

12. A Management Team

Keep a good secretary in office as long as he will accept the job.

RECOMMENDATION, AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF
EYE, EAR, NOSE AND THROAT SOCIETY SECRETARIES

INCOMING PRESIDENT Walter R. Parker pledged to Academy members in 1921: "I was told when I was informed of the nomination and election, that all I had to do was to obey the orders of the secretary. I now promise to obey the secretary."^{1(p449)}

Dr Parker was being more truthful than modest. While presidents came and went—and left their mark of improvement on Academy programs and policies—the secretary and treasurer were reelected year after year and kept the wheels turning. In fact, a president often came to office knowing little about the mechanics of Academy operation. Having to learn the ropes during his term of office deprived both the Academy and the president of effective utilization of his ideas and skills.

Walter Parker suggested the office of president-elect (established in 1925) to allow a president a year of understudy on the Council before assuming the reins.^{2(pp451-452)} He also helped create a group of management secretaries, and one of his former apprentices, a young man named William Benedict, was to be the Academy's longest-serving administrative executive. But that was 20 years in the future.

As it happened, Bill Benedict's first post in the Academy was the second vice-presidency under his former mentor, President Parker, in

1922. He had become head of the Mayo Clinic's Section of Ophthalmology in 1917 at the age of 32 and had joined the Academy two years later. He would be a major figure in the society for almost half a century.

Two other up-and-coming men entered Academy affairs about the same time as Bill Benedict. Harry Gradle, a Chicago ophthalmologist, and William P. Wherry, an Omaha otolaryngologist-ophthalmologist, were elected councillors for 1920. Dr Gradle was 36 and Dr Wherry, 39; they had become Academy members in 1911 and 1910, respectively, and, as Dr Gradle described, "for the following years sat quietly in each annual meeting."³

During their first year on the Council, they were appointed to the Postgraduate Committee to organize instruction courses. As chairman in charge of policy, Harry Gradle designed the course structure, and Bill Wherry took care of preparations. It was here that Harry Gradle's inventive genius and William Wherry's skill as an organizer-promoter were first combined in what would be a long-term working friendship.

Drs Gradle and Wherry, soon to be joined by William Benedict, were in the vanguard of a new generation, as well as a new breed, of Academy leaders. William Benedict first crossed paths with the Gradle-Wherry combination when he served on the instruction

course committee in 1925 and 1926. A new management system inaugurated a year later welded together these three personalities who would wield tremendous influence on the Academy and leave their lasting stamp on its activities and programs. Of the three, only William Wherry had a hand in the reorganization.

In 1921, Dr Wherry and fellow Councillor Edward C. Ellett had been appointed to report on reorganization of the secretary's office.^{4(p15)} The Academy's single secretary processed everything from membership records to meeting plans. To be sure, there were designated committees to draw the broad picture, but it was the secretary who coordinated and executed the details. The fact that the Academy thrived in an organized manner could be mostly attributed to the secretary's labor of love. His \$200 honorarium did not cover his personal office's expenses to transact Academy business.

Frequently referred to as the largest specialty society in the world, the Academy had six executive officers, a legislative-judicial council, and no managers. Leaders recognized that a more solid framework was in order. The society had every prospect of becoming larger, more active and complex. The recommendations of Drs Wherry and Ellett were palliative, and it appears they knew it and continued to work, unofficially, on a heftier organizational chart for the Academy. Their initial proposal, which was accepted, provided \$900 a year for maintenance of the secretary's office and an assistant from each specialty to help with the annual meeting.^{4(pp21-22)}

Minutes from a special Council meeting in May 1925 note that "a letter of Dr William P. Wherry, in reference to the reorganization of the Academy was read and freely discussed."^{5(p19)} At the October meeting, incoming President Edward Ellett moved that "the business of the Academy be centralized in the Secretary's office and that the working out of the plan to be referred to the Secretary [Luther

C. Peter] and Treasurer [Secord H. Large]."^{5(p26)} The Council agreed with this proposal as well as with a second one from Dr Ellett which permitted the secretary up to \$2500 in maintenance allowance.

