

Kansas Public Health Association

SAMUEL J. CRUMBINE

# BANQUET



HONORING

Geoffrey Mathews Martin, M.D., M.P.H.

Thursday, April 28, 1966

Glenwood Manor — Overland Park, Kansas

## THE SAMUEL J. CRUMBINE MEDAL

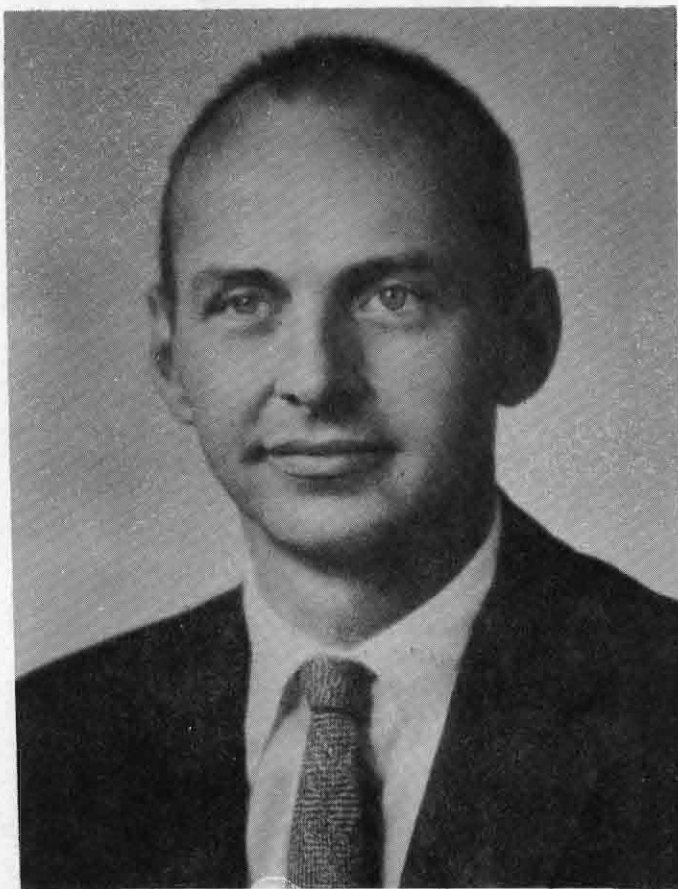


Presented for outstanding service in public health

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- 1946—Samuel J. Crumbine, M.D.\*
- 1947—Clarence H. Kinnaman, M.D.\*
- 1948—Charles H. Lerrigo, M.D.\*
- 1951—Earnest Boyce, C.E.
- 1952—E. V. McCollum, Ph.D.
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- 1955—Karl A. Menninger, M.D., and  
William C. Menninger, M.D.
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- 1961—Franklin D. Murphy, M.D.
- 1962—Leona Baumgartner, M.D.
- 1963—Charles A. Hunter, Ph.D.
- 1964—Fred Lowe Soper, M.D.
- 1965—Dwight F. Metzler, C.E., M.P.H.

\*Deceased



#### HONORING

**Geoffrey Mathews Martin, M.D., M.P.H.**

The Kansas Public Health Association has selected Geoffrey M. Martin to receive the Samuel J. Crumbine Award in recognition of the significant influence he has had on public health in Kansas and the nation. This dedication to people and to professional principles, and the spirit with which Geoff Martin performed are reminiscent of Dr. Crumbine.

Few have contributed as much to the health and welfare of children as Dr. Martin. The lives of thousands of children are — and will continue to be — enriched by the great devotion, effort, and ceaseless determination which Geoff gave to make the present and future more secure and promising for them.

The story of these contributions and the man who made them is the 1966 Crumbine Award story.

**Geoffrey M. Martin, M.D., M.P.H.**

Dr. Geoffrey Martin's creative and imaginative mind has always produced new, provocative ideas. Many of them developed into forward-looking legislation and effective local action.

Numerous ideas provided blueprints for the future many years before they became reality. Some of these were prophetic of future needs and are being implemented and popularized today.

Consistently, Dr. Martin displayed an analytic and logical approach to problems, a concern for human dignity, and unswerving determination against compromise if it jeopardized this concern. Geoffrey was a person of perfect integrity. He used the same set of ground rules to apply to all situations, insisting that such rules do not lend themselves to political pressure at any time.

