



Henry Thomas Ballantine, Jr.



Thomas Ballantine died on April 14, 1996 after a long and courageous struggle with progressive Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease. The resolution and determination he displayed throughout his life was exemplified in his last months when armed with oxygen tanks, he flew to Arizona for his final meeting of the American Academy of Neurological Surgery, the society he loved so much. A few months later, he was gone.

Tom Ballantine's father was a general practitioner in Muskogee, Oklahoma for almost six decades and Tom spoke with great pride of his dedication to caring for all the citizens of that rural area. In 1938 Tom married Elizabeth Elliot Mixter, and they became parents of two children, Elizabeth Gardner and Thomas Van Ness Ballantine (Tad).

Tom was immensely proud of Tad, a Professor of Pediatric Surgery at Penn State University College of Medicine and Chief of Pediatric Surgery at the Hershey Medical Center. Tad was fatally injured on an icy road on New Year's day, 1990, when he was returning from patient rounds. Their daughter, Elizabeth, is a Professor of Biology at Pine Manor College in Chestnut Hill. He also leaves three grandchildren: James Gardner who is pursuing a Master of Science in mechanical engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnical Institute, Thomas Ballantine who is studying environmental law at Stanford University School of Law, Palo Alto, and Allison Ballantine a medical student at Penn State University College of Medicine, who will be carrying on the proud tradition of medicine in the family.

Tom was a true patriot, proud of this country and of his service as a U.S. Army Surgeon during World War II. He served overseas from 1943 to 1945 with the 2nd Auxiliary Group in the combat zone caring for the non-transportable wounded and was discharged in 1945 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He fought in North Africa, Sicily and Italy. He landed with the invading U.S. troops at Anzio and, despite being pinned down by hostile fire for a prolonged period of time, was able to give pain relief and emergency care to the

wounded on the beach.

He was a graduate of Princeton University and the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. Following his discharge from the Army, he took his neurosurgical residency with Max Peet at the University of Michigan and at the same time earned his M.Sc. Degree in Neuroscience. In 1947, he returned to Boston to work on the Neurosurgical Service of the MGH with the late William Jason Mixter, where he remained throughout the rest of his life.

In 1949, he entered upon a fruitful period of collaboration with Richard Bolt and Leo Beranek of the Acoustic Research Laboratory at Massachusetts Institute of Technology investigating the possible use of ultrasound for intracranial diagnosis. This pioneering work resulted in the use of ultrasound not only in neurosurgery but in many branches of medicine as well. Subsequently, he formed the Medical Acoustics Research Group at the Massachusetts General Hospital and over the next twelve years examined the interaction of ultrasound with living tissue. His work with Professor Padamaker Lele at MIT continued through the next several decades. Although at that time imaging of the brain transcranially seemed impractical, the use of focused ultrasound to create brain lesions in experimental animals developed into an elegant method for studying brain function by the use of controlled excision techniques.

In 1962, he and his colleagues embarked on a program to evaluate stereotactic cingulotomy for the relief of severe psychiatric illness and chronic intractable pain. Five hundred forty-four patients were studied in a consortium of the Neurology, Psychiatry and Neurosurgical Services. Tom worked closely with Edwin H. Cassem and Vincent Perlo on the Cingulotomy Assessment Committee which, over the years, has incorporated physicians from all three services. Were it not for Tom Ballantine, psychiatric surgery would not be available as a clinical and academic activity today. He single-handedly championed its survival. As a highly respected advocate for the patient and as a caring physician he prevailed over irrational opposition and lived to see more and more rigorous studies supporting the benefits of psychiatric surgery in the treatment of patients with refractory depression, obsessive compulsive disorder and chronic pain.

In 1969, he was awarded an honorary D.Sc. from Suffolk University in recognition of his work with ultrasound and cingulotomy. At the time of Dr. Ballantine's appointment as Clinical Professor of Surgery, Emeritus, he received a letter from Derek Bok, then President of Harvard University, who wrote in part: "We feel very fortunate that during a distinguished career in neurosurgery, you have been able to share your knowledge and skills with so many of our students. The international recognition which has come to you for the use of cingulotomy in the treatment of patients with psychiatric disturbances and intractable pain has brought honor to Harvard."

In 1972, Tom Ballantine, while President of the Massachusetts Medical Society, founded the Commonwealth Institute of Medicine and became its first President. Its purpose was to examine the costs and quality of medical care in an attempt to keep government from intruding into the patient/

physician relationship. He was particularly concerned that PSRO legislature would concentrate solely on cost control and bypass quality. It was his hypothesis that gathering statistics concerning the utilization of medical skills and services would lead to valid basic information on the quality of medical care being delivered at the time. Thus, by evaluating the acute hospital care of over 140,000 Medicaid recipients in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, he showed that teaching hospitals did not increase the utilization of their services in comparison to those of community hospitals.

Appointed to the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Medicine in 1974, he was able to aid medical schools in the Commonwealth with the difficult problems of registration and licensure of applicants from other countries.

In 1973, he was appointed to the Subcommittee of International Relations of the American College of Surgeons after having visited Vietnam. Its mission was to determine if the American College of Surgeons could run a program to increase the surgical expertise of the physicians caring for the civilian population. He considered this both a rewarding experience and an attempt to give the government a view of the importance of socio-economic factors in its efforts in Vietnam.

On the Scholarship Subcommittee of the American College of Surgeons, he identified promising young academic leaders in South American medical schools and arranged to have them brought to the United States for one or two years to train and familiarize them with American neurosurgical practice.

While working with the American Medical Association, he helped revise its principles of Medical Ethics and served on the Long Range Planning Committee. Within the AMA he was a member of the President's Commission for Studies of Ethical Problems in Medical, Biomedical and Behavioral Research. His far ranging influence was recognized with his election as President of the International Society of Psychiatric Surgery. Often criticized for spending so much time on the politics of medicine, he said, "A man who is above politics is really saying that democracy is beneath him."

Tom Ballantine's professional memberships included The American Medical Association (Trustee 1977-1980); The Massachusetts Medical Society (President 1971-72); American College of Surgeons (Governor 1967-76); New England Neurosurgical Society (President 1957); Boston Society of Psychiatry and Neurology (President 1960); The Society of Neurological Surgeons (Vice President 1971-72) and the American Academy of Neurological Surgery (Vice President 1978-79). His service to government included the Program Project Committee of the National Institutes of Health (1964-67) and the President's Commission for the Study of Ethical Problems in Medicine and Biomedical Research (1982-83).

Tom had a radiant graciousness that enveloped those who came before, during and after him. He was loved by his patients and his associates. He was a gentleman, ideally cordial and proper, most often referring to his junior associates by their titles. He was a wonderful role model. He had an insatiable

interest in new ideas. He faithfully attended neurosurgical staff conferences and Grand Rounds. On the days of resident selection, he was always present to monitor the choices of the Attending Staff offering his guidance in keeping the Neurosurgical Service strong and vibrant.

His continued commitment and focus earned him the greatest respect of all his colleagues.

Respectfully submitted,

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Edwin H. Cassem, M.D.