Drs Peter and Large worked with Past Presidents Walter R. Parker and Walter B. Lancaster, President Edward Ellett, and President-Elect Ross H. Skillern to devise a secretarial group system of management. There were two goals. One was to consolidate Academy financial affairs, membership records, and educational and other activities in a central office under an administrative executive. The second was to distribute responsibility for major Academy functions, in effect to create a management team under the administrative executive.

William Wherry was in the process of acquiring two careers in addition to his busy practice. "His genius for organization," wrote Harry Gradle, "became immediately apparent, when Hanau Loeb, Meyer Wiener, Bill, and I held our first [Postgraduate] Committee meeting in my home in Chicago."³ Dr Wherry's ability as an organizer earned him the first vice-presidency in 1924 and appointment as Academy representative to the newly formed American Board of Otolaryngology. He was elected secretary-treasurer of the Board.

When the Council introduced their plan for a group of secretaries at the 1926 meeting, Bill Wherry was the choice for general secretary, the administrative executive. Former Secretary Luther C. Peter was rewarded with the presidency (Fig 29).

The original plan, effected in 1927, called for three section secretaries under the general secretary, one from each specialty to prepare the scientific program for an annual meeting and a third secretary with responsibility for the instruction program in both specialties. A second secretary for instruction was soon added. The president picked the first section

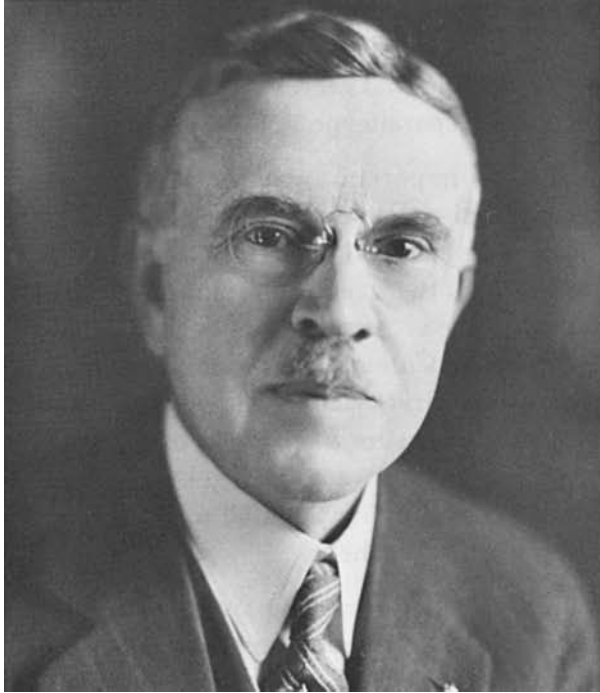


Fig 29.—Left, Luther C. Peter. Right, Secord H. Large.

secretaries, presumed in collaboration with Dr Wherry.^{6(pp456,479)}

Harry Gradle was a natural for the post of secretary for instruction. During 1927 he revamped the instruction program into the separate, conference-style courses that have endured to the present. William Benedict was given responsibility for the ophthalmology scientific program as secretary for ophthalmology. And a total newcomer to the Academy's official family, John L. Myers, who had joined in 1920, was put in charge of the otolaryngology scientific program as secretary for otolaryngology.

Although Dr Wherry reported "many controversies arose" with the shifts in responsibility, the new secretariat was soon running, if not precisely like clockwork, at least with more efficiency than the old order.^{7(p376)} The secretaries have "assumed entire control over the work of their respective sections," Dr Wherry told members in 1928, "the Executive Secretary has not been called upon to interfere."^{8(pp476,477)} To eliminate the conflict

and confusion of the first year, officers cooperated by dispatching copies of all Academy-related correspondence to Dr Wherry.

