

LAMAR SOUTTER EULOGY

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H. Brownell Wheeler, M.D.

Reverend Smith, members of the Soutter family, and friends. All of us here today were touched in one way or another by the life of Lamar Soutter. We are here to remember him, to honor him, and to give thanks for his truly remarkable life.

To some here, he was a member of the family. Perhaps a cousin or an uncle...a father or a grandfather...a husband. In a few minutes, we will hear family reminiscences from his daughter Sarah and his granddaughter Lisa.

To others here, he was a fellow surgeon... a professional colleague...a mentor ... a dean...a role model...a personal hero.

To all of us, he was a friend.

On October 12th, he died of heart disease at the age of 87.

Let us briefly recall his life. In retrospect, he was destined by birth for a life of great professional accomplishment and great public service. One side of his family included an extremely distinguished lineage of physicians and civic leaders, the Shattuck

family. His great, great, great grandfather Shattuck was the first physician in that line. He rode his horse to make house calls in Central Massachusetts. He probably rode over the very site in Worcester where his great, great, great grandson would found a medical school more than two centuries later. He himself never went to medical school. There were no medical schools in America in his day.

The other side of Dr. Soutter's family includes the Richardsons, a family which numbers many famous surgeons and distinguished public servants.

Twenty-five years ago, when Dr. Soutter was President of the Massachusetts Medical Society, he filled a post held previously by no less than four members of his distinguished family.

His father was an orthopedic surgeon at Boston Children's Hospital. He was very active in crippled children's work, especially at the Canton School for Crippled Children. Like his father, Lamar also became interested in helping crippled children, first at the Canton School, and later through the Easter Seal Society, which was oriented then toward research and treatment for polio. He served the Easter Seal Society in many ways and eventually became its national President. In that capacity, Lamar and Mary and the Easter Seal Poster Child had audiences with both President Ford and

President Carter in the Oval Office.

He graduated from St. Paul's School and from Harvard College. During and after college he undertook a number of remarkably adventurous trips. He crewed on the maiden trans-Atlantic voyage of the "Atlantis", an ocean-going sailing ship designed to collect biologic specimens for the Woods Hole Marine Laboratory. He sailed to Greenland and up into the Arctic with Captain Bob Bartlett, a famous Arctic explorer, on an icebreaker named the "Effie M. Morrissey". He also collected marine specimens on the West Coast. An uncommon fish in Oregon is actually named after Dr. Soutter. It is a type of sucker...a fact which always amused him.

In his most daring trip of all, he collected biologic specimens for Harvard's Peabody Museum in the sub-Arctic wilderness of Northern Canada and Alaska. To do this, he and a companion took a canoe up to the headwaters of the MacKenzie River and then down the headwaters of the Yukon River to the Pacific - a total of more than 1500 miles through virgin wilderness that wasn't even mapped in the early 1930's. Their canoe overturned in some rapids. They lost most of their supplies. His companion was badly injured. They nearly lost their lives, but somehow they made it back. Lamar Soutter was always a fighter, and a survivor.

He graduated from Harvard Medical School and became Doctor Lamar

Soutter. He then trained in Surgery at Massachusetts General Hospital. At MGH in the 1930's, thoracic surgery seemed like the most challenging surgical frontier. Naturally Lamar was attracted to it. He did further training in thoracic surgery at Bellevue Hospital in New York City and then came back to join the attending staff of the MGH.

He saw the need for, and personally established, the first Blood Bank in New England. He also anticipated the need for frozen plasma in the event of a major disaster. When the enormous tragedy that was the Coconut Grove fire struck a few years later over 500 people lost their lives; but many lives were saved because Dr. Soutter had built up a large stockpile of frozen plasma to resuscitate burn victims in shock. He went on to develop the American Red Cross blood program for Massachusetts, and he served as its Chairman for many years.

During World War II, he volunteered for active duty. He became a battle surgeon with General George Patton's Third Army, and he was awarded three battle stars. The climactic battle of the war was the so-called "Battle of the Bulge". In a last-ditch, desperate attempt, the German army threw all their Panzer Divisions into a ferocious counter-offensive. They completely surrounded the U.S. 101st Airborne Division and many other Allied troops at the Belgian village of Bastogne. Our soldiers were totally cut off and had no

medical care. Dr. Soutter volunteered to set up a battlefield hospital in Bastogne if the Third Army could figure out how to get his surgical team into an area completely encircled by the German army.

He and his team were towed in gliders at tree-top height over a heavily forested area. The German gunners on the ground had trouble seeing the gliders through the trees. However, when the gliders got to Bastogne, they had to land in an open field under enemy fire. Dr. Soutter's glider was hit, but fortunately he was not injured. In the next 24 hours, he did 56 operations. A few days later, a tank column from the Third Army broke through the German lines and restored a supply line to Bastogne. Shortly after, Dr. Soutter received the Silver Star medal, awarded for conspicuous gallantry in the face of enemy action.

After the war, he developed an active practice of thoracic surgery at MGH and he continued to direct the Blood Bank until he left to become Chief of Thoracic Surgery at Boston University Medical Center. His administrative abilities were quickly apparent. In a few years he became Dean of BU Medical School. While at BU, he was appointed by the Governor to chair a commission to evaluate the need for a new state medical school. His leadership of that group ultimately led to his selection as the Founding Dean of the University of Massachusetts Medical School. For Dr. Soutter, it

was another great challenge and an adventure - like exploring the Arctic, canoeing through unmapped wilderness, or going behind enemy lines during wartime. It was the chance-of-a-lifetime to create an entirely new academic medical center, one which he was convinced could become outstanding and be of great public benefit, despite the fierce controversy which surrounded its creation.

