



SOCIETY OF PROFESSORS EMERITI
Established in 1978

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THE ORIGINS OF
THE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY SOCIETY OF PROFESSORS EMERITI:
NOTES FROM THE ARCHIVES
(Revised)

The late Sam Soule, one of our more thoughtful members who was a devotee of medical history--an interest which we had in common--more than once urged me to write a short history of the Society. Being chronically over committed to writing, I demurred, but I promised to keep the thought on tap. As Archivist of the group, it was the natural thing to do. The result now before you is a modest collection of reminiscences fortified by verification.

By 1975-1976, when I began increasingly to see some of my friends in the faculty attain the distinction of professor emeritus only to disappear from the daily scene, I conceived a partial solution: A Society of the Emeriti. Then in 1977, when my wife Louise and I partook of Thanksgiving dinner at the home of Phil and Eloise DuBois, I broached the idea to Phil and we talked in the living room after dinner. What did he think of it? His response was unqualified so I invited him to join me in canvassing the existing Emeriti for their reaction. The vice-chancellor's office gladly provided the relevant names and addresses; there were about 85 living in the area, and we, of course, approached them first. A short letter with a reply form was sent out and, shortly, affirmative responses were received from about 30. Accordingly this group met in March and April, 1978 at the Alumni House to discuss the proposal, then to draw up a constitution and bylaws.

The stated purpose was "to encourage and promote the common interests of its members, to provide for social and intellectual interaction among them, and to serve as a clearing house for information concerning University policy of interest to the group."

The early history of the founding was reported in the W.U. Record, April 6, 1978. The present account is a brief survey of the first decade.

The first officers were: President, Saul Rosenzweig, Departments of Psychology and Psychiatry, President-elect and Secretary-Treasurer, Philip H. DuBois, Psychology. The additional members of the Council consisted of William E. Allen, Clinical Radiology, Medical School; Arthur B. Cleaves, Earth Sciences; A. Gwendolyn Drew, Physical Education; Thomas S. Hall, Biology and former Dean of the

College; Richard J.W. Koopman, Samuel C. Sachs Professor Emeritus of Electrical Engineering; and Carl Tolman, Earth Sciences and former Chancellor and Dean of the Faculty. In the course of the years the Council has been increased in size and the terms of office have been staggered. This group has become a kind of senate which under the leadership of the President and President-elect (Executive Secretary) meet regularly before the monthly luncheon meeting to plan and execute the business of the Society. The Council has played a vital and vibrant part of the Society, and those elected to it enjoy not only the luncheon but the exhilarating prelude.

After the instructive experience of the first few years, the office of Treasurer was separated from that of Secretary so that at present the chief officers and the President, President-elect and Executive Secretary, and Treasurer. Appended is a list of the presidents for the first twelve years.

The membership rapidly grew until it attained the continuing figure of about 100. The large majority live in St. Louis, or vicinity, but some who have retired to more distant places have maintained membership to receive the monthly notices and to attend occasional meetings when they are in town.

From the outset it was recognized that the Society would have a natural input of about a dozen new Emeriti each year and would be subject to some attrition as time passed. But on that basis it was anticipated that with a nucleus of members actively interested and devoted, the organization would survive and probably prosper.

It was not so fully anticipated that the group would in its membership and activities be so representative of all the schools and departments of the University. Faculty members from the hilltop, in its various departments, from the Medical School and Dental School, the Law School and the School for Social Work have mingled in the group at its monthly meetings and other events in a unique way. Few other organizations at the University have been so fortunate.

At the regular monthly luncheon meetings an invited speaker from the University or the larger community talks to the group briefly on some timely topic or on one in which he or she enjoys a special expertise. These meetings occur in all but the summer months. About a third of the registered members attend these sessions, and there is always a lively exchange among the participants that is reinvigorating in its effect.

Alumni House was almost immediately succeeded by Whittemore House, the Faculty Conference Center, as the meeting place of the Emeriti. With the gracious cooperation of the managers--first, Arthur Kleine, then Shirley Emerson--the Emeriti have practically acquired a club house of their own. The monthly luncheons are served a la carte in the fireplace room; the anniversary banquets are in the large dining room and the living room, and the Council meets are, by courtesy, held in the Board Room. Those who were not formerly members of the Faculty Conference Center usually pay the

