

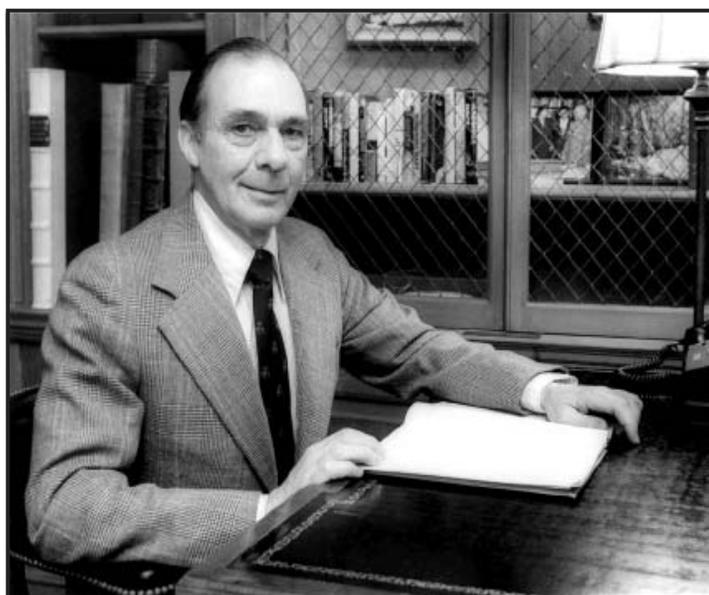
TRENT ASSOCIATES REPORT

Fall/Winter 2005

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Remembering Terry Cavanagh

In response to my request for reminiscences of Terry following his death on 26 June 2005, I have received replies from a cross section of those who knew him in a variety of ways at different periods in his twenty-seven year tenure at Duke. These memories have given me a more well-rounded picture of him and perhaps they will do the same for others as they read what has been written here.



G.S.T. Cavanagh, 1923-2005

I did not meet Terry Cavanagh in person until sometime after I became curator in 1992, although I fairly immediately began a practice which continued through the ensuing years until his memory began to fade. Whenever I had a question about the collection that could not otherwise be answered, I would phone him, usually in the morning, at his home in Athens, Georgia. I would ask and he would answer. The exchange was usually brief and to the point; then, a few days later a witty note would follow in the mail.

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Remembering Terry Cavanagh, continued from page 1

Visiting Booksellers Abroad

In the summer of 1978 we traveled to England and Wales with Susan and Terry Cavanagh. Terry had extensive contacts among English booksellers as he obtained many items for the Trent Collection there. We stayed first in Cheltenham for a few days at the house of some friends of theirs and after that visited Stonehenge, Avebury, and the National Trust town of Lacock, dating to the 13th century, in Wiltshire. In Lacock we stayed in an ancient inn and banged our head on 14th century beams on the way to the communal loo in the middle of the night. Lacock Abbey had been the home of the great early photographer Fox Talbot and currently housed the Photographic Museum. Terry was quite interested in Talbot's work.

Our visits to booksellers began at Hay-on-Wye in Wales. The town is a book collector's mecca as its streets are lined with used book dealers. We visited several that Terry knew well and remember one experience in particular. We crossed a lawn full of Canada geese and their droppings to see a young dealer whom Terry had just met. When we entered his house classical music was playing and books were stacked everywhere. The young man and his wife had a new baby and when we went upstairs we observed that the baby's crib was also full of books. Where the baby slept was never made entirely clear to us.

Later in the trip we stayed with Margaret and Peter Eaton at a former Rothschild estate outside of London. Peter Eaton was a well-known London bookseller from whom Terry had purchased books for years. The rooms of the main house were filled with books, each room devoted to a different subject. Another guest that day was Harry Keen, Professor of Human Metabolism at Guy's Hospital in London. The discussion over dinner of the English Civil War made it seem to have happened only yesterday. Terry also knew the British physician Richard Hunter. Anyway, it was on that trip that Terry told us about Hunter's hypothesis that King George III had suffered from inherited porphyria.

