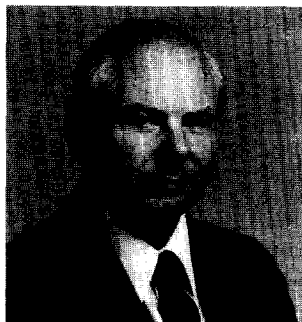

EDITOR'S PAGE



“Roots”
WILLIAM W. PARMLEY, MD, FACC

Editor-in-Chief

Journal of the American College of Cardiology

In conferences and rounds, it is not uncommon for house staff or fellows to quote from some recently published article. Frequently, it is the most recent article from the *New England Journal of Medicine*, or at the very least, something published within the last few years. In my experience, trainees rarely know about articles published more than 5 years ago, and in fact appear to disdain older reports as if they are incorrect or unimportant. Similarly, younger cardiologists rarely seem to understand or appreciate the history and heritage of the American College of Cardiology. Perhaps it is the rapid pace of change in medicine that focuses our attention on the most recent event and causes us to neglect the unknown “roots” of the past. Perhaps because the history of our country is so short, we similarly neglect our political, cultural and moral legacies from the past.

For those who are unclear about the history of cardiology in this country and the roots of the American College of Cardiology, Dr. Bruce Fye, the College historian, has performed a labor of love. Publication of his book *American Cardiology* has provided the most complete and comprehensive review of this subject ever written. Through the generous support of an educational grant from Astra-Merck, this book is complimentary to all members of the College. It is a fascinating journey through the development of cardiology in the United States in this century.

The book carefully chronicles several events of importance. In 1924, the American Heart Association (AHA) was organized. One notable board member was Paul Dudley White, then an instructor in medicine at Harvard and the Massachusetts General Hospital. There was an emphasis on public health cardiology and academics. Some clinicians in the Northeast felt apart from the AHA and in 1926 organized the Sir James MacKenzie Cardiologistical Society. In 1935, some of the same New York practitioners met to organize the New York Cardiac Society. There was continued frustration on the part of many practitioners about the academic elitism of the AHA,

and they thus organized the American College of Cardiology (ACC) on November 28, 1949. Franz Groedel was the leader in developing this new organization, which focused on continuing education for the clinician. Considerable tension existed with the AHA as the ACC membership drive began, and this tension persisted for many years. With the growth of both organizations, however, and a better definition of their respective roles, the two organizations have become virtual partners in the fight against heart disease. This important transition is a fascinating story in *American Cardiology* and is carefully narrated and enriched by quotes of those in leadership positions at the time.

The book summarizes the College's role in continuing education. Of interest was the efforts of Dr. Eliot Corday to establish circuit courses abroad, with the first in the Philippines and Taiwan in 1961. Within 5 years, 17 circuit courses had visited 44 countries. Subsequently, there was hardly a country in the world that did not benefit from these educational outreach programs. Although the circuit courses are rarely held any more, their impact on world cardiology was considerable.

In 1968, the College borrowed money to purchase the present site of Heart House. It was a bold step for an underfunded organization, but proved to be a turning point in the national image of the College and its developing role in the Washington, D.C., world of health care legislation. Heart House was dedicated in October 1977 and has subsequently had two additional wings added. It is now the crown jewel of the College, especially the Learning Center educational programs. We owe a debt of gratitude to those leaders who had the vision of a national and international organization that prompted them to build Heart House and all that it symbolizes.

These and other historical events are woven together in a compelling narrative that is of great interest to all who are interested in heart disease. I believe that this book will become a classic in the history of cardiology, and a must read for all who wish to explore their professional “roots.” The exhaustive research over 5 years and the meticulous detail and documentation provided will not only educate the reader but will deepen their appreciation for those who went before us and laid the groundwork for the practice of modern cardiology as we know it today.

Address for correspondence: William W. Parmley, MD, Editor-in-Chief, *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, 415 Judah Street, San Francisco, California 94122.