

FRIEND OF MAN—PAUL GIDEON ISAAC LAUFFER

EULOGY by EVERETT G. McDONOUGH, PH.D.*

MY FRIEND Carey P. McCord, the father of industrial medicine, tells why he selected "Blind Hog's Acorn" as the title of one of his very interesting books. It seems that his father, as a minister, obtained additional remuneration by boarding traveling salesmen and other wandering men. One such man was a phrenologist who agreed to pay for his board by the reading of the lumps on the heads of the two sons of the minister. Dr. McCord's older brother was examined first and it was foreseen for him that he would have a brilliant future. When it came to Carey P. McCord's time, the man's face began to take on a doubtful look, and he began to shake his head. Carey's mother became truly worried and downcast as the phrenologist admitted that he could only see a most dismal future for this son. In his attempt to add some blue sky to the gloomy clouds ahead, the phrenologist attempted to cheer Mrs. McCord with the statement, "even a blind hog gets an occasional acorn."

Despite the fact that our Medalist, like Dr. McCord, is a minister's son, I hasten to correct the impression that this story refers to him. Rather I believe that *we* have been the blind hog in overlooking for so long this excellent candidate. I hope I can do justice to my part of this presentation as I feel we have, not an acorn, but a full grown oak tree.

I have known our Medalist for over thirty-five years; so I know you and he will forgive me if I refer to him as Paul.

My first encounter with Paul was an enriching one, for in part he contributed to my discovery of a way to obtain considerable free space while traveling even on the most crowded subway. The formula for this great discovery is as follows: work for several months on the study of auto-oxidation of aldehydes so that your clothes, skin and hair take on an odor which is a cross between a tub of rancid butter and a herd of wild goats. This will assure that the noses of all those who surround you will direct their eyes to your presence. Then be certain that you are reading the then outstanding book on chemotherapy, a very large volume whose title was clearly visible in large type, "Principles and Practices of Chemotherapy with Special References to the Specific and General Treatment of Syphilis."

* Evans Chemetics, Inc., New York 17, N. Y.

I can assure you that if you follow this process, that by the time those around you read that last word you will have armlength room in all directions.

Paul's contribution to this discovery was that he had just obtained his Doctor of Philosophy degree at Columbia University under Marston Taylor Bogert who incidentally was our first Medalist. His research was concerned with certain acridine dyes whose greatest potential use was in the field of chemotherapy.

Paul's dissertation was such a masterful presentation of the subject that Professor Bogert selected this general area for my first seminar. In order to be competent to understand the dissertation, I had to read Kolmer's authoritative book with the very effective title.

My second contact with Paul was a more direct one, and I believe it is worth relating as it indicated a trait which I feel that you will all agree that Paul has carried through his life. . . this is his consideration of others.

As a part of the initiation into the honorary chemical fraternity, Phi Lambda Upsilon, I had to obtain the signatures of all members at Columbia University in ink on an unglazed porcelain plate. You can imagine the damage that this abrasive plate did to the old-fashioned fountain pen. All of the signers, excepting Paul, used my pen. As he signed with his own pen, he said he guessed my pen had taken enough abuse.

In his thought-provoking book, "The Tao's of Science," Dr. Siu points out that America is a country that lives by the motto: "If you do not know what to do, do something." To adapt this philosophy to fit our Medalist, we need only add two words so that it becomes, "If you do not know what to do, do something for somebody."

This lending of the helping hand has been with Paul all of his life and it has earned him the title of "Professor" from his discerning high school math teacher and the title of "Mayor" from the appreciative citizens of the Village of Hastings-on-the-Hudson. This latter was not easily won and it took a lot of doing for a good-sized predominantly Republican community to elect a man running on a Democratic ticket. In Hastings, Paul is known as a dedicated man and has held almost all of the more important civic offices.

Another story will serve to illustrate this "Friend of Man" trait of Paul's. It took place as our country entered the First World War, which was just at the close of Paul's college freshman year. Paul had entered Washington-Jefferson College largely because his father had graduated from there. He had intended to study electrical engineering but, fortunately for all of us, as a freshman, he got a job in the chemistry stockroom and was converted to the idea of becoming a chemist. The chemistry department consisted of one professor who patriotically entered the service before commencement. However, he left a sad senior who had failed in

chemistry and could not graduate until he had passed a supplementary examination in general chemistry. Since Paul was the only person left in the college with any semblance of connection with the chemistry department, he had to make up an examination for the senior to take. Needless to say, the senior passed and graduated—thanks to Paul's help.

To be able to bring help to so many in such a wide variety of ways, a man must be capable not only mentally but also physically and also must have had a wide variety of experiences. Paul qualifies on all of these accounts.

Listen to the following for an accumulation of varied experiences. As I mentioned before, his father was a minister, and this unique environment was made even more varied by the fact that his father moved so frequently that Paul attended seven different grade schools. Yet, he was such a good scholar that he was valedictorian of his high school graduating class. In college, after the experience with the failing senior, he became, in his sophomore year, the laboratory assistant to the new professor of chemistry and held this job until he graduated. Washington-Jefferson was unwilling to let him go so he stayed on for two more years as a graduate assistant in the chemistry department. During this time he took sufficient courses to obtain a Master of Science degree.

Undoubtedly, the two greatest names in chemistry in the early 20's were Stieglitz of the University of Chicago and Bogert of Columbia University. Paul studied for two summers under Stieglitz and, in addition, had some side courses under the also very famous scientist, Morris Cohn. At Columbia, as I have already mentioned, he worked on the acridine dyes, specifically the isomers of proflavine and acriflavine under the sponsorship of Bogert. In addition, he was a graduate assistant in organic chemistry, a DuPont Fellow, a Fritzsche Fellow and, on the side, minored in metallography.

I should not forget to stress that his study of four foreign languages allows him to keep us all up-to-date on what is happening elsewhere in the cosmetic world.

Paul's life was not an easy one. His father died when he was eleven years old and it was necessary for him to do all types of odd jobs. At the ages of fifteen and sixteen he was on piece work in a glass factory. At seventeen, we find him selling books in rural communities. At eighteen, he was working in a rolling mill and, at nineteen and twenty, we have him working "down on the farm."

To do all of this work, a man must have a pretty sturdy body and it is noted that Paul played basketball, baseball, and was on the track team and despite his lack of height was fullback on the high school football team. His most important recreational activity in recent years centers around mountain climbing, a sport which in my opinion demands more physical stamina than any other. He has been an officer and a member of the

Board of Governors of the Adirondack Mountain Club. His other hobby is the conservation of our beautiful forests and water supplies.

On the more personal side, Paul has been a devoted family man. I know that he considers as his greatest accomplishment his daughter and son and four lovely grandchildren.

In this much too brief review, I think I should mention at least one other outstanding characteristic of Paul's. Perhaps I do so to excuse our lack of recognition for so long. Paul is a modest man and a quiet man; nevertheless he does serve as a living evidence to support the Greek historian Thucydides' statement that "of all the manifestations of power, restraint impresses men the most."

It seems to me that it is most appropriate that Paul was born and raised in Pennsylvania, a state long renowned for its friendly people, and in closing I ask that you ponder the appropriateness of his given names, two of them being the names of his two grandfathers, and the title I have tried to use as a summation of him—"Friend of Man—Paul Gideon Isaac Lauffer."