

THE HUB OF THE AMERICAN UROLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

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To the best of my knowledge, nothing has ever been written on the organization and function of that part of the American Urological Association known as the Secretary's Office. From this point, the spark emanates which keeps the machine running smoothly, representing the duties of the office, which are many. In addition to supervising the business throughout the year, the Secretary must arrange for and assist the President at each annual meeting and is responsible for the general conduct of the session. He is a member of many standing committees, but probably his most important commitment is Chairman of the Program Committee, where he receives titles and abstracts for the scientific program. It is largely through his judgment, with the help of the remaining members of the Committee, that the scientific program is selected. He must be thoroughly familiar with the Constitution and By-Laws of the organization and work accordingly, except when specially instructed by the Executive Committee. He must carry out the President's wishes within the meaning of the government of the organization and must assist those members elected president, who are not too familiar with the administration of the office and, in such a case, is responsible for guiding the activities of the President. He must inform the membership of what transpires at each annual meeting and keep them posted on the business which is transacted throughout the year through the medium of a News Letter, which is published quarterly, and, in addition, keep in close touch with the eight Sections and advise their secretaries on the activities of the parent organization.

You can see from these preliminary remarks that the Secretary has a very great responsibility and must act as the "hub" of the organization. He must see that the wheels turn smoothly, showing no preference for any one group, with courtesy and fairness to all. He is the silent partner of the President, is seen frequently but is heard from seldom, except when making his annual report.

The American Urological Association had a humble beginning, but it was through the determination and popularity of our first Secretary, Dr. Ferd. C. Valentine, who produced the spark that kept the engine running. Most of you are familiar with the fact that Dr. Ramon Guiteras was our first President and that the American Urological Association was the offspring of the New York Genito-Urinary Society, which was organized by Dr. Guiteras and his fellow-workers in a wine house on Ninth Avenue in New York City, kept by a man named Hoffman. Following its organization, the stenographer sent out notices, which, through the journals, were copied in remote places, such as China, Japan, Greece, Asia Minor and elsewhere. The number of men who wanted to join was so great that the idea of having an exclusive body was given up and on February 22, 1902, in Dr. Guiteras' home, a motion was made by Follen Cabot and seconded by Ferd. C. Valentine that the New York Society adjourn, was carried, and the American Urological Association was born. Sponsors on this occasion were Drs.

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* *Note by editor.* President of The American Urological Association 1956-57.

Winfield Ayers, Bill Earl, Newell, Guillen and Fisher of Utica, with Mr. Blanchard, stenographer of the clinic acting as secretary. Dr. Ramon Guiteras was elected President and Dr. Ferd. C. Valentine, Secretary, both to serve for a period of two years.

At the first meeting of the new organization, the names of seventeen others were added to those present as founders of the Association. The meetings were held for a time monthly and at the third session, in 1902, nineteen more were elected to membership, most of whom lived outside of New York City. At that time, the Secretary, Dr. Valentine, suggested an honorary membership and proposed a list of seven men who were elected.

There is no record to show under what Constitution and By-Laws the organization functioned for the first two years of its existence and no complete account was kept of the minutes of the meetings of the Executive Committee. Saratoga, New York, was selected as the place for the first annual meeting on June 13, 1902, at which time Dr. Hugh H. Young advocated the Bottini operation for prostatic hypertrophy and Dr. A. H. Ferguson reported 21 cases treated by perineal prostatectomy. Dr. Valentine read a paper on "Failures in the Irrigation Treatment of Gonorrhoea." The monthly meetings continued to be held in New York City and Hartford, Connecticut from 1902 to 1906; in the former city at the Athletic Club and the latter in conjunction with the Hartford Medical Society in the Hunt Memorial Building. About this time, men from all over the country were elected to membership on a favorable report of the Executive Committee.

It is noted that at the second one-day annual meeting, held in New Orleans in 1903, the American Urological Association received a letter from the American Medical Association asking them to consider the advisability of affiliation with the American Medical Association. The project was to promise, if accepted, that the AUA would retain its name, its autonomy and independence. This proposition was presented at the monthly meeting on October 7, 1903, at the New York Athletic Club. Affiliation never took place, but the last combined meeting of the AMA and the AUA was in St. Louis in 1910, when the members of our Association voted unanimously against amalgamation with that body.