Throughout the trip Susan and Terry were in their element, Terry dealing with his beloved booksellers and Susan repeatedly dashing off into some little shop to purchase something that had caught her eye. Thanks to Terry we learned a great deal about the art of selling and purchasing rare and important books from the past, in this case books that dealt with the history of medicine.

Nick was also grateful to Terry for explaining to him the complexities of cricket as they watched a test match being played.

Nicholas Gillham, PhD and Carol Gillham
James B. Duke Professor Emeritus, Biology



**Cavanagh and Martha Kelly in
Hospital Library Reading Room
1962**

Mr. C

I have many fond memories of Mr. C. He was so interesting to talk to because of his knowledge and wide interests, and I learned a lot from him. I especially remember his wonderful sense of humor (which was sometimes rather off-beat!) He could put a humorous slant on most any topic which made for many enjoyable and entertaining conversations.

Mary Ann Brown

Librarian Emerita
Duke Medical Center Library

Cavanagh Protégé

When I arrived at Duke University in 1975, Terry Cavanagh, Susan Carlton Smith Cavanagh and Elon Clark were some of the first people I met. That initial pilgrimage to the Trent Collection in the History of Medicine, and the subsequent introduction to the aforementioned individuals, led to very close, memorable and rewarding friendships with all three. The latter was responsible for my current employment.

“Mr. C,” as we affectionately referred to Terry, was not only a great friend; he was also the consummate mentor. I had early bibliophilic tendencies, a predilection fostered by my paternal grandmother, who collected Victorian juvenilia. And, I have always had a keen interest in the history of medicine and science; however, my interests have transcended these fields. I was amazed by Mr. C’s breadth and depth of knowledge of not only medicine and science, but literature, history and the arts, as well. Being in his presence was a constant enlightenment and education. I felt like an apprentice in William Caxton’s shop.

Mr. C was also a person who not only understood the wider importance of preserving and promoting the history of medicine and science but he also knew every item in the Trent Collection. There are librarians and there are Cavanagh types. The latter are extremely rare, especially in a time of pandemic technophilia. Mr. C was a bibliophile’s librarian.

I was fortunate to attend several professional meetings with Mr. C and Susan. He was not only admired and respected, he was revered. His memberships in the august Osler Society and Grolier Club were testaments to his veneration. I received vicarious thrills out of his involvement in both organizations.

I am always surrounded by books and not a day goes by that I don’t think of him and Susan. His passing reminds us all that greatness in one’s field is achieved not only with sagacity, but with commitment to excellence and a steadfast championing of one’s chosen field. **BRAVO, Mr. C!** You have left an indelible impression upon us all. You, through the words of Horace, have taught us, “*Litera scripta manet.*”

Douglas C. Zinn

G.S.T. Cavanagh Protégé

MD - PhD Program

When I arrived at Duke in the summer of 1970, to take over an already running MD-PhD program in the history of medicine, no one was more excited and more helpful about my arrival than Terry. I had met Terry at meetings in the years before I came to Durham, but I really only came to appreciate his very wide knowledge of medical books and of medical history after we began to work together. He was a generous mentor to me and to our students. He encouraged my own work by giving me access to the stacks in the Perkins Library and he saw to it that I had an office near the Medical Library.

I was not so young in age, but very young in my professional career when I came to Duke, and he took me in hand and literally showed me the ropes, so to say. It was a genuine pleasure to work with him and he became a real colleague. I believe the students appreciated him as much as I did. Terry deserves a great deal of the credit for any success the medical history program at Duke achieved. Thus it is with great gratitude and fondness that I recall those days thirty-five years ago.

