

TRIBUTE

A Thank You to Howard P. House, MD: A Communicator Par Excellence June 29, 1908–August 1, 2003

On behalf of the board of directors of the Martha Entenmann Tinnitus Research Center, Inc., and the co-chief editors, editorial board, and staff of the *International Tinnitus Journal*, I thank Dr. House for his teaching, his leadership, and his contributions to the discipline of otology. On a personal level, I commend him for his humanity, support, and friendship over the years.

Dr. House was to otology in the United States what Adam Politzer was to the field in Europe. He was the last of a generation of otologists—Julius Lempert, George E. Shambaugh Jr, H. Wullstein, Samuel Rosen, Harry Rosenwasser, T. Cawthorne, H.F. Schuknecht, and J.B. Farrior—who together altered the course of otology from its focus on surgical control of diseases of the ear to that of reconstructive surgery for reduction of hearing loss and vertigo and improvement of hearing. He never forgot the influence of Julius Lempert in stimulating his interest in otology. All the aforementioned specialists are models for what can be accomplished by the integration of clinical experience and basic science and vice versa. Today, we identify such cooperation as translational medicine.

Dr. House was a graduate of the University of Southern California's Keck School of Medicine. He later served on USC's faculty as clinical professor of otology from 1946 to 2000, during which period he served as head of the department of otolaryngology from 1952 to 1961. He led the fundraising effort to build the USC medical school campus at its present location and co-founded the Salerni Collegium, a scholarship program for medical students.

Dr. House continued the tradition of excellence set by his father, Milus M. House, DDS, a pioneer and researcher in prosthodontics. He visited and learned from the masters in ear, nose, and throat medicine and, in particular, otology. He was open to new ideas. As a clinician of excellence, he applied his clinical experience



to the advantage of his patients. Dr. House applied this vast store of expertise to advancing the basic science of otology. He understood the necessity of maintaining synergy between both clinical experience and basic science, which he shared with the world. He was open to discussion and questioning from students, fellow otologists, scientists, and politicians. One had the feeling in such discussions that the opinions of the questioners were important regardless of their station in the hierarchy of our specialty or their position in society. This charming personal touch allowed Dr. House to communicate effectively with an audience, whatever the view and the discussion.

Dr. House's crowning achievement for otology is considered to be the House Ear Institute. It incorporates an integrated group of professionals—basic scientists and clinicians—who work in close relationship with one another and are dedicated to the advancement of ear care for affected patients and the development of improvements in ear function (i.e., reducing hearing loss, vertigo and, most recently, tinnitus). A highlight of this approach was the development by his brother, Dr. William F. House, of the cochlear implant. The House Ear Institute (HEI), by providing both didactic teaching courses and state-of-the-art conferences in otological surgery, continues to serve as a source of excellence for otology and neurotology. This concept was shared by Dr. Howard House with all his fellow professionals. He offered to otologists assistance for the establishment of otological foundations worldwide. This tradition of excellence is being continued by his son, John W. House, MD. The establishment of our foundation, the Martha Entenmann Tinnitus Research Center, Inc., benefited from the teaching of Dr. Howard House.

Most memorable of all for those of us who were privileged to attend were his courses at the American Academy of Otolaryngology–Head and Neck Surgery and at the HEI. These courses were characterized by

honesty and sharing of experience. I remember his describing the problem and treatment of a “gusher” that occurred during stapes surgery. He communicated to all in the room the humility a surgeon must bring to the operative field for any and all problems that may develop and “tips” to provide control of the problem. It was a no-holds-barred presentation from which all of us benefited.

Dr. Howard House’s achievements in clinical otology and acoustical science were recognized by numerous citations of excellence, lifetime achievement awards, and other awards worldwide. He received numerous honorary degrees; they included an honorary degree in medicine from the Karolinska Institute of Sweden and honorary fellowships from the Otologic Society of Australia, the Royal Australian College of Surgeons, the German Society of Otorhinolaryngology, the Asociación Panamericana de Oto-Rino-Laringología y Broncoesofagología, and the International College of Surgeons.

Dr. House served as president of numerous professional associations, including the American Academy of Otolaryngology–Head and Neck Surgery (formerly the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngol-

ogy); the American Otological Society; the American Triologic Society; and the Centurion Club of the Deafness Research Foundation. He received USC’s Outstanding Career Service Award and the Physician of the Year award from both the President’s Committee and the California Governor’s Committee for Employment of the Handicapped.

In 1947, Dr. House was appointed chairman of the subcommittee on noise and directed the national study on industrial noise that set the Occupational Safety and Health Administration hearing conservation standards in use today.

With his sons, Kenneth M. House, MD, and John W. House, MD, and his daughter, Carolyn Helmuth; with his brothers, William F. House, MD, a pioneer in neurotology, and James House, DDS; and with his nine grandchildren, we share the loss—and celebrate the life of achievement—of Dr. Howard House. We thank the family for its dedication to excellence, from which patients and professionals worldwide have benefited.

Abraham Shulman, MD, FACS