

Edward Byer Shaw, MD

Chair Pediatrics, UCSF

Area IV Chair, 1934-42

AAP President, 1949-50

His Presidential address can be found in *Pediatrics* 1951; 7:1-7

Excerpts from the address:

“I should prefer first to speak a few words about the many individuals who comprise the membership...The Academy exists only to express our mutual interest in childhood and to translate this interest into everything which can benefit the condition of childhood... (O)ur history will well attest that the welfare of children and not the aggrandizement of our members has been the principle objective of this organization...

(F)ew would choose this branch of the profession on the basis of purely monetary reward. Why then have you chosen this speciality...? ... (T)he practice of medicine with children gratifies so many of the feelings...Pediatrics offers the opportunity to observe the growing organism ... a biologic function of unending fascination...The termination of pediatric care is the triumph of maturity which is in happy contrast to the medical care of aging adults...(ending with) the final disasters of degeneration and death.

Much of the time of the pediatrician is devoted to the medical care of the well child with the supervision of nutrition, environment, immunization...Our generation has witnessed a tremendous improvement in morbidity and mortality in infancy and in childhood...

Childhood illnesses ...are usually straightforward ...(and) can be studied with more objectivity than in the adult for they are not apt to be a devious combination of physical illness complicated by the degenerative changes of aging,...psychiatric overlay,...fear and worry, ...oppressive circumstances...

...The pediatrician has the opportunity for most gratifying relationships...He must perforce become the family advisor..., the lineal descendant of ...the horse-and-buggy doctor...

(The pediatrician is a specialist because he) restricts himself to only those things which he does expertly...

(Board of Pediatrics and the training of the pediatrician)

(The Academy's "Study of Child Care" and the need to educate all physicians and the public on this matter.)

Our interest must extend to government and to governmental agencies. There are those amongst us who are suspicious and distrustful of such organizations as the Children's Bureau. This attitude will avail us little. Public health and private practice have each important functions which need not necessarily overlap...

This brings us another agency, ...the Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth...(in which the Academy met with many of the other players involved in developing) in children the mental, emotional and spiritual qualities essential to individual happiness and to responsible citizenship and what physical, economic and social conditions are deemed necessary to this development...

.We have still other responsibilities with respect to national matters. The social planners seem determined to this country some scheme of state medicine...As an organization we have disapproved this move...(which) expresses the views of a great majority of our members..."

(Multiple organizational comments, including plaudits for the work of the founding Executive Secretary, Dr. Clifford Grulee who was about to retire.)

EDWARD BYER SHAW, MD MEMORIAL

Comments by John J. Piel, MD

Edward Byer Shaw's Life began on April 5, 1895 in Olney Illinois.

He remembered with surety that at age 3 he knew he wanted to be, would be, a doctor.

His surviving a severe case of typhoid fever at age 6 further secured his resolve.

How wide spread would be the areas of medicine and in how many facets of medicine he would excel one could not have predicted, and even now in retrospect one can hardly believe.

He was the first member of his family to be a doctor; so that his was not a career for which he had a heavy pressure of tradition or many role models.

He graduated from Olney High School in 1912 and then migrated west to work for a year as a furniture mover to store up funds for his higher education. He entered the University of California at Berkeley and graduated in 1917 with an A.B. Remarkably, he then pursued two degrees simultaneously: a Masters in Bacteriology, studying with Professor Karl Meyer at the U. C. Medical School. Dr. Meyer certifies that Dr. Shaw, then a junior student, discovered that the same organism produced two quite different diseases: undulant fever and infectious abortion of domesticated animal. He further established the fact that the organism belonged in a genus, "Brucella". That was in 1920 and in Dr. Meyer's words "this contribution has stood the test of time." Here clearly was the end of the spectacular spectrum of skills and talents marked "scientific". The mental discipline, the boundless curiosity of the scientist, would never be absent from Dr. Shaw's life and works.

Following graduation from the Medical School, he interned at U.C. Hospital, S.F. His year of residency in the fledging specialty of Pediatrics was spent with Dr. F.B. Talbot at the Massachusetts General Hospital.

In 1924 he entered the Private Practice of Pediatrics in S.F. in which he quickly excelled. During the years of his practice (1924-58) he became the authority for the diagnosis and treatment of Infectious Disease, writing original papers on some basic and, much needed, clinical research of the diverse modalities of diagnosis and treatment as they emerged in the field of Infectious Diseases, as well as in General Pediatrics.

With seemingly limitless supply of energy, he was not only dedicated to fun with his family and friends, but was a founding member of the American Board of Pediatrics and, in 1947-1949, its President, and also a vigorous builder of the American Academy of Pediatrics of which he was the "President Triple Crown" by also being the Vice President of the Senior Society, the American Pediatric Society, in 1960.

Locally, he was Chief of the Communicable Disease Department in the "Polio years", 1928-1960. He worked with boundless commitment to organizing the best possible care of the patients with that "impossible disease". He obtained the first Dresler respirator used on this coast and used and studied the first crude yet promising machines for respiratory support. As his department grew so did his stature in the area of Infectious Diseases, leading to more and demanding responsibilities both locally, ie, Chairman of Bay Area Medical Association, Committee for Administration of Live Virus Vaccine, and nationally, Consultant to the Surgeon General of the United States, Control of Epidemic Diseases, National Committee White House Conference on Children, and Committee in Control of Infectious Diseases, American Academy of Pediatrics (Chairman 1956).

These years of clinical medicine were indescribably rich in personal and human ways. He had a huge practice of devoted resident patients and a large referral practice from all of Northern California, notably of polio patients and patients with communicable diseases, but also illnesses that challenged diagnosis. With his brightness, cleverness, and compassion and concern, he was a wizard of a diagnostician.

He had mastered the art of the practice of medicine, for he combined his devotion to the intellectual part of the profession with his basic love of children and their parents. House officer rounds with him illuminated this priceless combination for all his students.

That little 3 year old boy in Olney may have had a premonition, but no one else did, for the startling change in his life that occurred in 1958. He was called to be a Professor and Chairman of the Department of Pediatrics at UCSF.

He stayed at that post for eight years and became the Professor's Professor; still a splendid teacher, inspiring Diagnostician and tender, compassionate physician, but also an expert in meeting the demands of academic organization, restructuring, building, inspiring, and so forth.

The personality spectrum then added the band of Superior Academician to Scientist, Humane Physician. He received local and national recognition in all fields starting with the American Academy of Pediatrics award for excellence in the practice of Pediatrics up to the UCSF Distinguished Service Award given to one who has served his community in an outstanding fashion.

His life outside of these listed, seemingly numberless demands, was full of love and fun and grace. His beautiful wife Betty, who tragically predeceased him, and his beautiful children and some 16 grand children and 21 great-grandchildren were truly central in his value system. Jazz, good theatre, good food, good company, playing his ukulele, and above all his horticultural, specifically his hot-house of orchids, rounded out the person of this extraordinary man.

He truly fulfilled Freud's definition of life: "Life is learning, laboring, and loving."