To allow a smooth transition, without overwhelming Dr Wherry, one purpose of reorganization—to centralize fiscal affairs and Academy activities—was phased in gradually. With all correspondence being funneled through his office and with his gradual assumption of the treasurer's duties, Dr Wherry's facilities were soon overflowing with Academy paperwork. With Council approval he enlarged his private office in 1929 and set aside "one full room" for Academy business.⁹

It was the beginning of an Executive Office. Dr Wherry pronounced the Academy had grown so large, it was in the "big business" class, and perhaps it was for the day. The society had 1,600 members, and operational expenses totaled \$18,249.61.^{10(pp487,528)} The Headquarters Office, as it was less formally known, had a staff of one—Dr Wherry's personal secretary.

In 1931, Dr Wherry was made executive secretary-treasurer, and former Treasurer Secord H. Large was elected comptroller, the chief financial officer with supervisory control. The office of comptroller was eliminated after the retirement in 1943 of Dr Large, who had served faithfully, first as treasurer and then as comptroller, since 1909 (Fig 29).

To the initial cadre of four secretaries, three more were added (Table 8). William V. Mullin was made secretary for instruction in otolaryngology in 1931. As annual meeting affairs increased, notably with a more diligent effort at public relations, the beginning of a Teachers' Section, and a jump in extramural activities, the Council created a catchall secretary for miscellaneous activities (Ralph A. Fenton) in 1935. Two years later the post was narrowed to secretary for public relations.

The seventh and last secretaryship—the secretary for home study—was established in 1944, four years after the Academy had proceeded with the then-unorthodox idea of specialty education home study courses. Harry Gradle, who had introduced, advocated, and executed the plan, became the first secretary. A second secretary for home study was never established, perhaps because it seemed unnecessary. The courses were for residents, not members, and each course had an associate secretary and a faculty to develop the curriculum.

In 1969, when the Council decided to parlay the home study concept into continuing education programs for practitioners, they agreed that program development should be guided by a secretary for each specialty. To avoid delay, they borrowed permanently the constitutionally established post of secretary for public relations for responsibilities in continuing education.

The secretarial system not only streamlined Academy operations, it gave each specialty responsibility for its own educational programs

and resources. In the long term, this enabled the Academy to serve equally well, and impartially, a membership that grew ever more divided into distinctly separate specialties.

Just as important was the effect the secretarial system had on meeting plans. It had for years been the president's privilege and obligation to plan the scientific program in conjunction with the secretary. The two alone made up the Program Committee until the early twenties when the first vice-president was added, probably to ensure a specialty balance. Other meeting activities were handled by independent committees. Zipping them all together was the secretary's headache.

In 1927, the secretaries were naturally included on the Program Committee along with the chairman of the Committee on Arrangements. Later additions to the Program Committee were the president-elect and treasurer-comptroller (both about 1930) and the chairman of the Council Committee on Academy Activities (in 1933). The other secretaries were added as the positions were created.

When these men met in January, they could discuss everything from program content to the annual banquet. It was infinitely more practical to have all facets of the meeting congealed under a central committee (Fig 30 through 32). As the men responsible for the Academy's educational output, the secretaries formed the nucleus of the Program Committee and became the mainspring of the Academy. Good men in all secretarial positions have been the society's greatest asset (Table 9 and 10).

Under the robust leadership of William Wherry, the first group of secretaries set a precedent of esprit de corps that would long outlive their terms. Bill Wherry, Bill Benedict, and John Myers held their posts for 16 years. Harry Gradle served as a secretary for instruction until he assumed the presidency in 1938. Their motto was "Bigger and Better Academy" (coined by Bill Benedict), and their style was



Fig 30.—Program Committee members pose with their wives and Dr Wherry's secretary, Claire McGovern, at June 1936 meeting at French Lick, Ind. Almost 25 years later, Drs. Lierle, Ruedemann, and Benedict would still be on the committee.