Gert H. Brieger, MD, PhD

Johns Hopkins Distinguished Service Professor

Editor Emeritus, *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*

Student Research

What a great surprise it was to have Terry Cavanagh announce that he was going to visit me at Oxford University where I was spending part of my third year of medical school, working on a project on physician-writers. I had selected Oxford because I wanted to study with one of the leading scholars of Thomas Browne, the author of *Religio Medici*, who was a favorite physician-writer of William Osler's. Terry was coming to Oxford to attend the meeting of the Osler Society and invited me to attend what turned out to be a great meeting and a great introduction to this interesting group. When I returned to Duke, Peter English and Mort Bogdanoff convinced me that I had to persuade Frank Neelon to help me bring my project to completion. I happened to mention attending the Osler Society meeting with Terry and the deal was closed!

Months later, following a call from a patient, Frank Neelon and I became interested in the question of why some people identify a foul smell in urine after ingesting asparagus. As we worked on this problem, I wanted to search the medical literature, both modern and historical. Susan Feinglos and Mary Ann Brown took great delight in asking this strange question of the modern literature. Terry was similarly thrilled to dig through the collections at Duke to locate the historical literature, which contained some very interesting theories. As we had numerous volumes spread out across the library, we received lots of surprised expressions from those asking somewhat more "acceptable" questions. The piece that Frank and I wrote was published in the *North Carolina Medical Journal* (1985;46(6): 332-334), with a cartoon brilliantly created by Susan Cavanagh. We will all miss Terry's wry sense of humor and his enthusiasm for books.

Jeremy Sugarman, MD, MPH, MA

Phoebe R. Berman Bioethics Institute & Department of Medicine

The Johns Hopkins University

Mr. C

After many years of working with Mr. C, I was delighted to discover that under his very stern façade, there was a warm caring person, with a wonderful sense of humor.

Wilma Morris

Administrative Staff
Duke Medical Center Library



Professional Library Staff, 1980
Terry and Susan (back row, 3rd & 4th from right)

Two Memories

I was working on a project related to Wilms' tumor, a malignancy of the kidney of children. I went over to the Trent Collection and filled out the card to examine a copy of Max Wilms' 19th century monograph. Mr. Cavanagh went back into the vault and came towards me, clutching the book to his chest.



Cavanagh at Staff Party

"You know, we bought this book in the 1930s and you're the first person who ever asked to see it," he said. He continued to hold the book tightly to his chest as if it were his personal possession.

I looked back at him and replied, "Well now aren't you glad that you bought it?" and took the book from him.

I also remember him throwing me out of the Trent Room for using my dictaphone to take notes regarding a manuscript. (Obviously the use of a pen would have been inappropriate near a valuable rare book.) I was banished to the library lobby. He came out, a few moments later, and told me that he certainly couldn't have the noise of my handheld dictaphone in his library.

Edward C. Halperin, MD, FACR
Vice Dean, Duke University School of Medicine

A Dear Friend

Terry Cavanagh was a dear friend. His soft voice and extremely kind manner belied his tremendous strength of knowledge in the field of history of medicine. His grasp of medical discoveries and trends in health was remarkable and he was a master of librarianship.

Terry helped me so much in organizing the Trent Medical Library and was such a close friend of my husband, Jim Semans, and me that no words could describe how much I shall miss him.

He and Susan spelled "togetherness" and were a wondrous team.

