After Office Hours

A Visit with Dr. Walter T. Dannreuther

The goal of every American specialist in obstetrics and gynecology, and of every doctor preparing for this specialty, is certification by the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology. Responsibility for the concept of the Board rests squarely on the broad shoulders of a single individual. "Walter Dannreuther was father, mother, and babysitter of the Board," his friend and co-worker, Dr. Edward Schumann, told me.

On entering Dr. Dannreuther's Park Avenue office one finds an amazingly busy clinician. The man who dreamed a great dream of postgraduate instruction and made it come true is a professor with a lifetime devoted to postgraduate teaching. Yet basically he remains a practicing gynecologist. In his consulting room there are hundreds of loose-leaf notebooks. These contain his longhand notes, the history and physical examination of every patient he has seen in private practice. Filing cabinets in an outer office hold the laboratory and operative data and the pathologic reports. Thumbimg through the notebooks one sees Dr. Dannreuther in a new light. Keeness of observation, one expects; the highest degree of professional skill and gynecologic judgment, one takes for granted. But the written record shows even more—an intense, personal interest in his patients.

Dr. Dannreuther's heritage is musical rather than medical. His father, Gustav, was a distinguished musician. He organized the first string quartet in the United States. He was an original member of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. For 26 years Gustav Dannreuther occupied the Concertmaster's desk in the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, and he was professor of music at Vassar College.

Young Walter was a choirboy, but his musical interest went no further (today he professes to know only hillbilly music). "I always wanted to be a doctor," he says. "I don't know why, but as far back as I can remember that was my wish."

That wish was gratified in 1906, when he graduated from Long Island College of Medicine. Even then he was not altogether a neophyte. In the summer of 1903, between his first and second years in medical school, Walter Dannreuther rode with a country doctor in Lanesboro, Massachusetts. The next summer he assisted a prominent surgeon of that time, Dr. Charles H. Richardson, in Pittsfield. After his third year he substituted as an intern at St. John's Riverside Hospital, in Yonkers, New York. In his fourth year Dannreuther placed first in the examination for internships at the Jersey City Hospital.

"My internship actually began three months before graduation," Dr. Dannreuther said. "They needed an intern at once, and sent for me. Dr. Raymond, dean of the medical school, told me to go. I was
excused from further attendance in class. It was rather flattering, in those days when internships were very scarce, for a hospital to call upon a student who had yet to graduate.”

At graduation he received the Dudley medal for scholarship. On the same platform, forty-three years later, his alma mater (now the State University of New York College of Medicine) conferred on Dr. Dannreuther its Alumni Achievement Medal. Later I saw this medal in Dr. Dannreuther’s apartment and read the inscription: “For distinguished service to American medicine.”

Postgraduate Training

“I was an intern at the Jersey City Hospital for 18 months,” Dr. Dannreuther related. “During this time I did the first caesarean section in the hospital, and probably in Jersey City. Dr. Jack Mooney, the attending surgeon, let me do the operation. The patient was a midget, exhibited in Coney Island. She was 3 feet 8 inches tall, and the baby—apparently normal—weighed 7½ pounds. I reported the case in the Medical Record. It was my first article.

“After completing my internship I became associated with Dr. Augustin H. Goelet, one of the pioneer gynecologists in New York. I remained with Dr. Goelet until his death four years later.

“During this time I worked in St. Bartholomew’s Hospital Clinic, doing general surgery, and at the West Side Hospital and Dispensary, in gynecology.”

The Teacher

Dr. Dannreuther’s postgraduate teaching began in 1914, at the Postgraduate Medical School and Hospital. He was asked to teach female cystoscopy. First the new instructor had to teach himself the art.

Combining the talents of a clinician, a surgeon, and a teacher, Dr. Dannreuther made rapid progress on the faculty of Postgraduate
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substance correctly for the relief of very serious illnesses, yet he thought he had qualified himself, and many persons would take him at his own valuation. The trouble was, there were no standards.

"In September, 1927, I was on a train, going to Asheville, North Carolina, for a meeting of the American Association of Obstetricians, Gynecologists and Abdominal Surgeons. John O. Polak, who was then president of the Association, shared my compartment. I showed him a resolution I had drawn up. 'If you approve it,' I said, 'I will bring it up before the Association tomorrow. If you don't approve it, tear it up.' Dr. Polak read the resolution and handed it back to me. 'This is the most constructive thing that will happen to our specialty in this century,' he said. That moment was really the beginning of our Board.'"

Miss Leff, who has been Dr. Dannreuther's secretary for many years, gave me a copy of this resolution. This historic item is in the minutes of the American Association of Obstetricians, Gynecologists and Abdominal Surgeons for the meeting held September 15 to 17, 1927.