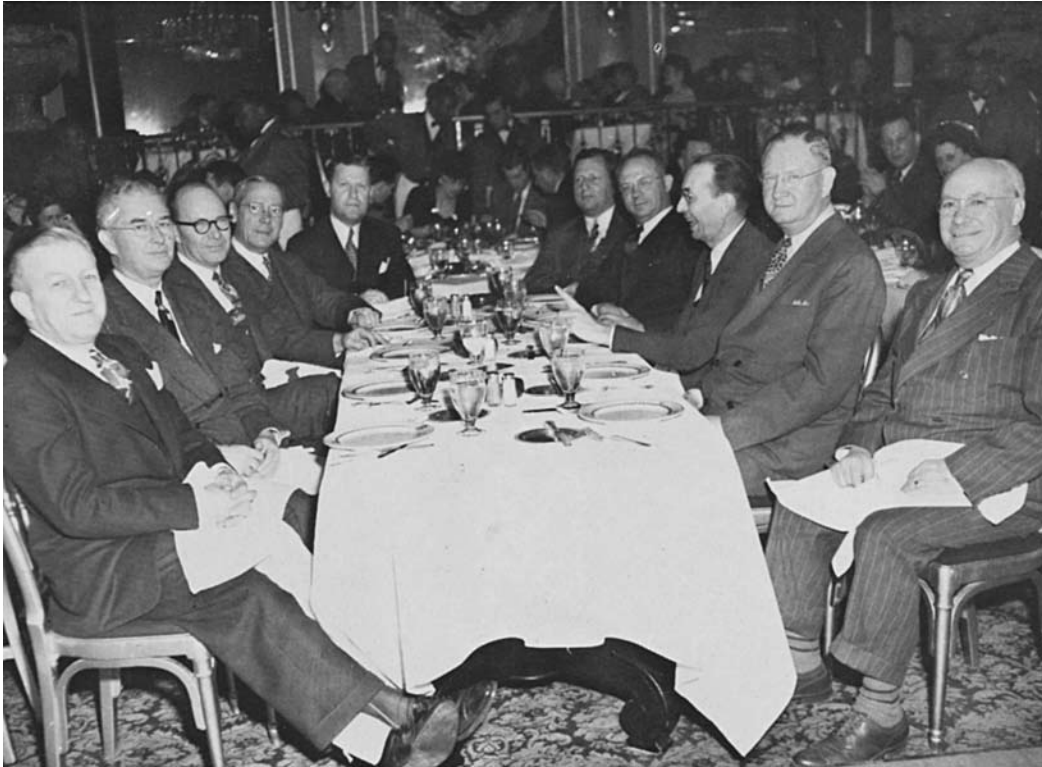
fraternal. Their common objective, as defined by Dr Wherry, was "to raise the standards within our own group and by ourselves."¹¹

Academy meetings reflected not only their indefatigable work on educational programs but also their flair and enthusiasm. They livened up meetings with golf tournaments, bridge tournaments, and postconvention cruises (Fig 33). During the meeting, the secretaries themselves were frequently found up in the early morning hours, hashing over the program—what was going well here, what could stand improvement there—all over a game

of cards which were Dr Wherry's passion and form of relaxation.

As incoming president, Harry Gradle wrote his impressions of the 1937 meeting in the December *Bulletin*, with a last-paragraph swan song to the secretariat.

"As for the Board of Secretaries (now being on the outside), I think they are a bunch of lousy bums. Their card playing is atrocious and the best player does not stand a chance. Nevertheless, I love them one and all. . . . I hope that the closely knit bands will keep us all together as a group so long as we may live."¹²



Al Wood
Al. Reese
"Van" Alyea
Ferry Boies
Chick Jones
Bill Benedict
Erling W. Hansen
Arthur C. Jones
Kenneth L. Roper
Dean M. Lierle

Fig 31.—Dinner together at Chicago's Palmer House Empire Room became tradition for the Program Committee during its January meetings. Shown here in 1947 are (left to right): Lawrence R. Boies, O. E. Van Alyea, Algernon B. Reese, Alan C. Woods, Kenneth L. Roper, Dean M. Lierle, A. D. Ruedemann, Erling W. Hansen, William Benedict, Arthur C. Jones.

