Soutteriana Exhibit Honors Founder

Memorabilia honoring the life and work of Dr. Soutter.

Until autumn, the illuminated case by the entrance to the medical library will display print and pictorial artifacts in tribute to the life and achievements of Dr. Lamar Soutter (1909-1996), founding Dean of the University of Massachusetts Medical School. Gael Evans, Reference Librarian, oversaw the gathering, captioning, and arrangement of this colorful exhibit's photographs, books, and facsimiles of newspaper and journal articles, with the help of the Lamar Soutter Library's Display Case Committee.

SR: In addition to his likely being the individual who, more than anyone else, was responsible for the establishment of our state's medical school here in Worcester, what were a few other highlights of Lamar Soutter's life, in terms of professional or personal accomplishments?

GE: He pioneered revolutionary filtration and preservation techniques at the blood bank at Massachusetts General Hospital more than 60 years ago—techniques that saved many lives in the horrendous Cocoanut Grove Fire in 1942. Also, under harsh conditions in the North Atlantic, he participated in a number of oceanographic expeditions in the 1930s, first signing on at age 21 with the crew of the Atlantis. Four years later he sailed as ship's doctor and chief science officer aboard the schooner Effie M. Morrissey, captained by Robert A. Bartlett, who had previously explored North Polar regions with Admiral Peary.

However, his single most impressive feat may have been his performing of 63 surgeries, within 24 hours, while with the Army Medical Corps in hostile territory during the Battle of the Bulge in World War II. Dr. Soutter accomplished this after being flown across enemy lines, while under fire, in a glider. For these supremely unselfish efforts, he earned a Silver Star.

Moreover, while Dean of Boston University's School of Medicine, he assisted in the merger of collections at Harvard Medical School and the Boston Medical Library to form Harvard's Countway Library in 1966. This interest in partnering medical library collections reurred, when Dr. Soutter was creating the collection of our library in the early 1970s. The collection of the Worcester Medical Library (established 1798) has been housed here since 1973. Finally, as capstone to his career, Dr. Soutter helped to found the medical school at...
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East Tennessee State University.

SR: Which institutions and individuals assisted you, in providing information and realia for the showcasing of Dr. Soutter's works and accomplishments?

GE: Dr. H. Brownell Wheeler (Harry M. Haidak Distinguished Professor of Surgery Emeritus), as a colleague of Dr. Soutter, provided me with unique personal and professional perspectives, as well as sharing slides of Dr. Soutter. UMMS alumns Michael Foley also contributed rich insights. Especially generous with their time and materials were library and other personnel from our sister campus in Amherst, as well as the Massachusetts State Library, Boston University, Harvard University, Secretary of State Galvin's office, the Smithsonian Institution, the Marine Biological Laboratory at Woods Hole, the Massachusetts Hospital School, and St. Paul's School (Concord, New Hampshire).

SR: Based upon the research and anecdotes you were exposed to during your research for this project, as well as your own impressions of Dr. Soutter in his later years, what would you hazard to say were the human traits that aided him the most in his successes?

GE: His fierce determination to see the UMMS project through from start to finish was most impressive. The political opposition he faced, particularly in eastern Massachusetts, was very formidable, and would have stopped any lesser person in their tracks. Even after Worcester was chosen as the site of the State's medical school, there still remained a huge struggle to get the project funded and the facility built. He was never a quitter. In his early adulthood, Dr. Soutter endured numerous hardships to survive a 1,500 mile canoe trip through the Yukon, ministering to the needs of his injured fellow traveler. Dr. Soutter's sense of service to humanity also found expression in his philanthropic devotion to several charities, the Massachusetts Hospital School, and Sea Soldiery Home. Finally, in his administrative calling, Dr. Soutter had the uncanny ability for picking the right person for the right job at the right time.

SR: Thank you, Gael, and thanks to the other LSL staff members who assisted you in planning and preparing this wonderful display. Our medical library is truly fortunate to have been named after such a deserving and inspirational figure as Dr. Soutter. Also, how fortunate the medical community had the benefit of Dr. Soutter's influence for so many years.

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Videos Provide Continuing Education Information

The Lamar Soutter Library subscribes to a video series of programs that are a valuable source of up-to-date information for health care professionals. These video programs are produced by the Network for Continuing Medical Education (NCME), which, as their flyer states, "is a service linking medical schools and hospitals with the best in medical communications."

All video programs are produced by an award-winning team of professionals and presented by prominent clinicians and scientists from the nation's foremost institutions. The program topics are pertinent to a physician's day-to-day practice, providing information on the latest developments in medicine and disease management.

