

biochemistry and *physiology* in 14. *Pharmacology* and *pathology* are occasionally listed and a few schools show *special sections* for nuclear medicine. There is much departmental overlap in the teaching. Informal courses are far more common than formal ones.

The majority of medical schools, as revealed in the questionnaires, feel that present undergraduate courses are adequate. A few plan to increase the instruction. Many postgraduate courses are extensive and it is for the postgraduate student that the schools feel the technical instruction should be designed.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the questionnaires, the conclusion is that the undergraduate teaching of nuclear medicine in North American schools is in most cases fairly *adequate* but not often *superlative*. In a small number, the subject appears to be neglected. There is a definite place for the highly trained expert in this field and there are advanced courses to provide this training.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TO THE EDITOR:

The gavels used by The Society of Nuclear Medicine have a history comparable to their importance in directing the destiny of the Society. In 1857, at the time Professor William Allen Miller was making the first measurement of the far ultraviolet spectrum, squirrels planted walnuts on the site of the graphite reactor now known as Old Grandma, at Oak Ridge. These walnut trees grew during the boyhood of Roentgen, Rutherford, and Thompson, reaching their maturity at the turn of the century when the atomic age reached full flower.

When Old Grandma was built, these fine old walnut trees had to be cut down. They were thrown on the scrap heap at 10:32 a. m. EST on February 1, 1943.

When Old Grandma went critical at 5:00 a. m. on November 4, 1943, those trees lay forgotten.

The logs, however, were retrieved from the scrap heap at 4:45 on the sunny afternoon of August 2, 1946, just after the junk picker had attended the ceremonies inaugurating the first shipment of radioisotopes for medical use.

Those logs were water cured at the bottom of White Oak Lake (the drainage from Old Grandma) until 1948, during which time they picked up a considerable amount of background radioactivity. This activity was carefully sandblasted off the surface and the wood was air dried in the shadow of the world's first tower reactor facility.

Next, this fine old wood was transferred for further curing to the Roaring Fork Branch of the Little Pigeon River at the foot of the Great Smoky Mountains. After removal from the Roaring Fork the logs were hand sawed into thick planks by a man who had been exposed to the fallout radiation from ten atomic bombs.

The famous Wood Whittlers of Gatlinburg, Tennessee then hand turned this beautiful, historic, solid walnut into gavels for the Society of Nuclear Medicine. The gavels now used have this history.

MARSHALL BRUCER, M.D.