FREDERICK G. KERGIN

The papers in this issue of The Canadian Journal of Surgery were prepared by members of the Kergin Surgical Society as a tribute to Frederick G. Kergin. The members of the Society, which presently numbers some 85 individuals, were surgical residents in Toronto during Dr. Kergin's period of office as Chairman of the Department of Surgery at the University of Toronto. Since its inception, the Society has met annually and continues to flourish with the enthusiastic participation and support of Dr. Kergin and his wife, Suzanne.

Frederick Kergin's many achievements reflect a brilliant career as a clinician and medical educator. He was the youngest son of a doctor's family in British Columbia and entered university in Toronto at 16 years of age, graduating from medical school in 1930. Following graduation, he was awarded a Rhodes Scholarship which provided two years of special surgical studies in Oxford. During this time he satisfied the requirements for admission to The Royal College of Surgeons of England. He returned to the Department of Surgery in Toronto, then under the chairmanship of Edward Gallie, as a member of an illustrious surgical division which was staffed at that time by Norman Shenstone, Gordon Murray and Robert Janes. His academic career was interrupted by World War II; between 1939 and 1945 he was on active duty with the 15th General Hospital in England and Africa, and held the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel.
At the end of the War he returned to the Department of Surgery in Toronto, and up until his retirement from the University in 1972 his career was an uninterrupted sequence of honours and achievements. In 1957, he was appointed Chairman of the Department of Surgery and Chief Surgeon at Toronto General Hospital. He retired from this position in 1966 to become Associate Dean in charge of clinical affairs at the University. In this latter capacity, Dr. Kergin played a key role in the development of Sunnybrook Hospital to its present status as a full-time university institution. During these years he was active on the executive committees of many national and international surgical societies, played an active and significant role in The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, became President of the American Association for Thoracic Surgery and was a Hunterian Professor. In addition to many other responsibilities, he devoted a great deal of time and energy to The Canadian Journal of Surgery in his capacity as Chairman of the Editorial Board between 1965 and 1972.

While the above remarks pay tribute to his many talents, no such account can reflect the special pleasure and remarkably stimulating experience enjoyed by those of us fortunate enough to have worked with Dr. Kergin as his residents. Without doubt he derived greatest pleasure from his role as a teacher, and was both selfless and tireless in the effort to assist students of surgery in understanding their specialty and in the development of their careers. On first acquaintance Dr. Kergin may have presented a slightly forbidding image to many of us, but it was soon evident that he was utterly devoted to the support of his individual trainees, and the attainment of the highest possible quality of surgical practice among his graduates. He is a superb, indeed uncanny, clinician and has never lost the enthusiasm, which is usually attributed to youth, for a new idea and for the pursuit of solutions to a problem. His broad interests include a great love of nature and the outdoors and have been shared freely with those who worked with him.

The associations which members of this Society have enjoyed with Frederick Kergin have profoundly influenced the careers of many of us. The contents of this issue reflect the diversity of stimulus and interest afforded by that association.

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