

Memorial for George Leveridge Bowen, M.D.

Presented to the New York Obstetrical Society,
December 10, 1991

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Dr. George Leveridge Bowen, a Life Fellow of this Society and its President in 1960, died on October 17, 1991, a few weeks before his 95th birthday. He outlived most of his contemporaries, but to the members of the obstetrical community, past and present, he was a respected colleague, a warm friend, and a fine professional.

George Bowen was born on November 4, 1896 in Osborne, Kansas, where he graduated from high school in 1914. We know of only a single detail of his activities in World War I, that he was a cadet in the Naval Aviation School at M.I.T. in 1918. But, as one of his later colleagues gracefully put it, we don't know whether he got off the ground. We do know that he studied at George Washington University, receiving an A.B. in 1922, and his medical degree in 1925. During this period he is said to have travelled to Russia, as secretary to a Congressional Committee.

In 1925-26, he interned at the Walter Reed General Hospital with a commission as 1st Lieutenant in the Army. In 1926, he began an internship in Obstetrics at Bellevue Hospital, and served as Resident in the following year. He then served in a series of posts, which we would now describe as house officer training, at the Manhattan Maternity Hospital, Women's Hospital, and New York Hospital.

In 1928 he joined the N.Y.U. Staff at Bellevue as instructor, and at the time of William E. Studdiford's appointment as chairman, he was promoted to Assistant Clinical Professor. In subsequent years he was further promoted, becoming Clinical Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology in 1955.

George Bowen became a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons in 1935, and in 1937 was certified by the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology (at a time when only a few dozen candidates were certified annually). He became a Fellow in the newly-formed American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists in 1954. He served with distinction on the staffs of French Hospital, Lenox Hill Hospital, and for a brief period, Memorial Hospital. Later he was on the staff of Huntington Hospital, Brookhaven Hospital, and the Community Hospital of Glen Cove. He was chairman of the department of OB-GYN at Doctor's Hospital from 1959-1964. He retired from practice in 1973.

Dr. Bowen's scholarly contributions were not numerous, but, in one sense, remarkable. In 1949, he published a textbook of Obstetrics and Obstetrical Nursing, with Miss Mae Bookmiller, R.N., the Bellevue Obstetrical Service Supervisor (never to be forgotten by any resident in those years). This ran through 5 editions in 18 years, and was the standard national text. He contributed chapters on infections in Lowrie's 2-volume text on Gynecology in 1952-1955.

This memorial would not be complete without an appraisal of George Bowen's effect on his colleagues and juniors who came to know him. He seemed frozen in time, at about the age of 50, and seemed not to age or change in demeanor for decades thereafter. He was a model to generations - modest in behavior, but trustworthy, competent, and calmly skillful. He was the obstetrician of choice for many of our families. He is deeply missed.

Mr. President, I move that these remarks be placed in the minutes of the society, and a copy sent to Mrs. Bowen and his daughter, his surviving family.