Hans Horst Meyer Celebration

The Trent Associates and the Medical Center Library hosted a celebration on Thursday 25 March to honor J. Horst Meyer’s gift of his grandfather Hans Horst Meyer’s portrait and medical memorabilia. The occasion gave us an opportunity to celebrate the contributions of H.H. Meyer to science and to express the Library’s appreciation for the generous gifts of Professor Meyer, DSc, Fritz London Professor of Physics, to our historical collections. The guests were welcomed by Patricia Thibodeau, Associate Dean for Library Services. Then, Dr. Mark Newman, The Merel H. Harmel Professor and Chairman of the Department of Anesthesiology, shared a few words about Meyer’s significance as an anesthesia pioneer. Dr. Robert L. Lipnick, from the Office of Pollution Prevention & Toxics at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, gave the guest lecture, “Hans Horst Meyer and the Lipoid Theory of Narcosis.” A reception followed in the lower lobby adjacent to the exhibition which had been mounted as part of the event.

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Hans Horst Meyer, DPhil, holds a prominent place at the historical intersection of pharmacology and anesthesia. His greatest achievement was in the formulation of the lipoid theory of narcosis which still stands today largely unchallenged. Published in 1899, Meyer’s classic paper proposed that the ability of a substance to produce narcosis or anesthesia is governed by its partition coefficient.

He shares the honor as the cofounder of this theory with Charles Overton who independently arrived at the same conclusion at the same time although indirectly through a study of permeability of plant and animal cells to various substances. The Meyer-Overton theory stimulated decades of research to answer important questions of exactly how certain drugs can act to produce a state of anesthesia. Meyer’s findings were significantly extended in the 1920s by his son Kurt H. Meyer, a professor of chemistry at the University of Geneva, who was the uncle and adoptive father of Professor Meyer.
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One of the many medals awarded to Hans Horst Meyer

Patricia Thibodeau prepares to welcome the guests

Guests, Dr. James H and Mrs. Mary DBT Semans

Medallion bust in honor of H.H. Meyer's 70th birthday

Dr. Lipnick and Prof. Meyer examine some of the Hans Horst Meyer memorabilia

Ann and Robert Lipnick enjoy Duke Gardens during their visit

All photos in this issue by Judy Woodburn, except the Lipnicks in Duke Gardens by Prof. Meyer
Books Purchased with Funds Donated by Trent Associates

Account of the rise and progress of the asylum, proposed to be established near Philadelphia...


Billard, Charles M. A Treatise on the diseases of infants... New York: George Adlard, 1839.

Burrows, George Man. An Inquiry into certain errors relative to insanity... London: Printed for Thomas and George Underwood, 1820.

Clarke, M. A. Directions for the management of children... London: Printed for W. Griffin, 1773.


Looking Ahead

On Saturday, 9 October during Medical Alumni weekend, the Georgia Medical Society in celebration of its 200th anniversary will dedicate a plaque commemorating the 1931 gift of their library to the Duke Hospital Library. Dean Wilburt C. Davison orchestrated the gift of 8,000 books and journals, which along with the later Trent bequest provided the foundation stones for the current historical collections.

An open house and reception are scheduled from 10:00 am - noon. The unveiling of the plaque will take place at 11:00 am in the History of Medicine Reading Room. Everyone is cordially invited to attend.
Sustaining Members
Dr. David L. Epstein
Dr. Edward C. Halperin
The Honorable James Parker Jones & Mrs. Mary Trent Jones
Dr. Gordon K. Klintworth
Mr. Josiah Charles Trent Lucas
Dr. Andrew T. Nadell
Dr. Francis A. Neelon
Dr. A. T. Pagter, Jr.
Dr. Robert A. Sorrentino
Dr. Robert E. Stone

Members
Mrs. Ruth M. Blum in honor of Prof. Horst Meyer
Dr. Howard G. Clark, III
Dr. E. H. Ellinwood, Jr.
Dr. John A. Feagin, Jr.
Dr. Rufus R. Hambright
Dr. William W. McLendon
Dr. Enrique Montero
Dr. Lisle Wayne, II

Contributing Members
Dr. Eben Alexander, Jr.
Dr. David A. Barnes
Dr. Howard M. Dubose
Dr. Debara L. Tucci & Dr. Kevan E. VanLandingham
Drs. George D. & Evelyn R. Wilbanks

Gifts in Kind
Dr. & Mrs. David Allen
Mr. William R. Burk
Estate of Dr. Ewald W. Busse
Dr. Nicholas W. Gillham
Ms. Patricia Webb Levering
Dr. Deborah Pope
Dr. Dale C. Smith

* Donors since last newsletter

Before the Colors Fade

Before the Colors Fade, an oral history series originated and hosted by Edward Halperin, M.D., features conversations with prominent emeritus or current members of the medical school faculty crucial in the growth and development of the School of Medicine and Duke University Health System. To date eight speakers have participated with more anticipated in the fall.

Charles B. Hammond, MD
Joseph C. Greenfield, Jr., MD
William G. Anlyan, MD
Eugene A. Stead, Jr., MD
Merel H. Harmel, MD
Charles Johnson, MD
Andrew G. Wallace, MD
Samuel L. Katz, MD

Copies of the video recordings have been donated to the historical collections in the Medical Center Library and can be checked out for your viewing convenience. Search in the online catalog under the title, Before the Colors Fade, to confirm the call numbers and availability.
Become a member of the
Trent Associates for 2005
at one of the levels indicated:

_____ Member $25.00
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Gifts in kind are also appreciated and count toward membership.

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Make checks payable to Duke University and send to:
Trent Associates for the History of Medicine
Duke University Medical Center Library
Box 3702
Durham, NC 27710