DR. MARION B. SULZBERGER

FOREWORD

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The first 60 years of the life of an extraordinary man like Marion B. Sulzberger are so full of unusual and noteworthy events and achievements that it is exciting for any chronicler to record those data which would be most illustrative of his imagination, his industry, his intelligence and his sense of dedication.

Marion B. Sulzberger was born March 12, 1895 in New York City, the son of Ferdinand and Stella Sulzberger. His father was the founder of the meat packing firm of Sulzberger and Sons which eventually was to become Wilson & Co., one of the largest meat packing firms in the world. After going through grammar school and high school in New York City, he went to Harvard University for a brief period.

After this first abortive attempt at an academic career, Marion Sulzberger traveled for two years to various parts of the world, working his way as a stoker, laborer, shepherd and camel driver, exertions which undoubtedly stood him in good stead during his later years in academic fields. Then followed two years of business activities during which time he surveyed cattle lands and packing and forestry conditions in Paraguay and Argentina for his father's firm. With the advent of World War I, he engaged in what must then have been a most unusual and daring exploit, when from 1917 to 1919 he served as a naval aviator. Licensing of aircraft personnel at that time was the function of the Aero Club of America which was part of an international organization, the F.A.I. (Federation Aeronautique Internationale). Marion Sulzberger holds F.A.I. Seaplane License No. 74, issued to him on October 24, 1917, and F.A.I. Landplane License No. 1104, issued on December 19, 1917.

By 1920 having had his fill of non-academic life, he began his medical studies, first in Geneva and then in Zürich. Subsequently, he took postgraduate training in Dermatology and Syphilology in Zürich under Bruno Bloch and in Breslau under Joseph Jadassohn. These two great teachers and scientific investigators molded Sulzberger's basic approach to dermatologic problems.

Marion Sulzberger returned permanently to the United States in 1929. He started out in private practice with Fred Wise, who became his teacher and friend and who, together with Josef Jadassohn, probably had the greatest influence on him in his approach to the practice of clinical medicine. He at this time joined the staff of the Skin and Cancer Unit which was then in the process of becoming one of the great dermatologic institutions in the world under the guidance of Dr. George M. MacKee, the fourth in the group of outstanding men who have had a major influence on Marion Sulzberger's development as a dermatologist and scientist.

In 1933 he married Kitty, more formally known as Kathryn Mullen Conway, who has been a stimulating influence on—and a continuing challenge to—Marion Sulzberger's lively mind and personality.

His career since 1929 has been closely associated with the Skin and Cancer Unit of which he became the Director in 1947, succeeding Dr. MacKee. In 1949, after the Skin and Cancer Unit was amalgamated with New York University-Bellevue Medical Center, he was made Professor and Chairman of the Department of Dermatology and Syphilology.

Marion Sulzberger has an exceptional ability to present both clinical and scientific topics in a crystal-clear fashion. This great gift has made him one of the outstanding
present-day teachers and lecturers in dermatology. His tremendous contributions to the investigative and teaching phases of dermatology are evident from even a cursory look at the list of his publications. The text on “Dermatologic Allergy” is the classic work in its field. The Year Book of Dermatology and Syphilology, of which he was co-editor from 1931 to 1942 and editor since 1943, has had a very incisive influence on dermatologic thought throughout the world. Other books are “Dermatology. Essentials of Diagnosis and Treatment” (with J. Wolf), “Manual of Dermatology” (with D. M. Pillsbury and C. Livingood), “Office Immunology” (with R. L. Baer) and “The Clinical Significance of Disturbances in the Delivery of Sweat” (with F. Herrmann).

Among Marion Sulzberger’s outstanding achievements was his leading role, in a group of forward-looking colleagues, in the formation of the Society of Investigative Dermatology and the establishment of the Journal of Investigative Dermatology of which he was Editor from 1938 to 1949. He also served on the editorial boards of the Journal of Allergy, Acta Dermato-Venereologica, Dermatologica, Excerpta Dermatologica and Psychosomatic Medicine.

In recognition of his outstanding role in dermatology Marion Sulzberger has been made a member of many local, national and foreign societies. Among the foreign societies which have awarded him honorary or corresponding memberships are those of Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Denmark, Germany, Great Britain, France, Hungary, Italy, The Netherlands, Sweden and Venezuela.

In World War II he joined the U. S. Navy as a Lieutenant Commander in 1940, being discharged in 1946 with the rank of Captain. During the intervening years he played a leading role in organizing dermatologic sections in Naval hospitals; and he carried out investigative work on dermatologic aspects of chemical warfare, thermal burns, protection against insects, the prophylaxis of fungous infections of the feet, prickly heat, and many other topics of importance to the war effort of the allied nations.

His more than 200 publications cover a wide variety of subjects and are remarkable, among other reasons, for their welding of dermatologic thought with knowledge in the basic sciences (especially immunology and physiology) and in internal medicine (particularly endocrinology).

More important even than his ability to exercise his own intellectual agility in the subjects that fascinate him, is his talent for conveying this inquiry and enthusiasm to his colleagues and his students. That Marion Sulzberger is able to kindle such enthusiasm, and, moreover, that he can, by his own method and example, sustain the interest and the exultation of discovery in an ever-widening sphere—it is this, more than any specific investigative triumph, that makes him endeared and respected by all who share his interest in scientific research, in medicine and in dermatology.

The inspiration of his teaching, the insistence of his pursuit of information, the fastidiousness of his thinking and his singular loyalty to the discipline of dermatology have succeeded in giving dermatology a stature envisaged by his predecessors.

It is unusual for one man to accomplish such a volume of clinical, teaching, investigative and organizational work during a span of only 28 years since he became a physician. It is even more remarkable that in addition he is a well-informed, out-going, entertaining, congenial human being with an excellent sense of humor and a love for the lighter side of life. This specialty has been fortunate indeed that Marion Sulzberger, who would have made an outstanding contribution in any pursuit, has made dermatology his chosen field of endeavor.

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