

IN MEMORIAM

HERMANN J. BOLDT

1856—1943

HERMANN JOHANNES BOLDT was born in Germany June 24, 1856, and died in St. Petersburg, Florida, January 12, 1943, at the age of 86.

The Boldt family originally settled in Kansas City when Dr. Boldt was 9 years old, but soon thereafter came to New York where Dr. Boldt was educated, first in pharmacy and then in medicine, graduating from the University of the City of New York, Medical Department in 1879.

Dr. Boldt carried on a large general practice until 1890 when he was appointed instructor in gynecology at the New York Postgraduate Medical School and Hospital. This stimulated him to become one of the pioneers in developing gynecology as a specialty in New York City, and in 1891 he was made professor of gynecology. Within a relatively short time Dr. Boldt became one of the outstanding specialists in this country. He was a stalwart character, a prodigious worker, a man with many original ideas, an enthusiastic and careful investigator, and a conscientious doctor. He had many personal peculiarities; always wearing rubber boots in the operating room; preferring to operate at 7 o'clock in the morning; encouraging his operative patients to take nourishment and get out of bed within a relatively short time after operation, and he manifested the utmost boldness in the surgical procedures utilized. He was one of the first abdominal surgeons in the world to attempt the transplantation of ureters; carried on research in the physiological action of cocaine, and did much to develop an interest in gynecological pathology. He invented an operating table for abdominal surgery which won a medal at the Paris Exposition in 1900, and also designed a modern examining table for office work. He was a faithful and regular attendant at scientific medical meetings and seldom appeared without presenting some interesting specimens and participating vigorously in all the discussions.

The writer of this memorial has a vivid recollection of Dr. Boldt's appearance almost every month without exception at the meetings of the Section of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the New York Academy of Medicine from 1907 to 1915, when Dr. Boldt invariably entered the room carrying a huge leather valise containing specimens of pelvic pathology.

Dr. Boldt was a member of many local and national medical societies and an honorary member of several of the foreign obstetrical and gynecological organizations. He served as president of the old German Medical Society, the New York Obstetrical Society, and as chairman of the Section of Obstetrics and Gynecology of the New York Academy of Medicine. He was one of the founders and formerly a member of the Board of Governors of the American College of Surgeons. The one organization in which he was interested above all others was the American Gynecological Society, whose meetings he attended long after he had retired from active practice. At the age of 84 he was present at its meeting at the Seignory Club in Canada in June, 1940. Even during the latter years of his life Dr. Boldt could not be a silent bystander.

Dr. Boldt served as professor of gynecology at the New York Post-Graduate Medical School until 1917 when he was placed on the consulting list, but he did not retire from private practice until 1929.

Dr. Boldt married Miss Hedwig Kruger. From this union there was one son, St. John Boldt, who was killed in action during the first World War, and in the same year of 1918 Mrs. Boldt died. The double tragedy at this time deeply affected Dr. Boldt, and he was compelled to withdraw from practice temporarily and seek seclusion for a year or two.

Dr. Boldt left no surviving relatives except a sister, Mrs. Celli, who is believed to be living somewhere in Italy.

During the years of Dr. Boldt's active professional career he devoted most of his attention to his work in the New York Post-Graduate Medical School and Hospital, and those who knew him well during that time have a keen appreciation of the contributions he made to the development of the Department of Gynecology and the education and training of younger men.

Dr. Boldt had a brilliant and distinguished career as a gynecologist and will always be remembered for his genial friendliness and strong personality, as well as his scientific attainments.

Walter T. Dannreuther.