Mary D.B.T. Semans

The Mary Duke Biddle Foundation

Continued on page 6

A Special Friend

Terry Cavanagh became a very special friend to me when I was at Duke. Although we were light years different in personality, we developed a common bond through our love for the history of medicine. I always called him “Mr. Cavanagh” until one day he asked me to call him “Terry.” I first met Terry when the medical library was in the basement of the then Duke Hospital, now Duke South. It was the summer of 1973; I had just moved to Durham from Charlottesville and had not started my internship. I came to Duke with a pre-existing love for medical history, passed along by my father, also a physician. Dr. William Muller, Chair of Surgery and a Duke alumnus piqued this interest at the University of Virginia. I remember that I was drawn immediately to the Trent Room which has since moved to the Seeley G. Mudd Building and been reshaped to fit a new space. As I was looking through Joe Trent’s wonderful collection, Terry slowly entered the room and asked if he could help me. He was quiet, small of stature, deliberate speaking, and friendly for a scholar meeting a novice. I am sure he considered that I in no way could appreciate the magnitude of what I was beholding in the collection room. I queried him regarding the origins of the collection and the man who established it. I learned all about Joe Trent and Mary, his wife, herself a Duke. Interestingly, several years later I befriended Mary when I sewed a laceration on her foot in the Duke ER. The chairs of surgery and orthopedics came to the ER to save Mary but she wanted me for her surgeon – a second year resident – and I completed the job. We are friends until this day.



Cavanagh, Ella Jones, and a student in Trent Room, 1962

Howard Carter said of King Tut’s tomb, the “wonderful things” — books of all sizes from octavos to quartos to elephant folios. The Trent Collection had all of these and more but here I found available what I wanted. I found Harvey Cushing, Osler, Halsted, Hunter and Paré. He had a mint set of the two-volume Halsted papers for \$75.00 which was a fortune to me but my wife knew that I had no will power against bibliomania. These two books are treasured as the first of my historical library and would cost much more today. Terry had a bookplate of Halsted’s, an original, which he gave to me, and I have it framed on my

That day in late June, Terry enlightened me regarding the origins of the collection. We began to talk about surgical history. He let me know that he also was *Old Galen* – his *nom de plume* for his personal book business. I had known of his flyer from my father, also a collector, but I had no idea that I had met the same man. As an avid collector himself, Terry often ran across extra editions and would personally buy them. I had been looking for a first edition of William Stewart Halsted’s papers. Terry had one and took me to his personal stash of books at his house. I entered the basement to see, as

wall with a copy of the 1922 Stocksdales photo of Halsted. On that trip to his house I spotted a copy of Osler's book on angina. As I was to become a cardiac surgeon, I was interested. I opened it to find that it was a signed copy. I asked Terry if he could price it for me. He simply said, "Someday." When I graduated from the Duke surgical residency program ten years later, it arrived in the mail compliments of Terry. He had a steel memory.

Terry liked me and I liked him. We were as different as cats and hippopotami. I was an extroverted, somewhat reckless, but intellectually curious 27-year-old "boy" in many ways. My thirst for this stuff exceeded my ability to appreciate the magnitude of his knowledge, the riches of the collection, or my pocketbook. Tammy, my wife, soon learned that it was the "little ones" that Terry sold me that cost the most. He had a running account for me. He never called in the debt as long as I was paying while I continued to collect books. Every once and a while he would slip in a little free one.

Terry's first marriage did not work out. I only went to his house once while he was with his first wife. Susan Carleton became a close friend after he was divorced and was his assistant in the Trent Collection [and eventually his wife]. She is still a good friend of Tammy's and mine. She had been at Duke for years and gave me a different perspective. She enlightened me regarding the early medical illustrators at Duke and their Hopkins origins. Susan and Terry were always there for me when I made unannounced visits to the Trent Collection. Remember, Dr. Sabiston had a 24 hour x 7 day x 365 days a year residency program and free moments were few. These times when I slipped away to the Trent Collection were the best of times. I would sit in my white pants and jacket (like an ice cream man uniform) and have tea and scones with Terry and Susan. It was private time with just the three of us. He was a Canadian and had known W.W. Francis who was William Osler's nephew and was responsible for cataloging the Osler books before they were brought from 13 Norham Gardens in Oxford to McGill in Canada. On these afternoons Terry enlightened me regarding Osler's life and his impact on medicine in general and his relationship to Duke through Wilburt Davison, a Rhodes Scholar and his student.