STANDARDIZATION OF TRAINING FOR THE SPECIALTIES REPRESENTED BY THIS SOCIETY

The following resolution was offered by Doctor Walter T. Dannreuther of New York City:

"Whereas, Every licensed physician is legally empowered to treat any and all pathologic conditions, and,

"Whereas, Those physicians who devote themselves to the study of a particular part of the body will develop a special expertise in recognizing and treating the abnormal conditions to which that part is subject, and

"Whereas, A physician is not justified in pretending to be a specialist unless he is really an expert in his chosen field, and

"Whereas, Such fitness and skill can be acquired only by intensive study, thorough training, and prolonged experience, and

"Whereas, The absence of any standardized requirements for specialists has brought specialists into disrepute in many instances,

"Be It Resolved, That the President be authorized to appoint a committee of five to consider ways and means for the organization of an American Board of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, who shall issue certificates, after due inquiry and examination, to those physicians who have qualified themselves for this special field of practice, and

"Be It Resolved, That a communication be sent to the American Gynecological Society suggesting the appointment of a similar committee to cooperate and act jointly with the committee representing the American Association of Obstetricians, Gynecologists and Abdominal Surgeons."

This resolution, by motion of Dr. Phaneuf, was referred to the Executive Committee for consideration. Later the resolution was reported upon and adopted by the Association.

"And so," Dr. Dannreuther continued, "the keel was laid, but it took three years of hard work before the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology was launched."

Headed by Dr. Dannreuther, the members of the joint committee met, discussed, went their several ways to work out details, and met again. Seated in Dr. Dannreuther's consulting room I heard the story simply outlined. In Portland, Oregon, in 1929, the Joint Committee formally requested the participation of the Section of Obstetrics and Gynecology of the American Medical Association. This was beset with difficulties. There were objections from those who thought that the general practice of medicine would be jeopardized. But objections were finally overcome. The American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology was organized in 1930, with Dr. Walter T. Dannreuther as its president. He filled that office with distinction for a quarter of a century.

An Active Emeritus

To attain emeritus status does not mean to retire from active practice. Relieved of
行政事务和教学负担，Dr. Dannreuther 有更多的时间投入到他的办公室和手术中；所以它或许被说成是无可争议的事实，他已‘退休’到私人实践中。他在纽约大学医院和圣克莱尔医院工作。他是一个十四家其他医院的顾问。

许多对妇产科文献的贡献揭示了 Dr. Dannreuther 的关注重点在于临床研究。但他特别的兴趣在于培养年轻的医生并帮助他们成为杰出的成功妇产科医生和妇产科医生。“我拥有全国最优秀的前居民散落在全国各地，”Dr. Dannreuther 骄傲地说道。

《统一的妇产科和妇科学》

在 Dr. Dannreuther 的公寓里，我们在他的办公室讨论了我们专业的需求。

“我们最需要的是，”Dr. Dannreuther 说，“是将妇产科和妇科学在单一的部门中在所有医院。我不认为一个医生能做好妇科而没有一个妇产科的背景，我不认为一个医生能做好妇产科——尤其是手术——而没有妇科的训练。”

他指出，当正确练习时，少于百分之二十的妇科病例是手术的。一般的外科医生没有训练或该处置来处理百分之八十的非手术妇科病例。

有多少次的操作是被完成的？Dr. Dannreuther 说他不乐意去总结。“它很难去评估智力的诚实。病理学报告是可贵的，但它不是一个可信赖的判断标准。例如，子宫切除术对脱垂是被广泛接受的技术，尽管子宫显示没有异常。

内异位症和旋转倒置的子宫可能是相关的，且在适当的测试，操作可能被进行。每个案例应被个别考虑，并且一个有训练的妇科医生（当可获得时）应坐在审计委员会。”

荣誉

Dr. Dannreuther 已经收到了许多荣誉，除了以上提到的。他是美国妇产科，妇科和腹部外科医生的主席，美国妇科协会的会长；也是美国妇产科和妇科学的名誉会长。另一个男人，Dr. Jennings C. Litzenberg，已三年连续获得美国妇产科和妇科学的三个最高职务。

《大象的收集》

Dr. Dannreuther 的桌子上，展示在咨询室，接待室，他的公寓里是著名的象形人偶的收藏。用象牙，银器，“猫的眼睛”，稀有木头及其它材料。他特别地喜欢两头大象被用精美的银器装饰，放在银器中。

Dr. Dannreuther 说没有具体的原因开始收藏大象。“我开始收集大象人物，我把它送给我的朋友。”

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那天下午，当我离开 Dr. Dannreuther 的办公室时。站在繁忙的角落，我在等一辆南下汽车，我注意到一个摩天大楼正横跨公园大道。由于各种原因，这使我想到了 Emerson 的名言，每家伟大的医院是单个人影的拉长。它是真实的，当我反思，美国妇产科和妇科学的主席，Dr. Walter T. Dannreuther，一位伟大的教育家在妇产科和妇科学领域，萨姆·戈登·伯科，在 N. J. 宾夕法尼亚州安博伊

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