

IN MEMORIAM

Hans May (1902-1975)



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Dr. Hans May, a senior member of the American Society for Surgery of the Hand and former chief of plastic and reconstructive surgery at Lankenau Hospital, died July 23, 1975.

Hans May was born June 22, 1902, in Germany where he earned his medical degree at the University of Freiburg in 1926. Afterward he spent a year with Aschoff in pathology, but continued his surgical training under Prof. Erich Lexer and assisted in his research studies in joint transplantation and the blood supply of the scaphoid. After several years in Munich as assistant to Lexer, Dr. May immigrated to the United States, settling in Pennsylvania.

Arriving in 1934 with a letter to Dr. George P. Muller, who was acquainted with Lexer, Dr. May interned at Chestnut Hill Hospital and in 1935 became licensed to practice in the state of Pennsylvania. During his early years in Philadelphia, he met Dr. Stanley P. Reimann and subsequently joined the staff at Lankenau Hospital as assistant surgeon under Dr. George P. Muller. Dr. May felt comfortable at Lankenau, the original old German hospital which had practicing sisters and followed many of the old German medical customs, until as late as World War II.

Dr. May became chief of plastic and reconstructive surgery at Germantown, Abington, Holy Redeemer, and St. Christopher's Hospital for Children, as well as

associate professor of surgery at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Medicine. In 1953, when a department of plastic and reconstructive surgery was established at Lankenau, Dr. May became chief of plastic surgery and served until his retirement. He also was president of the staff at Lankenau Hospital.

In his professional career, Dr. May was honored by being made the first president of the Robert H. Ivy Society. He was a diplomate of the American Board of Surgery, a member of the Founder's Group of the American Board of Plastic Surgery, and one of the early members of American Society for Surgery of the Hand. In addition, he was a member of the American College of Surgeons, the American Association of Plastic Surgeons, and the American Society of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery. He was also a member of the elite surgical society of Germany which selected him to make the memorial address for the late Prof. Erich Lexer at their Congress.

Dr. May felt that work was the primary purpose of his life. He was a meticulous surgeon and an outstanding teacher. Yet he was a compassionate individual who had time to listen to anyone's difficulty or trouble. Although he trained only one surgeon completely in his career, there were many surgeons who worked with him as residents for periods of 3 to 6 months and who received the benefit of his excellent teaching.

Dr. May published many articles on plastic and reconstructive surgery, but he always maintained his interest in general surgery. His first book on plastic and reconstructive surgery was written for the general surgeon because at that time there was little guidance available to the young surgeon without immediate access to the services of a plastic surgeon.

Retiring to his home in St. Croix, Virgin Islands, Dr. May continued an interest in problems concerning cleft palate and trauma because of the great need present in the Islands. Unfortunately much of his retirement was painful as a result of a malignancy which metastasized to the lung, despite all measures taken to halt it. He is survived by his wife, Lisa, two sons, William and John, and three grandsons.

Richard S. Oakey, M.D.