

HISTORIAN'S NOTE



Taps for "Tappy"

"Tappy is Tops" we wrote a dozen years ago in our letter of support of his advancement to the highest academic rank at The University of California. And now, with heavy heart, we must say in farewell that "Tappy was Tops." Certainly he was that in the minds of all who appreciated his tremendous impact on the lore of nuclear medicine. For, Doctor George V. Taplin truly was a physician's nuclear medicine man. Uppermost always in his work was the patient who might be benefited by the new modalities and opportunities, especially in diagnosis. Although Doctor Taplin fully appreciated the usefulness of the "inside-out" imaging initiated in 1951 by his close friend and colleague, Benedict Cassen, he nevertheless emphasized the significance of the new concepts at the biochemical/physiological level, which stemmed from applications of man-made radioactivity. A keen insight and an inspiring afflatus are the precious attributes that characterize any innovative investigator, and Doctor Taplin's exceptional intuition and imagination made of him the nuclear medicine physician without peer. He was soft-spoken, and a casual listener might have thought his presentations of his latest endeavors were something less than inspiring. But, this was to his advantage. For, to those of us who knew something of the gifts of Tappy, his piercing perceptions were so very great and his masterful demonstrations of the validity of his insights were so convincing, that we found ourselves waiting eagerly in anticipation of brilliant new revelations whenever he presented his latest contribution. His prodigious fruitfulness was reflected in his voluminous writings, which caused us to invoke the Latin phrase, "*res ipsae loquuntur.*" Among the many distinctions to Professor Taplin was his being made an

honorary member of Gesellschaft für Nuklear Medizin in 1971.

Tappy was an all-around person who loved life fully, especially through his appreciation of his family and friends. To be a houseguest of him and his lovely wife, Lucile, was a joyful treat; their hospitality was so warm that, after an hour or two, one felt he had lived there always. While helping to prepare breakfast, Tappy gleefully would point with pride toward the microwave oven and explain that he used it initially to prepare his macroaggregated albumin particles of just the right size.

One evening in April 1970, I was invited to accompany him and Lucile to the home of one of his musician cronies. En route, Tappy explained that a group came together once each month, just to play and mutually to enjoy the good old tunes. Tappy was the leader of this aggregation of about a dozen professional men, each of whom had worked his way through college by playing in a band. No written music was required—they knew all of the pieces by heart! Our camera captured "Tootin' Tappy" playing his trumpet as he led the group in a delightful "fun" evening. Truly it was an unforgettable experience I shall cherish always.

The uniqueness of his creativity earned for Doctor Taplin a measure of immortality such as will be afforded few of his contemporaries. He left the world a better place, and he will be sorely missed. The poignancy of his passing is shared by all who came to know, and thus to love, "Tappy."

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