From the inception of the Association until the present, fifty-one annual meetings have been held from June 13, 1902 at Saratoga, New York to May 31, 1956 at Boston, Massachusetts. While the Association is actually fifty-four years of age, three of the annual meetings were not held because of the war and the government's ban on conventions, due to travel restrictions.

In the early days, the Secretary had the full burden of carrying on the activities of the Association. Not only did he have to take care of all the correspondence, but was solely responsible for the scientific program, until the meeting in Boston in 1913, when it was decided to establish a Program Committee, of which the Secretary was to be Chairman.

The author wishes to pay special tribute to the first Secretary of the American Urological Association, who held this post for a period of three years and was largely responsible, with the help of the President, of laying the foundation of the

greatest urological association of all times. Dr. Ferd. C. Valentine was Secretary from 1902 to 1904 and in 1906, he presided at the Boston meeting as President of the Association. He was one of the most active and able members and one to whom we owe more for support and encouragement in the early years, than any one else. Per chance, even the existence of the Association, in its 55 years, is due to Dr. Valentine's strenuous efforts in opposing the plan of amalgamation proposed by the AMA at the annual meeting in New Orleans in 1903. Our first Secretary was born on the twenty-second of March in 1851, on board a vessel belonging to his grandfather in the North Sea. He was brought to this country in early infancy. Dr. Valentine received his medical education in the old McDowell Medical School of St. Louis, which afterwards became the Missouri Medical College, graduating in 1876. His first inclination was to specialize in diseases of the eye but owing to financial reverses of his father, who was a banker, Dr. Valentine felt it his duty to earn his livelihood and, as a result, went to Central America where he became the Surgeon General of the Army of Honduras. It was there that he became interested in venereal diseases and subsequently went abroad to study the subject that had engrossed his attention in Central America. Towards the middle of the nineties, Dr. Valentine first became a factor to be reckoned with in the world of genitourinary specialists. He was an able and industrious contributor to medical literature; the aim of his writings always being helpful to his fellow practitioners. The last meeting Dr. Valentine attended, in which he fought so violently for the good of the Association he loved and had served so well, was in 1909 in Atlantic City, New Jersey. His untimely death, which occurred in December of that year, was a great loss to the Association.

In addition to Dr. Valentine, we have had ten other past secretaries, who have served our Association. Time will not permit a description of their activities; however, I would like to mention their names and tenure of office: Louis S. Schmidt, 1905; Hugh Cabot, 1906-1910; Harry A. Fowler, 1911-1914; Henry L. Sanford, 1915-1921; Homer G. Hamer, 1922-1927; Alexander Randall, 1928-1930; Gilbert J. Thomas, 1931-1935; Clyde L. Deming, 1936-1941 and Thomas D. Moore, 1942-1948. To these men the society owes a deep debt of gratitude for the fine work they have done in executing the duties of the office and promoting the growth of the Association, for it was not until 1952 that a large portion of the burden of the office of the professional Secretary was transferred to that of the Executive Secretary.

The author well remembers his first term of service on the Executive Committee—1936-37, as a representative of the North Atlantic Section. At that time, Dr. Gilbert J. Thomas, who had served so well as Secretary, was the presiding officer. It was the custom, in those days, for the President to give a dinner on the Sunday evening preceding the first scientific session Monday morning. Cocktails were served at 6:30 and a very delightful dinner at 7:30, which was followed by some form of entertainment. After this, the officers and members of the Executive Committee adjourned to an adjoining room, where the meeting of the Executive Committee was called to order by the President and continued into the early hours of the morning. The Secretary had a stenographer present to take

notes. He gave his report, as is the custom, and after reports of the various committee chairmen and discussion by the Executive Committee, the meeting terminated. That year, I believe, there was one additional luncheon meeting.

The President's Dinner on Sunday evening remains part of the program, but the meeting of the Executive Committee, which followed, was discontinued a number of years ago, as it became necessary to meet two days in advance of the scientific program to transact the business at hand. The first session is called to order at ten o'clock Saturday morning and continues throughout the day. The second, at the same time on Sunday morning and, in addition, there are luncheon meetings Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday—so one can clearly visualize the changes which have occurred with the growth of the organization.

