

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

ROY BARNETT COHN

(1909–1999)

Born in Portland, Oregon February 28, 1909, Roy Barnett Cohn died January 11, 1999 in his 90th year of life. Roy was chosen by Lewis Terman for the famous lifelong study of gifted children which led to the establishment of the Stanford-Binet I.Q. test. He entered Stanford at the age of 16 and was awarded his M.D. degree from Stanford, after internship, at age 24. He was elected to Alpha Omega Alpha as a top member of his graduating class. Dr. Cohn went on to the Harvard Surgical service at the Massachusetts General Hospital where he trained in pathology, neurosurgery, and where he served as Chief Resident Surgeon in 1937-38.

His first faculty appointment at Stanford University School of Medicine as an instructor, was made in 1938-39. For 60 years since that appointment Dr. Cohn was a part of the Stanford faculty. During those years, Roy B. Cohn served many notable roles in the School of Medicine. He twice served as Acting Chairman of Surgery for one-year periods, he served as Associate Dean for Postgraduate Education, and as a member of the Academic Senate, as well as the Senate of the School of Medicine. His academic stature earned him the Walter and Elsa Rooney Chidester Professorship of Surgery in 1975. A productive scholar with 156 published works, he was a true pioneer in the field of organ transplantation. He was the first surgeon in California to perform a successful kidney transplant and his landmark paper "Homotransplantation of the kidney between identical twins" reported the first such procedure following Dr. Joseph Murray's report a few years earlier. Dr. Cohn immersed himself and his close coworker Dr. Samuel Kountz in the study of immune rejection of transplants and together they developed the Stanford Renal Transplantation Unit. It generated an enviable record of successes and was the forerunner of what has become the Stanford Multiorgan Transplant Service. In 1939, the Rockefeller Foundation chose Dr. Cohn to help lead the founding and development of the Tata Memorial Hospital in Bombay, India for the treatment of cancer. He devoted two full years to this important task. During WWII, Lt. Col. Cohn served a leadership role in the Army's 59th Evacuation Hospital. He moved with it from North Africa to Sicily, Italy, France, and finally Germany. He had vivid memories of the liberation of Dachau where he was the first medical officer to

arrive. He was a recipient of the purple heart for wounds in action. His activity in the reserves followed and he achieved the rank of Brigadier General.

Dr. Cohn was always a demanding teacher of surgeons, insisting on his own high standards of excellence. He was a stimulator and catalyst for research investigators but beneath this "tough", no nonsense facade, was a warm and caring human being who inspired respect and affection. In terms of dedication, surgical skill, investigative zeal and competence in patient care, he set an enviable example.

On June 5, 1947 Roy married Ruth Wood, whom he had met while she was a student at the Stanford University School of Nursing in San Francisco. Their 52-year marriage reflected their devotion to one another and to their children. Jeffrey was born three years after their marriage, and he became a general surgeon; Stephen is a landscape designer and contractor; Warren a writer; Marcus a commercial real estate broker and Anna Lisa an attorney.

Much admired and loved by several generations of surgeons, Dr. Cohn was recognized by his election as President of the Alumni Association in 1982. In 1990 he was recipient of the J.E. Wallace Sterling distinguished alumnus award in recognition of his enormous contribution to Stanford University's School of Medicine.

His peers nationally and internationally recognized him through election to no less than 22 surgical and medical societies. He served as President of the San Francisco Surgical Society and the Pacific Coast Surgical Association.

Dr. Cohn proudly described himself as "one of the last of the old time classical Professors of General Surgery". His friends and colleagues, with a host of others, feel the loss deeply.

Presented to the Senate of the Academic Council on April 1, 1999.

Committee:

Robert A. Chase, Chairman

James B.D. Mark

Harry Oberhelman

Edward Rubenstein

Norman Shumway