Kenneth Roper
Clair M. Kos
Daniel Snyder
Glen G. Gibson
Harold G. Scheie
Vic Byrnes
A. D. Ruedemann
Eugene Derlacki
Dean M. Lierle
Bill Benedict

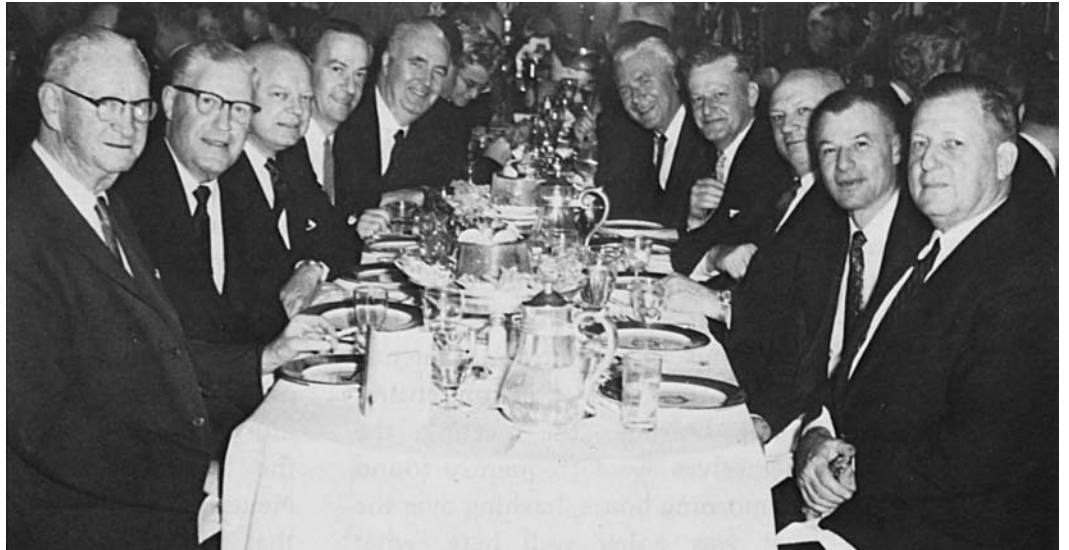
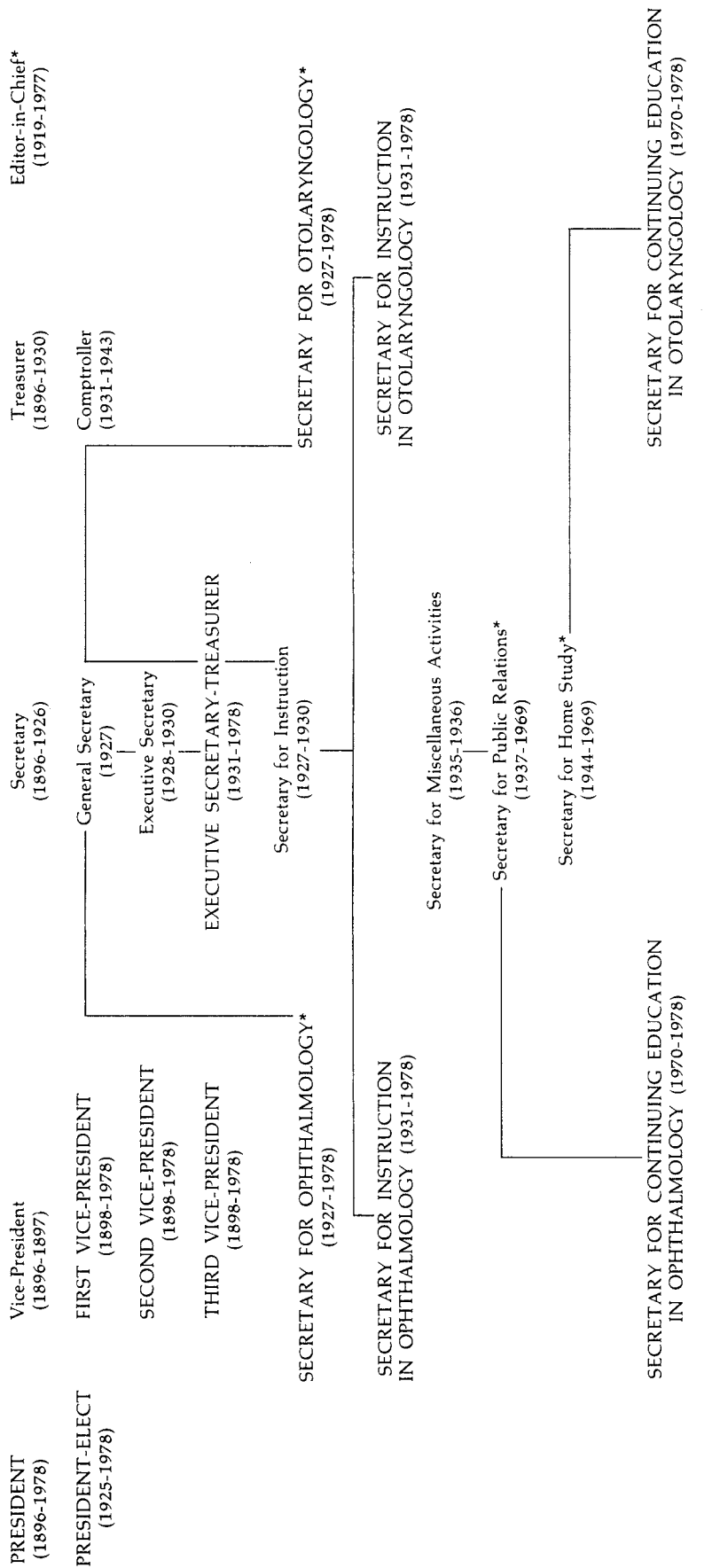