The NCME series is designed to support hospital-based Continuing Medical Education activity as a major educational resource. NCME is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to provide continuing medical education for physicians. Each program lists the CME credit designations with the number of credit hours to be awarded upon completion of a post-lecture course. (Copies of the "Physician Participation Record," which includes the quiz, are available in the Library.) The American Medical Association, (for the Physician Recognition Award or PRA), the American Academy of Family Physicians, and the American Osteopathic Association award CME credit for participation in NCME.

Since its inception in 1965, NCME has produced over 2000 video programs on a full range of medical topics. Recent topics include: "Osteoporosis: Individualizing Consultations" (#811), "Treatment of Hyperlipidemia: Expanding the Horizon of Prevention" (#812), "Menopause Management: A Multidisciplinary Team Approach" (#813), "Mosquito-Borne Viral Diseases" (#814), "Understanding the Malpractice Crisis" (#815), "Approaches to Diabetes Mellitus, 2003" (#816), "Hypertension Update" (#817), and "Is Your Emergency Department Prepared for a Nuclear, Biological, or Chemical Attack?" (#818).

The NCME videos are shelved in the AV collection of the Library and are available for one-week loan to registered patrons of the LSL. The NCME posters are prominently displayed near the AV collection, and the programs are fully cataloged in QUIN, the Library's online catalog.

A Dose of Reading: Physicians' Memoirs

Ever since the Renaissance, when Girolamo Cardano's 1643 autobiography (The Book of My Life) appeared, an impressive body of memoirs has flowed unabated from the pens of physicians the world over. The following is a gathering of some classic accounts, principally drawn from recent times. All titles are held in the collection of the Lamar Soutter Library, or are available through Interlibrary Borrowing or the Virtual Catalog system.


Gonzalez-Crussi, F(rank). There Is a World Elsewhere: Autobiographical Pages (1998). This well-spoken pathologist grew up as the son of a Mexico City pharmacist, before coming to the United States where he completed his medical education in Colorado in 1962. See also his essay collection, Notes of an Anatomist (1985) and his volume The Day of the Dead and Other Mortal Reflections (1993).

Cumulus Project Forges Partnership

The Lamar Soutter Library has formed a task force to work with Academic Computing Services, together with Medical School faculty, on a digital image project. This project’s goal is the creation, indexing, and maintenance of a database of web-accessible images, using Cumulus software. Content will be contributed by faculty, and will be available to all faculty. This database of digital images will be used for instruction in the School curriculum.

Initially, development of the database will focus on images. Later, the scope will be expanded to include additional formats, such as PowerPoint slides, transparencies, video, sound, and text.

This fledging enterprise recognizes the trend in libraries to explore the potential of digitization partnerships to improve teaching and learning. These partnerships provide opportunities for curricular support and research. As the database grows, it will become easier for faculty to gather and display digital images, rather than use multiple pieces of equipment for slides, transparencies, and video. Having a single software application for digitization and displaying the more traditional transparencies, slides, and video formats in the classroom.

There are a number of issues and challenges facing the task force. The task force will be exploring copyright, ownership, indexing, and metadata to describe content, security issues, and training. A goal of the task force will be to build a user-friendly environment that will allow the creation, mounting, and manipulation of digital content for curricular support and research. As the database grows, it will become easier for faculty to gather and display digital images, rather than use multiple pieces of equipment for slides, transparencies, and video. Having a single software application for digitization and displaying the more traditional transparencies, slides, and video formats in the classroom.
Selzer, Richard. Down from Troy: A Doctor Comes of Age (1992). Following up on an already impressive body of medical writings accessible to the layperson—primarily in the form of essays and short stories—this son of a family practitioner writes here of his 1930s childhood on the banks of the Hudson River, as well as his medical training in Albany and at Yale.

Thornton, Yvonne S. with Jo Coudert. The Ditchdigger’s Daughters: A Black Family’s Astonishing Success Story (1999). This inspirational family memoir, by a New York City area practicing physician, describes the determined efforts of her parents and four sisters to overcome racist attitudes and related obstacles, while living in 1950s New Jersey. JL

Crespo Chosen Associate Director

The Lamar Soutter Library is pleased to announce that Javier Crespo has been selected as the new Associate Director, National Networks of Libraries of Medicine, New England Region (NN/LM, NER). Before becoming Associate Director, Javier served as the Consumer Health Information Coordinator for the NN/LM, NER. In that capacity, Javier provided training programs to public librarians, health care workers, and the public throughout the New England Region. Before joining the NN/LM, NER team, Javier was the Assistant Director for the UMass Health Net project, the LSL’s own consumer health information initiative.

In the summer of 1999, Javier relocated to the LSL from Chicago, where he was Information Services Librarian at the Library of the Health Sciences at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Javier appreciates the opportunity to serve libraries and librarians through the work of the Regional Medical Library. Please join us in congratulating Javier on his new position. DL