



Emeritus Quarterly Newsletter

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The Editor Says . . .

We all should know basic elements of our own history, but if we had a quiz, how many of us would be able to name the Clinic's early leaders who followed the Mayo brothers? Thus, this issue's brief recounting.

In the Mayo Clinic's early years Drs. Will and Charlie made most or all the decisions about the practice. However, after World War I, as the size and complexity of the Clinic increased, and after the brothers had made the decision not to have the Clinic continue on after them as a family run affair but rather a public trust, the brothers proceeded to form a more structured governance. In order to allow broader staff representation in decision making they chose a board of governors structure that would be responsible for dealing with major issues and a number of standing committees charged with administering the practice. Thus, at a meeting of the "qualified electors" of the Mayo Clinic on November 21, 1921 the first Board of Governors was elected and standing committees appointed to be effective January 1, 1922. At this time there

were close to 120 staff members at the Clinic. Drs. Will and Charlie, Henry Plummer, E. S. Judd, D. C. Balfour,

and Harry Harwick were the first Board members.

Dr. Charlie did not enjoy administration but Dr. Will included him in most decisions since the partnership had been formed. Dr. Will retired from surgery in 1928 and Dr. Charlie a year and a half later. Dr. Will remained Board chairman through 1932 when both he and Charlie resigned, and did not attend Board meetings subsequently. However, Dr. C. W. Mayo (Dr. Charlie's older son), and Drs. D. Balfour and W. Walters, (Dr. Will's two sons-in-law) were given career long appointments to the Board. Even though no longer on the Board, Dr. Will's influence at the Clinic remained considerable until he died at age 78 in 1939. Dr. Charlie had died two months earlier in 1939 at age 74.

Dr. Donald C. Balfour was the first to follow Dr. Will as Board chairman beginning in 1933. Dr. Will referred to this change as the beginning of the third phase of the Clinic's history. Dr. Balfour continued as chairman through 1936 but remained a member of the Board until his retirement in 1947. There were approximately 150 medical staff at the Clinic when Dr. Balfour started as chairman. The Clinic continued to grow, and during his period the blood

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