Fig 32.—Gathered for dinner are members of the 1960 Program Committee. Left to right: William Benedict, Kenneth Roper, Clair M. Kos, Daniel Snyder, Glen G. Gibson, Harold G. Scheie, Victor A. Byrnes, A. D. Ruedemann, Eugene Derlacki, Dean Lierle.



Fig 33.—Top, Standard golf foursome at meetings in early 1930s: Secretaries Bill Benedict, Bill Mullin, Harry Gradle, and Bill Wherry. Left, Secretary John Myers, who apparently was not a golfer.

TABLE 8
DEVELOPMENT OF ACADEMY FAMILY OF OFFICERS



Note: Officers as of 1978 are shown in capital letters.

*Revisions in officer group included in the 1977 Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, and Division Standing Rules: secretaries for ophthalmology and otolaryngology retitled secretaries for program to more accurately describe their function; formal revision of office of secretary for public relations to secretary for continuing education in ophthalmology and secretary for home study to secretary for continuing education in otolaryngology (the function of these two secretaries had been converted to continuing education in 1970); establishment of editorship as an elective office of each specialty division.

TABLE 9

SECRETARIES FOR OPHTHALMOLOGY (PROGRAM)*

NAME	YRS SERVED (INCLUSIVE)
William L. Benedict, Rochester, Minn	1927-1942
Algernon B. Reese, New York	1943-1951
Kenneth L. Roper, Chicago	1952-1971
Frederick C. Blodi, Iowa City	1972-1977
Robert D. Reinecke, Albany, NY	1978-

*The secretaries for instruction can be found in chapter 8, "The Section on Instruction"; the secretaries for public relations in chapter 19, "Building Rapport"; the secretaries for home study in chapter 22, "A Stop-Gap Measure: Home Study Courses"; and the secretaries for continuing education in chapter 26, "Expanding the Formula: Programs for Practitioners."

TABLE 10

SECRETARIES FOR OTOLARYNGOLOGY (PROGRAM)*

NAME	YRS SERVED (INCLUSIVE)
John L. Myers, Kansas City, Mo	1927-1942
O. E. Van Alyea, Chicago	1943-1947
James H. Maxwell, Ann Arbor, Mich	1948-1950
Howard P. House, Los Angeles	1951-1953
Lawrence R. Boies, Minneapolis	1954-1956
Eugene L. Derlacki, Chicago	1957-1959
Clair M. Kos, Iowa City	1960-1969
Brian F. McCabe, Iowa City	1970-1977
Jack D. Clemis, Chicago	1978