripheral to the mainstream of pediatric inquiry and elicited only a few polite comments. In the break that followed an older man, probably over 40, a biochemist named Sam Rapoport whom I knew by reputation approached me to tell me how much he had enjoyed my talk. It was an experience that I have never forgotten, one that will be repeated many times for others during these new few days.

Four years ago, in addressing this audience, I reviewed some of the important issues that have faced this society as it evolved from a select club of 23 members to the impressive gathering of today. Today, I wish to emphasize the constants that have persisted despite those changes, constants that are of particular significance to us as academicians.

The greater world that we live in is facing a progressive cynicism that is pervading all walks of life. Sincerity is regarded with suspicion. Selfishness is assumed where none exists. The occasional deviation is responded to with general indictments followed by burdensome regulations intended to prevent the unpreventable. This ugly and distorted view appears to be confirmed every day in the newspapers.

The medical profession has not been spared. In fact, it seems to have been singled out for particular attention. The reasons for this singular attention are complex. One reason I would suggest is, perversely, the aura of infallibility of medicine engendered by the remarkable advances of recent years. Failure is now considered synonymous with culpability. Corps of auditors are propagated, less informed, and with more dubious motivations than those they are intended to monitor. Proving one's innocence has become a burdensome occupation interfering with the important pursuits of one's life and profession.

Our society, as reflected in these spring meetings, stands in sharp and welcome contrast, clinging to values that have been constant since its inception. Honesty is assumed and errors are recognized as the inevitable fumbles that beset those who tackle complex problems. Although we may count on sympathetic understanding, our world is not of primroses and ice cream. Competition is keen; work and workers are judged. The goals, however, are clear and simple although not easy to achieve. We lay claim to being physicians and scientists-physicians with a breadth of interest in the welfare of children and scientists seeking to penetrate the unknown with the faith that greater knowledge brings the potential for improving their welfare. It is our good

fortune to be associated with a way of life that has more worthy objectives than self-aggrandizement.

Two individuals who have helped shape our world are shown in Figure 1. The year is 1965, and the occasion is the presentation by Saul Krugman to Dr. Holt of the *Festschrift* in his honor. It was also the day that Holt was informed that he was to receive the Howland award. These two men have helped perpetuate those cherished values that are part of our pediatric tradition. Saul Krugman has been my closest friend and counselor since we arrived at Bellevue at the close of World War II. He is well known to this audience and I have had the privilege, previously, of speaking to you about his many accomplishments. Today, I would like to tell you a little about L. Emmett Holt, Jr. It is no exaggeration to say that Holt changed the course of my life and that of Krugman, as he did of many others.

First, let me place Holt in time by tracing the academic equivalent to the biblical begat. Holt's father was a pioneer in American Pediatrics, probably the most famous pediatrician of his time. One of his students was John Howland. Howland, in turn, begat his own brood, among them Edward A. Park, the first Howland awardee. Ned Park became Chairman of Pediatrics



Fig. 1. Dr. Saul Krugman presenting to Dr. L. Emmett Holt, Jr. a copy of the *Festschrift* in his honor on the occasion of his 70th birthday.

at Hopkins and Holt, Jr. about whom I am now talking, looked to him as his mentor.

Holt, Jr. was a preeminent scientist whose careful observations on nutrition in infancy provided the scientific foundation for current therapy. His activities in child health stretched far beyond the laboratory with the world as his arena. It was only after his death that I learned what he considered to be his most important achievement.

Holt, in his later years, wrote an autobiography, not for publication but for his children. The manuscript came into my hands in a carton containing notes and memorabilia entrusted to me by his son, Arnold. It is his closing message that I would like to impart to you in his own words, only slightly edited.

Holt first pays tribute to Park in the following way: "He had knowledge well in advance of the younger members of his staff, but he never lost an opportunity to build them up, recognize

their thoughts, ideas, and achievements. The inspiration of such a character could not but have a profound influence on his associates as they moved out to occupy academic positions." Holt, then, in a typical self-effacing way, described his own role. "I was merely a transmitter of what Dr. Park taught me. To see his ideas and ideals blossoming in the persons of Bob Ward, Saul Krugman, Joe Dancis, Jonathan Lanman, and others (and there were many others, some of whom are sitting before me today) is the major satisfaction of being a professor of pediatrics. If I can point to Dr. Park as being the father of my professional career, he can look upon my successors as his grandchildren and they to him as grandsire. May his successor multiply!"

Today, as we celebrate our centenary, it is fitting to pause a moment to look back in gratitude to those who preceded us before we, once again, take up the burdens and the challenges of the future.