The burden of the business of the Association, up until June 1949, was carried on by the Secretary from his professional office. This oftentimes caused considerable hardship with overcrowding, and each time a new Secretary was elected, it would be necessary for him to make room in his office for additional files, etc. When the author, whose tenure of office was from 1949 to 1954, was made Secretary at the Los Angeles meeting, having been on the Executive Committee and realizing what this change meant, obtained permission of the Executive Committee, with the whole hearted support of the then Treasurer, Dr. George C. Prather, to establish an office separate from his professional one and as a result, this was the beginning of a central office of the American Urological Association. Miss Dorothea Nyquist, who had served the Association so well for seven years, continued as assistant to the Secretary in the Atlantic City office. She remained a most efficient assistant for a period of three years, at which time she announced her intention to enter the realm of matrimony and because of this, submitted her resignation on May 27, 1952, to take effect not later than the end of July. Miss Nyquist, now Mrs. Thomas D. Moore, deserves much credit for her loyalty to the American Urological Association for the ten years she devoted to assisting the Secretary.

When the Secretary lost the temporary services of Miss Nyquist, due to illness, the year before her retirement, he more fully realized the tremendous amount of work that he had to shoulder when transacting the business of the Association. By that time, he had served as Secretary almost three years and had observed the ever-increasing business transacted in the office, along with important papers and records which must be kept filed for future reference. The thought of a permanent office came to mind with the appointment of an Executive Secretary, and before the 1952 meeting in Atlantic City, at which Dr. Elmer Hess presided, the Secretary communicated with the President by telephone and recommended the appointment of Mr. William P. Didusch, who was known to the members as a distinguished artist and convention manager, for the position of Executive Secretary. He inquired and learned through Miss Bertha Trott, assistant to Dr. J. A. Campbell Colston, Editor of the Journal of Urology, that very attractive quarters could be obtained in Baltimore, for a minimum fee, in the building of which Miss Trott had complete supervision, with a long term lease. To this recommendation, Dr. Hess gave full support and tentatively offered the position

of Executive Secretary to Mr. Didusch prior to the Atlantic City convention. At that meeting, the recommendation of the President and Secretary was approved by the Executive Committee and the office of Executive Secretary was born.

One of the recommendations presented by Dr. Hess, in his presidential address, was the purchase of a permanent home to be located in some central part of the United States and the employment of an Executive Secretary, who would aid in performing the many duties of the central office. However, the Executive Committee, realizing that the Association did not have sufficient funds to purchase and maintain a home, selected our present site at 1120 North Charles St., Baltimore, Maryland as the permanent headquarters of the American Urological Association. The professional Secretary is responsible for the conduct of both offices and is informed of the transactions of the executive office, so that, at all times, he is thoroughly familiar with the activities of the Association.

It was decided by the Editor of the Journal of Urology to move his office from the Brady Urological Institute to the headquarters of the AUA in Baltimore. In this way, we not only have the services of Mr. Didusch, but the helpful advice of Miss Trott. I was closely associated with these two charming people for three years, before my term of office as Secretary ended, and I can truthfully say that I have never worked with more efficient and delightful individuals. We have, in addition, Mr. Didusch's private secretary, who is most capable; so that now, instead of the "horse and buggy" way of operating, we have a modern, efficient "machine" to serve our large Association, including our distinguished and popular professional Secretary, Dr. Samuel L. Raines; our Executive Secretary, Mr. William P. Didusch; his assistant, Mrs. Virginia Bruce, and the valuable counsel of the assistant to the Editor of the Journal of Urology, Miss Bertha Trott.

An organization as large and as important as the American Urological Association must have a central office to conduct the business promptly and efficiently. As of today, it would be impossible for the professional Secretary to attend to the many duties of the office, without the aid of an Executive Secretary, unless he was retired or willing to give up his practice during tenure of office. For the six years I held that position in this Association, a decided change took place, with an awakening of the officers and membership to the importance of having the "hub" of the organization properly staffed to conduct its business in an up-to-date and progressive manner. As the fifty-first President of the American Urological Association, I wish to give credit to the secretaries who have preceded me, who carried, almost alone, the burden of conducting the business of this great organization.

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