Geoff was born in Cold Spring Harbor, Long Island, New York, in August 1917, the son of Helen and Drelincourt Martin. He was the middle child of three. His sister, who was very close to him in early years, died last Christmas. His brother, Malcolm Van Dyke Martin, lives in Bermuda and his mother in Maine.

**Childhood, Educational and Early Professional Career**

His mother recalls that Geoff always loved animals. Even when they lived in the city he had rabbits, parakeets, hamsters, and a dog. They mingled in harmony on the roof or on porches. Geoff once took a pet cha-

meleon named Charlemagne to Europe, attached to his coat lapel — to the chagrin of passengers and officials.

He was an omnivorous reader as a child. This trait became intensified during his high school years, at St. Paul's School in Concord, New Hampshire. He also developed a keen appreciation and knowledge of American history, government, and culture.

Geoff finished his last two years of high school in one, in order to save the cost of tuition. He entered college at a very early age.

Geoff was accepted as an honor student to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In his first year he discovered that science and math were not his forte. He transferred to the University of North Carolina where he majored in chemistry and obtained his B.A. degree.

Tulane University School of Medicine, in New Orleans, was the next step in his education. He was graduated in June, 1943 with an internship to begin at once at Children's Hospital in Boston.

During World War II, Dr. Martin became Assistant Medical Officer and mail censor on the AKA Oberon, an attack transport in the Mediterranean. Geoff insists that he lost faith in public school education reading those letters when he was censor.

He thoroughly enjoyed his tour of duty on the Oberon although he became concerned about the squalid living conditions he saw in North Africa. Probably this is when his first interest in public health developed.

He later became Medical Officer in the Pacific theater with the John P. Gray, a destroyer escort modi-

fied to a high speed escort. He worked with the underwater demolition units.

Right after the end of the war, he was assigned to the Naval Hospital at Arlington, Virginia, as pediatrician.

Following his naval service, he became assistant in pediatrics at the Johns Hopkins Medical School and the Harriet Lane Home in Baltimore.

#### **Motivation for Pediatric and Public Health Career**

It was Dr. Martin's opinion that the years of medical training and the war, underlined by personal tragedy, were the primary stimulus to his deep concern for the welfare of children. Dr. Martin was married following graduation from college. During the period of medical school a daughter, Penelope, was born. When the marriage was ended during World War II, he was almost completely separated from the little daughter he adored. It was a profound grief to him, one — as he puts it — which emphasized his determination to work for the welfare of children and was the "ammunition" for his public health career.

There was a marriage, of which there were five children, that ended in the late 1950's. Dr. Martin and his wife, Helen, were married in July, 1960. She also had children by a previous marriage. Together they have created a warm and affectionate family unit. People frequently cannot tell which is the natural child and which is the stepchild of either parent. A little boy, born in 1961, was welcomed with delight by all of them.

Geoff has instilled a deep love of books and intellectual curiosity in the children. He and Helen have shown a tremendous capacity for faith in each other and in the children to achieve the amity they have established together.

Dr. Martin, affectionately called "Pere," has been a very important force in the children's lives, giving them a feeling of being securely loved and also providing them with a great deal of intellectual stimulation.

#### **Public Health Career**

While he was in his residency in Pediatrics at Johns Hopkins Dr. Martin was asked by Dr. Paul Ensign, then director of the Division of Maternal and Child Health, Kansas State Board of Health, to come to Kansas. His first assignment was pediatric consultant to the Cowley County Health Department's child health demonstration unit.

Early in 1948 he moved to the state offices in Topeka as pediatric consultant to the Maternal and Child Health Division. He became assistant director, and then director of the Division in 1951.

He obtained a year's leave of absence for graduate public health work. In 1953, he received his Masters Degree in Public Health from Harvard cum laude. He was made a member of the honorary public health society, Alpha Omega.

In 1958, Dr. Martin became Executive Secretary of the Kansas State Department of Health. He consistently brought to the attention of the Legislature and the citi

zens of Kansas many important public health issues whether or not it was popular to do so. In many cases his outspoken analysis brought needed changes that provided safety and quality of care to patients in hospitals and institutions, to inmates in prison, and to children cared for away from home.

