

IN MEMORIAM

JENNINGS CRAWFORD LITZENBERG 1870-1948

JENNINGS CRAWFORD LITZENBERG, B.Sc., M.D., F.A.C.S., was born at Waubeek, Iowa, on April 6, 1870, and reared at Anamosa, Iowa, where his father practiced law until his sudden death. This left Litze, as his friends knew him, with much responsibility, as he was the only son and the youngest of three children. He had to work his way along from the teens and was thus a self-made man.

In 1890, having finished high school the previous year, he moved with the family to Minneapolis where he completed his undergraduate education in 1894, and received his M.D. degree in 1899 at the University of Minnesota. During this period of his education he was handicapped not only by the necessity of earning his own way and assisting in the support of his mother but also by an illness resulting in impaired vision, which necessitated complete rest for his eyes until they were sufficiently recovered.

In spite of these obstacles he maintained his poise, his academic standing, and interest in student affairs. He was a favorite and a leader in his fraternities, Delta Upsilon and Nu Sigma Nu, to which he remained devoted throughout his life. He was esteemed not only by fraternity men but also by the Barbs, which was not common in those days when there were many animosities. He was also active on class publications and in other university affairs. His whole educational and professional career revolved around the University of Minnesota.

He maintained his own physical condition and contributed to the improvement of that of the youths by acting as assistant physical director, first at the Minneapolis Y.M.C.A. and later at the University of Minnesota. The compensation for this work enabled him to finance his education. During the subsequent years of his life he maintained a lasting interest in athletics and physical education. This interest was only one manifestation of his deep-seated and enduring interest in youth and its development.

He began his career as a medical educator in 1901 when he was appointed Instructor in Obstetrics at the University of Minnesota. At that time practically all of the teaching in the clinical departments was on a voluntary basis. This meant a large faculty which was drawn from both Minneapolis and St. Paul.

Then there were no hospitals on or very near the campus so that the students had to travel long distances in Minneapolis and St. Paul and usually attended clinics in several hospitals during the same day. This, of course, meant a very considerable expenditure of unprofitable time on the part of the students.

Dr. Litzenberg was appointed to the rank of assistant professor in 1907 because of his ability and interest. At that time the Department of Obstetrics did

not include Gynecology. Upon his return from a year's study in Europe in 1910, he was made Associate Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, thus combining the two branches for the first time at that institution.

Three years later, under the able and farsighted leadership of President George E. Vincent, a revolutionary change was inaugurated in medical education there. The medical faculty had become large and unwieldy and the teaching was unsatisfactory in many areas with the students spending much of their time and energy in unproductive travel from clinic to clinic. So far as the faculty was concerned, most of their time was given to their private practices and voluntary teaching, with very little to research or productive work. As long as they received no compensation for their work the administration was in no position to make demands upon their time. Certain evils were inherent in the system but it also had some advantages as it tended to attract those who enjoyed the contacts with students and teaching. Such men caught the interest of students and gave inspiration to them. Among them was Dr. Litzenberg. From such a group of teachers was evolved a smaller but more efficient faculty. Among the new heads of departments was Professor Litzenberg as Chairman of the combined department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, which position he held for twenty-five years. Prior to this appointment he had made a second but shorter trip to Europe where he observed the organization and work in various clinics on the European continent and in the British Isles.

During his incumbency the department participated in graduate work with the granting of Ph.D. degrees. About a dozen of these degrees in Obstetrics and Gynecology were granted and now these men occupy positions as educators in various medical schools and some hold headships.

The development and recognition of specialists were becoming of increasing importance so he, together with others, became active in founding the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology on which he served for ten years. He resigned in 1940.

He contributed frequently to the literature. One of his most important articles was based upon a study of extrauterine pregnancy. He wrote a *Synopsis of Obstetrics* which was translated into Spanish.

He was a member of many special societies and held some office in most of them.

Upon his retirement from the faculty of the University of Minnesota in 1938 he was given an appreciation dinner at which he received many tributes. One from George E. Vincent, a former president of the University, reads as follows: "I think of you with pleasure and gratitude. You were always calm, wise, humorous and a steadying influence. You had ideals of research, teaching and organization to which you were quietly but steadfastly loyal. In time of stress you kept your head and your temper. You will carry with you the assurance that you have played an important part in making the University of Minnesota Medical School one of the best in the country."