Terry told me about the early days at Duke under the leadership of Dr. Hart and Dean Davison and the close link between Johns Hopkins in those embryonic days. Eventually, when I became an ECU professor, Terry was my prime supporter for membership in the American Osler Society which is still a cherished honor. I was much too young then to be in the presence of those scholars. Terry also established a connection for me at the Osler Library in Montreal when I was studying for my own interest the early details of angina pectoris. He made learning the history of surgery and medicine fun and a part of my profession. I use history daily as "the pegs" on which to hang the latest advances.

I would like to tell you about one halcyon afternoon around 1977. I came running into the Trent Collection and went straight into Terry's office, as I had a habit of doing. I rapidly greeted Susan and then asked Terry bluntly, "I need to see the Vesalius and the Harvey."

He looked up from his book, removed his glasses, and said to me: "Ranny, I am not sure that your sensory system can withstand both books in one afternoon."

Unshaken, I assured him that I could handle it. All those trips to the collection and I had never asked to see either book. I had been mired in Osler and Halsted and had not gotten to the “biggies.” He rose from his chair and led me to the vault. Slowly opening it, he waved me to the doorway. Remember, this is a conservative guy; generally he would think for several days before planning a visit from his office to the vault to see these icons of medical history. I am standing there in a sort of “stat life-form” pulsating to see the books. He understood me well; I was eager; he was not about to lose one drop of my intellectual curiosity, enthusiasm, or just damn energy. He opened the Frankfurt first edition of Harvey’s **De Motu Cordis**. Admittedly, I was “underwhelmed”; however, I could not tell Terry that I was crestfallen. It was printed on flimsy paper and was smaller than a quarto. Joe and Mary Trent had bought it from, I believe, Schuman’s in New York. That meant something to me – a great work bought for a young university medical school. Terry let me actually turn the pages. He had taught me how to “love” a book using the lightest surgical touch possible. The Harvey was placed back in its slipcover after I admired the drawings of the venous system of the arm. Then the folio-sized Vesalius appeared; **De Fabrica** was impressive and what a historical work should be, I thought. It was a bright copy on heavy paper with a contemporary binding. Again, it was a gift of the Trents. That day I went home and told my wife I had seen something that almost no resident had ever seen – these two works. I took with me a lasting impression of the books and more importantly, Cavanagh the man.



Cavanagh in Carrel
History Fellows Room
1976

Terry would often write me after I became a professor, simply saying, “I found a good letter about John Hunter while I was poking about in England. I usually don’t buy this sort of thing. Would you have an interest?” I’d call Terry and tell him to send it with no questions asked. He had been thinking only of my interests when he spotted that “goodie.”

Yes, Terry has a great place in my heart as well as my career. He was one of those rare men who could influence greatly without forcing an imprint of himself. He just rubbed you with the history and you became unknowingly infected with his zeal. He wanted you to remember his history of medicine and not necessarily himself. He was not a braggadocio in any form but was kind and unassuming. I never heard him speak ill of anyone although he had his battles. I’ll miss him because he was an important part of what I am today. He bequeathed the love of our medical heritage to me and I hope that I am continuing his legacy.

W. Randolph Chitwood, Jr., MD, FACS, FRCS
Professor and Chief, Cardiothoracic and Vascular Surgery
Senior Associate Vice Chancellor
East Carolina University, Greenville, NC

Recent Acquisitions

Purchases

Bew, Charles. **Opinions on the Causes and Effects of Diseases in the Teeth and Gums...** London: Printed for John Callow, 1819.

Brigham, Amariah. **An Inquiry Concerning the Diseases and Functions of the Brain, the Spinal Cord, and the Nerves.** New York: G. Adlard, 1840.

Brown, John. **Observations on the Principles of the Old System of Physics...** Edinburgh: Apollo Press, by Martin & M'Dowall, for the Author, 1787.

Diemerbroech, Ysbrand van. **Tractatus de peste...** Amsterdam: Joannis Blaeu, 1665.

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