

MEMORIAL

RUDOLPH H. KAMPMEIER

F. TREMAINE BILLINGS, JR.

With the death of Dr. Rudolph H. Kampmeier on June 23, 1990 the medical world lost one of its true giants. Born in Butler County, Iowa in 1898, at 92 he was vigorous, thoughtful and productive until a few months before his death. His last paper, "From Watchful Waiting to Antibiotics" was published in the fall of 1989. He attended the autographing celebration of his fifth book: Vanderbilt University School of Medicine. The Story in Pictures from the Beginning to 1963, in May 1990.

Dr. Kampmeier received his medical education from the State University of Iowa Medical College in 1923. When one considers his later tenacity of scholarly purpose and achievement and his driving force as a medical educator, the next few years of his training and medical activities were unusual. His internship was at St. Mark's Hospital, Salt Lake City, Utah following which he spent 1924-1925 in general practice at Castle Gate, Utah. This was followed by four years on the faculty of the University of Michigan Medical School. It is of coincidental interest that here he came in contact with Dr. John B. Youmans with whom he wrote his first paper on syphilis. Later he and John Youmans were closely associated for years at Vanderbilt. From 1929-1932 he was back in private practice in Pueblo, Colorado. But in 1932, the die was cast: he joined the faculty of Louisiana State Medical School in full-time academia. Here he came in contact with Edgar Hull. Both men were practical, hands on, fundamental patient and student oriented physician educators and were mutually attracted to one another.

In 1936, Dr. Kampmeier joined the faculty at Vanderbilt. This was a momentous year. It is unlikely that any single individual has had as much influence on as many graduates of Vanderbilt Medical School as has Dr. Kampmeier. He taught physical diagnosis to second year students, made ward rounds with third year clerks and polished and fine-tuned fourth year students in the Clinic. His textbook on Physical Diagnosis was a bible for many years. No one knew the students better. He was on all the committees that most affected their lives, specially promotions and admissions. He taught the art of medicine: history taking, examination: listen and observe. In addition to fundamental teaching he was intimately and inextricably involved in all the important activities in the medical school. He was Chief of the Medical O.P.D. from 1947 to 1961. It became a model for similar clinics all over the country. He was a member or Chairman of the innumerable committees which guided the

clinic, the hospital and the school. He started Medical L when he arrived at Vanderbilt and was responsible for its unusually successful function for almost 30 years. During World War II, the Vanderbilt method of treating acute primary syphilis was the protocol selected by the Surgeon General.

During the war Dean Leathers requested that Dr. Kampmeier's civilian status be frozen. As Dr. Morgan and Dr. Youmans left for military service, for 3 years, Dr. Kampmeier ran the Department of Medicine with the help of a group of unusually loyal hard working part-time faculty internists.

He was a unique man: modest, unassuming, solidly dependable, scholarly, amazingly productive and extraordinarily well organized. He had unlimited energy. In addition to his deep constant involvement with Vanderbilt, from time to time he was Chief of Medical Service of Nashville General Hospital, Medical consultant and Medical Director of Central State Psychiatric Hospital (where he was the physician for sick psychiatric patients), and Director of Medical Education at affiliated Saint Thomas Hospital.

Dr. Kampmeier wrote voluminously. For many years he was the Editor of the Journal of the Tennessee Medical Association and of the Journal of the Southern Medical Association. In his dual role his editorials were numerous, regularly read and influential. His published papers numbering one hundred seventy nine covering a very wide variety of subjects including thyrotoxicosis, plasma proteins and cholesterol, pernicious anemia in the Negro, medical care of psychiatric patients, medical education, medicine as an art, Whipple's disease, collagen disease, various aspects of tropical disease and nutrition. But through his prolonged involvement with medical L, his major contribution to medical literature covered syphilis, completely with all its intricacies and complexities. His book, *Essentials of Syphilology*, published in 1944 was only the beginning of his broad knowledge and understanding of this disease.

In addition to the books on *Physical Diagnosis and Syphilis*, and the *Picture History of Vanderbilt Medical School*, Dr. Kampmeier wrote the wonderfully detailed and entertaining book: *Recollections: The Department of Medicine, Vanderbilt University*; and a *History of the Tennessee Medical Association*. He continued to write regularly, several articles a year. In 1981 he presented a land mark paper to the members of the *Climatological* in which he gave details of a 35 years follow-up of 85 patients first treated for acute syphilis with penicillin. Among other articles, in 1982 he wrote of *Ducrey's Soft Chancre*; 1983, *Development of Knowledge of Sexually Transmitted Diseases* and an article entitled *Gumma*. In 1988 he wrote: *The Physical Examination—An Art*.

Dr. Kampmeier held leadership roles on city, state, and national levels.

He was an officer in both the Nashville Academy of Medicine and Davidson County Medical Society and the Nashville Society for Internal Medicine and became President of both. He was also President of The Tennessee Medical Association and the Southern Medical Association. His long association with the American College of Physicians culminated in his election to the Presidency and his becoming a Master. In recognition of his service to the College he was given the Alfred Stengel Award. He received additional recognition and numerous other awards including the Thomas Parran Award, Distinguished Service Award of the Southern Medical Association and The Rodman E. and Thomas G. Sheen Award of the American Medical Association. On his retirement symposia in his honor were published in The Medical Clinics of North America and The Southern Medical Journal. He was a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians (London) and an Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland. He was called on to give numerous name lectures. He was Physician-in-Chief, pro tempore, Cleveland Clinic. He was honored by the American Social Health Association and The Tennessee Academy of Family Physicians.

Dr. Kampmeier was absolutely indefatigable. He arose early in the morning to write (his editorials for the Journals of the Southern Medical Association and Tennessee Medical Association fill volumes). He was able to return home from a social event, take up his train of thought and continue writing. He was a skilled cabinet maker. He made much of the lovely furniture in his home himself. He almost single-handedly rehabilitated a summer home on a lake near Chattanooga. He was much involved with the background of his family and his roots in Germany.

Dr. Kampmeier believed strongly that the academic faculty should participate in organized medicine. He made every effort to bring town and gown together. He and Blanche gave yearly Tom and Jerry parties at Christmas time to which physicians, both full and part-time faculty were invited.

Dr. Kampmeier was a wonderfully solid pillar. Chancellor Emeritus of Vanderbilt, Harvie Branscomb, has expressed our feeling for Dr. Kampmeier fluently: "For Rudy Kampmeier medicine was more than a career, it was a vocation he served with unflinching devotion.

"Though he became internationally known in his specialized field his interests in medicine were broad and inclusive—research, teaching, professional journals, continuing education and the delivery of medical care to the public.

"His opinions were firmly held but he was generous and objective toward his colleagues and others. I never heard him say a critical word about any of his associates.

"When one came to know him, one discovered that beneath his resolute

and efficient demeanor was a warm and friendly spirit that made it a privilege to know him.

“Vanderbilt has been honored by his membership on the faculty and those who knew him were fortunate.”

Dr. Kampmeier is survived by his wife Blanche whom we have all known and admired for many years. They were married in 1922. She supported him in all his activities and accompanied him on many of his travels. They have a daughter Joan Kampmeier Medwedeff, three grandchildren and four great grandchildren. We will miss this remarkable man very much.