When he first took the job on, Dr. Soutter was the medical school's only employee. The total first year budget for the school, including salaries, administrative expenses, consulting fees, and everything else was \$200,000. He had the truly awesome responsibility for getting everything done which was necessary to create a new academic medical center from scratch - evaluating the potential sites, designing the buildings, obtaining the necessary funding, recruiting the entire faculty and staff, and much more. More than one governor tried to scuttle the project because of its cost. President Nixon impounded the federal funds necessary to build the University Hospital previously appropriated under the Johnson administration. Battle after battle was fought. Some were lost. But the war over the creation of UMass Med School was finally won, largely because Lamar Soutter was a tireless fighter who would not accept defeat.

Dr. Soutter insisted on a standard of "excellence" for the new school. He felt that for UMass Medical Center to prosper in the

shadow of the great medical centers of Boston, it had to be of similar high quality. Perhaps it was his family tradition, or perhaps his Harvard training, but he was always insistent on striving for excellence in every aspect of the new medical center.

Lamar Soutter was truly an honorable man, and he recruited honorable men. The character of Dr. Soutter became the character of the whole institution. His values have been carried down over the years by those whom he recruited, and by those later colleagues whom his appointees recruited in their turn. He established an ongoing institutional culture which has been responsible for much of the later success of UMass Medical Center.

It has been said that every great institution is built on the character and values of a great individual. That is certainly the case with UMass Medical Center. And the individual is Lamar Soutter.

It has also been said that behind every great man there is a great woman, and certainly Mary Soutter not only supported Lamar, she also contributed enormously herself to the early recruitment activities and to the overall spirit of the new school, much more than she knows or would ever acknowledge.

In addition to Mary, Dr. Soutter had a son Nick and two daughters,

Sarah and Betsy, and eventually five grandchildren as well. We will hear shortly from the family, so I will mention only one aspect of his family life which Mary shared with me. Every Sunday, Lamar would cook the family what he called a "gala dinner". He would choose the menu and purchase all the ingredients himself, and he kept their identity a secret from the whole family. The doors to the kitchen were kept firmly shut while he was cooking. Finally, in triumph, he would proudly display his special feast on a side table, buffet-style, for all to admire and enjoy. It was never a New England boiled dinner, either! One of his favorite specialties was Indonesian curry. Other favorites were spiced shrimp, baked whole fish, fresh tongue with cider sauce, and spicy Indian curried lamb. The meal was invariably a great success, according to Mary.

Lamar loved the world of nature, as one might guess from the wilderness adventures of his youth. During the depths of the Depression, he purchased a large and unspoiled island on Squam Lake, New Hampshire, which many of you will remember as the site of the movie 'On Golden Pond'. He never developed the island, even though it would have been quite lucrative for him to do so. He and Mary had a camp there which they deliberately kept rather primitive. The island was his refuge from the world. With Nick's legal help, he and Mary later arranged that the island will remain forever wild, preserving some of the natural world that they loved for future generations.

Cardiac problems ultimately led Dr. Soutter to resign as the first Chancellor/Dean at UMass. Fortunately, he later recovered his health to some extent. He was then sought out to consult in the founding of a new medical school in Eastern Tennessee. He even became the Founding Dean of that medical school. In total, he was the Dean of three medical schools, and the Founding Dean of two.

Last February, Governor Weld issued a special proclamation of appreciation for Dr. Soutter's many contributions to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Founding UMass Medical School was prominently mentioned, but so was his service in starting the Massachusetts blood program, his role as a war hero, his contributions at Mass General and at Boston University, and many more accomplishments than I have time to mention.

The UMass Medical School Library was a particular source of pride for Dr. Soutter. Appropriately, it has been named for him, and it contains his bust in bronze. There is a simple inscription on the bust: "Lamar Soutter, M.D....His courage and faith provided the cornerstone."

It is true. His courage and his faith did provide the cornerstone on which UMass Medical Center is built. He was not only the Founding Dean, he was the very heart of the Medical School in its precarious early years. To those of us who worked there then, he

was an inspiring leader, someone we could rally behind in the pursuit of what we considered a noble, but rather risky and uncertain goal. He loved a challenge. He was willing to take risks. And he had dogged determination, persistence and faith when he took a job on.

He will always be remembered at UMass as a worthy hero for the institution which he founded. The Medical Center is an enduring monument to him, not just in terms of its buildings, or even its teaching or research or patient care programs, but in the lives of innumerable people whom he influenced there - the faculty, the staff and especially the early students, to whom he was deeply devoted. He became their friend, their confidant, their hero...and their role model.

Lamar Soutter influenced the lives of innumerable people elsewhere as well. All of us here today have had our lives enriched by him in one way or another. It is appropriate that we remember and honor his life today, and also that we acknowledge our personal indebtedness to him. Together, we give thanks for his truly remarkable life, a life which further enhanced his illustrious family traditions in medicine and in public service. He will long be remembered for his many accomplishments, but he will also be remembered for his insistence on high professional standards and high moral principles, for his personal warmth and his genuine

interest in people, for his good humor... and for his unique, colorful and not infrequently mischievous personality which we all came to love. We will miss him greatly, but he has left us a remarkable legacy.