

## 24. Tributes and Tokens

*No greater honor can come to any man than to be honored by his peers.*

WALTER R. PARKER  
INCOMING PRESIDENT, 1921

**F**ROM ITS EARLIEST DAYS, the Academy attempted to honor those members who contributed to development of the society. Normally, award was accorded through election to office, with the presidency being the highest honor (Fig 52). Selection as the Guest of Honor for an annual meeting was a high expression of esteem. However, this distinction went primarily to notable specialists or men of medicine from foreign countries until the 1930s when the Academy began drawing guests of honor from the many distinguished men within its ranks.

In 1932, the Program Committee suggested dedication of the yearly TRANSACTIONS as another means of complimenting men who made manifold contributions to the progress of the Academy. The 1932 edition was appropriately dedicated to Founding Father Hal Foster. This practice continued only a few years until the Academy decided to publish a bimonthly journal.

All of these methods could honor only a select few, and with the unfolding of educational and other activities, a larger share of the membership had become directly involved



Fig 52.—Gallery of presidents at 1946 meeting.

in Academy programs. An article in the December 1937 *Academy Bulletin* noted that many members were rendering distinguished service without reward or remuneration. Most particularly was this true for a consistent nucleus of instruction course faculty members who had served for years and were largely responsible for the success of the courses. Creation of an elective honor group within the Academy was suggested.<sup>1</sup>

In 1939, a short-lived Honor Society was formed. This group was actually the culmination of two ideas. One was to honor those who had long served the Academy. The other was to band together the elder statesmen of the Academy—the past presidents—into a senior advisory group.<sup>2,3</sup> Both ideas were fused in creation of the Honor Society, composed initially of past presidents, the founder group, with others to be elected by the society (Fig 53).<sup>4</sup>

Along with bestowing membership on those who served, the Honor Society was to advise the Council on major problems and future guidance of the Academy.<sup>5</sup> This function seemed particularly apropos, since Honor Society members would represent a composite of experience in Academy activities. As it turned out, the society was too loosely constituted and its purpose too nonspecific to be of much practical value.

Thirteen past presidents met at the 1939 annual meeting to organize the Honor Society. They elected officers, with Joseph C. Beck as president, and appointed Walter B. Lancaster and Allen Greenwood to draw up a constitution and bylaws. As an initial gesture, they inducted five men into the society: Secord H. Large, the comptroller, William P. Wherry, the executive secretary-treasurer, William L. Benedict, the secretary for ophthalmology, John L. Myers, the secretary for otolaryngology, and Ralph A. Fenton, the secretary for public relations.<sup>6</sup>

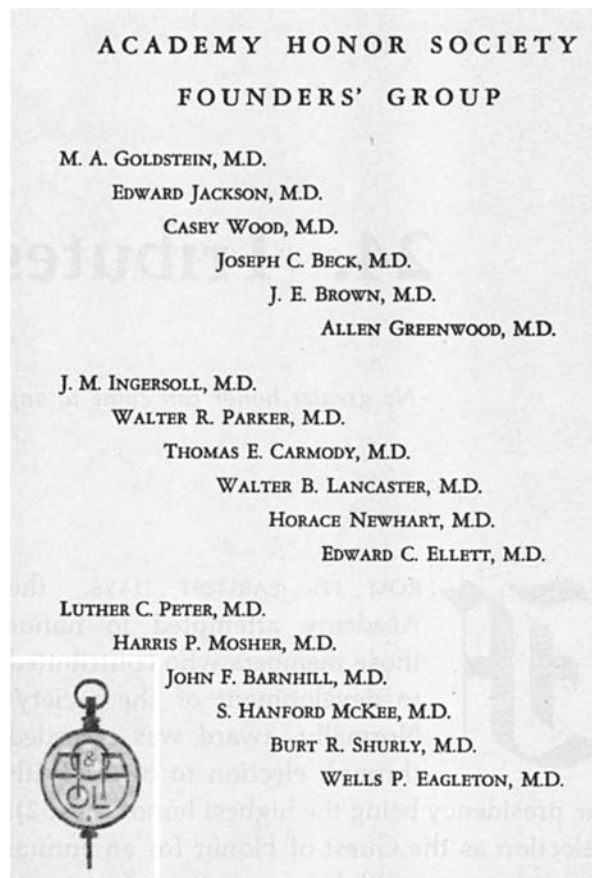


Fig 53.—Banquet program in 1939 listed first members of Honor Society. Group insignia (inset).