The words of former President Lotus D. Coffman on this occasion are also most appropriate: "In recognition of your long and distinguished service, the President and the Board of Regents express their gratitude, esteem and affection.

“Your name is already on the roll of honor of those who have contributed to the development of a great University. You have served the University notably and well. Your tolerant optimism and intelligent devotion to your work have increased your usefulness far more than you ever suspected. You have done a good job.”

Dr. Litzenberg experienced the life of a rural community in his youth and that of urban life during his mature and declining years, adapting himself to both. He went from the horse and buggy days of medical practice to those of the machine age. Through all of these he maintained his equanimity, adaptability, and sterling character. He passed through the experiences of empiric medical education to those of the scientific and research age without loss of equilibrium. His high ideals of professional service permeated his life and diffused themselves among his followers.

He enjoyed the completeness of life and finished his career at the Eitel Hospital with a brief attack due to coronary sclerosis, on August 15, 1948, at the age of 78.

Fred L. Adair.

JENNINGS CRAWFORD LITZENBERG
1870-1948

By H. M. N. WYNNE, MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

Dr. Jennings C. Litzenberg died August 15, 1948. He spent a long and active life filled with notable achievements, serving with distinction his community and state as well as his Alma Mater and the medical profession.

Doctor Litzenberg was preeminently a teacher who had a particular interest in the undergraduate medical student. He drove home the fundamental lessons of conservative obstetrics with the knowledge that most of his students would be on their own in private practice throughout this region and that through them the reduction in maternal mortality could best be accomplished. His influence over and direction of the graduate students in his department are well exemplified by the excellent work of these men in their teaching and practice of his specialty. He spoke so often before small meetings of county medical societies that the members were really among his graduate students. He found time to contribute original work on the role of the thyroid in sterility and made a painstaking study of tubal pregnancy. His clinical contributions on the care of pregnant women suffering from heart disease and tuberculosis were notable. His "Synopsis of Obstetrics" was published in 1940.

Dr. Litzenberg was respected, admired and loved by his colleagues. It was rare to hear him addressed other than as "Litz." He was a straightforward man with strong convictions tempered by a kindly humor and tolerance for the opinions of others. His sage advice could be had for the asking. He was always ready to give younger men opportunities to better themselves and rejoiced in their successes. He continued to learn as well as to teach all during his career.

Jennings Crawford Litzenberg was born April 6, 1870, in Waubeek, Iowa. He received his B.Sc. degree from the University of Minnesota in 1894 and his M.D. from the same institution in 1899. After an internship in the Minneapolis City Hospital he entered private practice in 1900 in Minneapolis. From that time until his death he was associated with his Alma Mater. He was Assistant in Ophthalmology and Otology for two years and then became associated with the Department of Obstetrics as Clinical Instructor, then Assistant Professor and Associate Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and in 1913 was appointed

Professor and Head of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and became Professor Emeritus in 1938.

In 1902 Dr. Litzenberg was married to Elizabeth Fisher. When in 1909 he went to Vienna for two years of graduate study, his wife and two children accompanied him. He returned to Vienna and Berlin in 1913-1914 for further study. Mrs. Litzenberg died in 1927.

In addition to his work in the medical school Doctor Litzenberg carried on his private practice and much consultation work. This intimate contact with private clinical practice gave him a thorough understanding of the problems facing the practitioner and consequently enhanced the value of his teaching for the undergraduate.

Many local and national medical societies of which he was a member were benefited by his active participation and wise counsel. He served his county and state societies ably and was president of both organizations. He was a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons and helped to organize the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology. He was chosen president of the American Association of Obstetricians Gynecologists and Abdominal Surgeons in 1934, president of the Minnesota Obstetrical and Gynecological Society in 1937, president of the Central Association of Obstetricians and Gynecologists in 1940 and president of the American Gynecological Society in 1941.

In 1934 Doctor Litzenberg was married to Doctor Olga Hansen who survives him.

This kindly, Christian gentleman and great teacher has passed, leaving a trail clear, deep and straight for those who would follow his ideals.