Dr. Martin insisted on high standards of prenatal and obstetrical care, and care of the newborn. One study on epidemic diarrhea of the newborn eventually resulted in measures that helped to decrease infant mortality.

He helped develop new forms for the birth and still-birth certificate. This permitted for the first time an accurate analysis of the causes of infant mortality and morbidity.

Dr. Martin led the way to changes in investigations on cause of maternal death from mailed questionnaires to personal studies by qualified obstetricians. Increased depth of knowledge and understanding of preventability in these cases resulted.

In 1952, the obsolete "Minimum Standards of Obstetrical Care" was rewritten by the Committee on Maternal Welfare of the Kansas Medical Society. Much of the work was carried out by Dr. Martin. The revised standards were published in the *KMS Journal*, reprinted by the Health Department, and distributed to every physician in Kansas.

By the middle of 1954, it was apparent that Retro-lental Fibroplasia which results in permanent blindness of premature infants, was caused by an excess of oxygen. Routine therapy in the care of premature ba-

bies was responsible. Dr. Martin and his staff went to work, analyzing and informing, to prevent such blindness.

His Division also supported efforts to develop a radiological health program within the Department and to establish a system of registration of radiation sources. Dr. Martin emphasized reducing the amount of radiation exposure to gonads of children and women.

He did outstanding work in helping to raise standards in children's institutions and child caring homes in Kansas.

One colleague puts it this way: "Children of Kansas who have to live away from home will never know how much they owe to this one man, Geoffrey Martin."

The joint licensing by Health and Welfare Departments of homes for children has often developed fierce pressures for compromise. Dr. Martin's stand was firm where the welfare of children was at stake. The program today is considered a model approach.

Testing for tuberculosis of volunteers and professional workers in children's homes and institutions began on a statewide basis while Dr. Martin was MCH Director.

He also made great efforts to control "black market" adoption practices in Kansas. In late summer of 1955, his Division became involved in such an investigation. It disclosed real abuses of the rights of children. A special committee of the Kansas Conference of Social Work drew up a whole new adoption act for submitting to the Legislature.

Dr. Martin had keen interest in improving school health and especially what students are being taught about health at various levels. He helped form a Joint Committee on School Health, composed of representatives of the State Health Department and State Department of Education. It is now known as the Inter-departmental Committee on School Health and is responsible for the annual Health Education Workshops.

The initiation of the active Kansas School Health Advisory Council was due largely to Dr. Martin's leadership. He stimulated many organizations to "take stock" of their programs and to plan ahead together where cooperation could abolish overlapping or duplication of activities. Voluntary, governmental, and professional health and education groups, thus brought together, have functioned to this day in serving as a clearing house for progress in health fields.

In 1958, Dr. Martin produced a manual to guide health officers in evaluation of school facilities. "The School Inspector's Vade Mecum," as it is known, helped to direct small schools to install flush toilets for the first time, provide needed safety measures, and work to improve water supply and other basic aspects of the school environment.

Challenged by "health education" and "motivation," Dr. Martin helped develop one of the best film libraries in the country. His enthusiasm and MCH funds contributed to its growth.

He also took pride in the fact that Kansas is a leader in fighting quackery. He "jumped into the fray with both feet" when something suspect came along.

He, with other Department personnel, began work against fluoroscopic children's feet in shoe stores early in 1950. By 1958, local ordinances were passed. About two years later, a state law was passed against X-rays for shoe fitting.

There was one idea of Dr. Martin's that intrigued his colleagues. It concerned genetic counseling for couples considering marriage, especially when hereditary diseases were already known to exist. Once again, he was considerably ahead of his time. Such counseling services are just recently available in a few parts of the country.

The Kansas program in venereal disease control received special commendation from the U.S. Public Health Service in February, 1960. Dr. Martin helped with various methods of VD education. One was the award-winning film, "The Innocent Party," where he served as medical advisor and guiding spirit. Another was a VD guide for teachers used widely in all states and the basis for development of other materials.

Virtually every area of public health received his attention at some time. Dr. Martin helped develop recommendations for standards of practice for grain fumigating operations, and establishing criteria for proper training and supervision of employees handling fumigants.