The proposed constitution and bylaws, which appeared a few months later, signified that membership was not to be conferred lightly. Aside from past presidents who would automatically become members upon their retirement from the Council, eligibility for membership would be restricted to Academy secretaries and assistant secretaries after ten years of service, to Academy members of at least 45 years of age who contributed 20 hours of instruction periods, lectures, or other similar work, and to lay individuals who made outstanding contributions to the Academy.<sup>7</sup> A key displaying the Academy emblem was chosen as the insignia and official award of the Honor Society.

The constitution was approved by the Council but never by the Honor Society itself, which

kept revising the document and managed to exist seven years without officially adopting it.<sup>8,9(p191)</sup> During this period, the society was adrift with no clearcut sense of direction. Its only fixed task was to judge the scientific exhibits and determine the award winners.

The society did provide a liaison officer to the Council and attempted in vain to formulate an organization that would be of assistance in development of the Academy's educational programs. A report to the Council in 1946 conceded that "the results of these efforts have not satisfied the members of the Honor group and it is quite generally agreed that there is not sufficient function for such a group to warrant its existence on the present basis."<sup>10(p127)</sup>

The Council agreed with a proposal from William Benedict to make the Honor Society purely titular and to grant the honor key yearly to those deserving of special recognition.<sup>10(p127)</sup> Eligibility remained quite limited. The key was awarded to faculty members of the Home Study Courses after five years of service, to contributors to the Section on Instruction after 20 hours of lecture, and to each President at the conclusion of his term of office.<sup>11(p122)</sup>

In 1953, the Board of Secretaries recommended that eligibility for the Honor Award be extended to those who contribute to, or serve in, any major category of Academy activity. The award was reinterpreted as "a recognition of merit in scientific achievement," and a point

system was devised whereby credit toward the award could be earned on an equitable basis.<sup>12</sup>

The point system worked out in 1953 is still the basis for granting the Academy Honor Award. Ten points are required for receipt of the award, with one point yearly allowed for presentation of an instruction course (regardless of hours), scientific paper, scientific exhibit, or motion picture and for participation on a continuing education course faculty (formerly Home Study faculty), on continuing education program development, or in a special scientific program. A maximum of two points can be acquired in any one year.

Each year at the annual meeting, the Honor Award certificate is presented to those who have accumulated the required ten points (Fig 54).

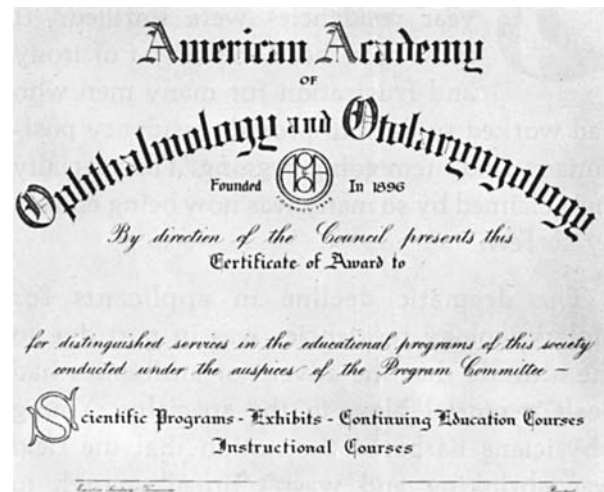


Fig 54.—Honor Award certificate.