

Memorial

Samuel A. Trufant, M.D., 1919-2011

Sam Trufant died in a nursing home in Hackettstown New Jersey on August 23rd 2011 at the age of 92, soon after he had had a stroke. Earlier in the year he and his wife Ann moved from their Hyde Park home to New Jersey to be near one of their daughters and her family.

Some months ago on a Monday evening, Sam told me, with a rueful smile, that he was leaving Cincinnati and that this would be his last evening at the Club. He would miss it. He did not want to leave Cincinnati, but was concerned that Mrs. Trufant, who was in poor health, needed more care than he could provide. Sam regularly attended meetings of the Literary Club and missed only if a companion could not be available for Ann.

Sam was born in New Orleans, the grandson of a grain trader and the son of a newspaper critic and business affairs writer. Sam was proud of his family and insisted on his name being pronounced Trufant, as in "ant" and not "ont".

The earliest record of a Trufant in North America was the partnership of Truffant, (spelt with two fs) and Drummond of Bath, Maine in the early 1600's. They built a series of magnificent ocean-going clippers trading the high seas, before steam was established. Included among these was the Emerald Isle. It made three trips between England and the U.S. around 1858 with a cargo of 1,280 Mormon Church members moving from England to what they believed to be the Promised Land. Sam worked his way through college and medical school at Tulane University, where he graduated M.D. in 1943. He was drafted into the army with the outbreak of World War 11. He served in the battlefield as a field surgeon and was severely wounded by German machine-gun fire in the fighting in Alsace Lorraine, also known as the Battle of the Bulge, where 81,000 American troops were killed. He was treated in France for six weeks until he was fit enough to travel back to the U.S. for further treatment and rehabilitation. He was awarded the Purple Heart and was sent to the army hospital at White Sulphur Springs in West Virginia where he met his future wife Ann. They had four children, one

son and three daughters. When Sam died there were 5 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren.

Their son, Samuel IV, lives in Harbor Springs where he works in the timber business as an agent for fine rare lumber. Michele breaks riding horses in Virginia and Ridgley runs a successful restaurant in New York City. Their daughter Cade and her family settled in New Jersey where she would eventually be joined by her parents.

Sam came to Cincinnati to advance his career as a neurologist. He held a joint appointment in the Dean's office. In 1958 the Dean, Dr. Stanley Dorst, introduced him to the Literary Club. Sam was so enthralled by what he found here that he persuaded his colleague, Dr. Charles Aring, to join in the same year. All three individuals, Dorst, Aring and Trufant outstanding in their professional careers, became Presidents of the Literary Club. In addition to his appointment at the University, Sam became an attending neurologist at Childrens' Hospital and became the Director of its Laboratory of Electroencephalography. In 1964 Sam went to Northwest India on a sabbatical with his family to work in mission hospitals and to develop medical programs during a devastating famine. He made a series of visits afterwards to work with Indian doctors serving the poor.

Sam was a kind and gentle man, modest, sought no honors and yet rose to the highest ranks in his field of neurology; editor of the prestigious journal, Transactions of the American Neurological Association; became Secretary of that Association and then its President. Similarly, he was elected to the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology and in due course became its President.

Sam did not publish a great deal yet he made a significant impact on the field of neurology as a trusted leader. He was skilled in resolving controversy and recognized as a wise and even-handed negotiator. Such achievements are seldom recorded in the academic literature.

Sam loved teaching. He endowed a fund at UC to honor its outstanding medical student in neurology. The present chairman of neurology, Professor Joseph Broderick, was the first recipient of the award.

Sam, a distinguished war veteran, returned to his home town, New Orleans and worked there for several years in its Veteran's Hospital. The Trufants lived in the French Quarter. They loved it.

Sam brought 14 papers to the Club, 5 before he left for New Orleans and 9 after his return. They cover a wide range of subjects, all carefully researched and clearly written. The one that appealed to me most was brought on November 10th 1980, "The Great Free Show".

Sam's paper opened with the following: "A couple of Sunday afternoons ago we walked from our cottage on Burgundy Street along St Louis Street and as we approached Royal Street found it blocked by police. In the distance a jazz dirge could be heard - the French Market Jazz Band was leading a mock funeral procession bemoaning the demise that day of National Air Lines. We headed toward Bourbon Street with the jazz and country western music entertaining any who walked the street and peered in the girlie shows. All this and more at no charge!"

To this lively detail Sam added sweeping historical comment when passing old buildings and public squares. He wrote of Jackson Square, "(it) has seen the history of the entire Mississippi. Its buildings have been the site of the transfers between nations and were the seat of government until modern times. Levees on the river opened up the interior valley of North America to the world".

His close friend, Dr. Charles Aring, who will be remembered as one of the Club's most distinguished members, knew how much his friend missed the Club, so he maintained a regular flow of Club papers to New Orleans. Sam read these avidly and years later remembered who wrote what.

The Trufants returned to Cincinnati in 1996 and Sam became a fully active Club member again. He was soon elected President. Although an innovator in neurology, he was not so as far as the Club was concerned. He was a protector of the well accepted traditions of the Club, which he loved. He felt that the Club provided him with the on-going liberal arts education he had missed when growing up. Also this education was provided in a charming setting and in an atmosphere of warmth and friendliness.

The Trufants had a summer cottage on the shores of Lake Michigan near Traverse Bay, part of a Cincinnati colony that gathers there in the summertime, swimming, fishing, sailing and gossiping. These were probably Sam's happiest days during his long and eventful life with his extended family and friends. Though short in stature Sam was a giant otherwise. Sam's dedication to his profession as a teacher continues in selfless fashion after his death. He gave instructions that when he died there should be no funeral, burial or obituary. This consummate medical teacher gave his body to Rutgers University medical school so that it could be used as a teaching cadaver by medical students.

--A loving husband and father, brave and courageous on the battlefield,
He gave of himself generously to his profession and society.

I am most grateful to my colleagues Drs. John Steiner and Charles Carothers on the memorial committee and to David Edmundson, Dale Flick and William Gerhardt, Children's Hospital Staff Historian, who also contributed.

Signed. Charles o. Carothers M.D.

Robert Smith M.D. Chairman.

John Steiner M.D.

<Note: scanned, OCR by jnm 12/06/2011>