In cooperation with the Health Education and the Food and Drug Divisions, a state poison control program was developed. With his usual "Think big!" approach, Dr. Martin suggested a national clearing house for poison control. This was in 1955.

As near as can be ascertained, this was one of the earliest suggestions from anyone for such a national center. The American Public Health Association, at the request of the U.S. Public Health Service, set up a committee to study the feasibility of a clearing house. The movement was then underway. After becoming official, it received its first appropriation for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1957.

A trek through Western Kansas in 1960 revealed migrant worker health problems which received rapid attention and action from Dr. Martin, his staff, and other divisions of the State Department of Health. The problem was surveyed, a day care and health care program for children established, and finally the active program of today which receives both state and federal support.

A source of great amusement to Dr. Martin was the result of a talk he made on television in 1961. He said that women should shovel snow, instead of their husbands! His advice received wide publicity and many angry letters from the ladies. But it is very much "the word" from Dr. Paul Dudley White and other leading cardiologists today.

Dr. Martin seriously proposed labeling of cigarettes as hazardous drugs as far back as the 1958 Legislative session. He gave special effort to prevention of smoking in young people.

#### **His Return to Pediatrics**

Geoff Martin left the Kansas Department of Health in April, 1962. (He insists it be reported that he was dismissed because of political pressure.)

After a brief period at Forbes Air Force Base as Preventive Medicine Officer and also as a pediatrician, Dr. Martin went into private practice of pediatrics in 1963.

As a practicing physician, Geoff retained his public health orientation. He made a determined and frequently successful effort to educate his patients, their parents, and various agencies in preventive medicine principles.

Dr. Martin broadened his practice to include adolescents and took a special, perceptive interest in their problems.

He finally concluded that the young mothers of young children are best cared for by the child's physician, giving greater insight into the problems of both. He took a great deal of interest in family planning and counseled many young parents of his patients. A considerable number of families are functioning better today because of the patient counseling they received from Dr. Martin.

He always remained fundamentally an educator. He was interested not only in caring for his patients' physical ills but also in helping them to understand how to live so as to improve their health and general welfare.

Geoff was interested in the "culturally deprived" child long before this child became a matter of public concern. In the office, he maintained a lending library of carefully selected books for his child patients. He told parents how books can enrich children's lives and let them use his list of recommended books.



He had a similar collection of educational toys and pictures that were very popular.

Dr. Martin remained extremely interested in the day care of children whose mothers must work. He served on the board of the East Topeka Day Care Association from its beginning. He also served on the board of The Children's Hour.

Dr. Martin maintained his interest in all legislation dealing with health and social welfare. He expended much time and energy in this area during Legislative sessions.

In his practice Geoff was especially interested in economically deprived children. As his wife and office assistant, Helen shared this interest. Together their enthusiasm for working with the family unit brought warmth and added benefit to his patients.

One colleague believes that the bond he shared with his patients was unique in practice. Children of all ages were encouraged to call him any time about questions on treatment, appointments, or almost anything. This fellow physician once answered the phone at the Martin home. When a young voice asked for "Pere" he assumed it was one of the Martin children. It wasn't. It was a 10-year old patient calling about his medication, and also wanting to chat about a book he had borrowed at the office.

All those whom Geoff worked with found it stimulating, exciting, and motivating—never dull or routine. He had an admirable ability to delegate appropriate responsibility and authority to staff and to support them in their actions. A number of individuals trace

their interest in public health careers to his provocative discussions and assignments.

It is appropriate that the Crumbine Award go to Dr. Martin in recognition of his contributions to public health in general and to people directly. The personal integrity of the man who made these contributions is widely felt.

While this booklet was being prepared, Dr. Martin died of lung cancer. Knowing that he had only a few weeks or months to live, he continued working until it was literally impossible for him to go on. He was particularly pleased to have been able to help with the Head Start program, an idea which interested him very much.

He endured his illness with characteristic grace and fortitude and maintained his sharp wit and keen outlook to the end. His conduct in the face of this final personal disaster will be an example to his children always.

He asked to be buried on the Kansas prairie. He lies now in the quiet Auburn cemetery, forever a part of the state for which he felt an enormous affection and to which he gave so much.

On Geoffrey's grave in this serene place will be inscribed these lines chosen by him from "The Pilgrim's Progress":

If you will go with us, you must go against wind and tide.

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