



THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS
800 NORTHEAST THIRTEENTH STREET
OKLAHOMA CITY 4 · OKLAHOMA

January 19, 1954

Mr. G. Meredith Brill
Associate Secretary-Treasurer
Alpha Omega Alpha
Slaterville Springs, New York

Dear Mr. Brill:

Sir Alexander Fleming is honoring the University of Oklahoma Medical School and the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation with a visit during the latter part of April, 1954. We hope to have Sir Fleming deliver the Annual Alpha Omega Alpha lecture during the course of his visit.

Assuming that Sir Fleming possibly does not possess an honorary membership to AOA, we would like to confer such a membership. Please advise us if such would be possible in accordance with Section 14, Article IV of the National Constitution.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Boyd Lester".

Boyd Lester, President
Oklahoma Alpha Omega Alpha

Letters to the Editor

Error or reality?

In reading the article “The price of pills” (*The Pharos*, Autumn 2019, pp. 17-21), I noticed what I believe is an error. The statement, “Discovered in 1928 by Alexander Fleming, MD (ΑΩΑ, University of Oklahoma College of Medicine, 1954),” appears to be a mistake. As most know, penicillin was discovered in 1928 by the Scottish researcher Sir Alexander Fleming. How could it be possible that this is the same Alexander Fleming inducted to ΑΩΑ by the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine in 1954? This is confusing and necessitates clarification for your readers.

Doyt L. Conn, MD
ΑΩΑ, University of Nebraska College of Medicine, 1963
Rochester, MN

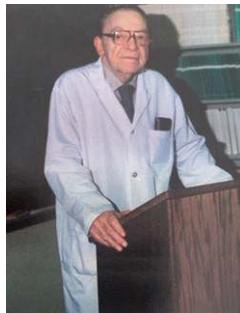
Editor’s response: Thank you Dr. Conn for pointing this out. We searched our historical records and found that Sir Alexander Fleming was indeed elected to ΑΩΑ in 1954 by the University of Oklahoma as a faculty member. He made his first visit to the University of Oklahoma July 3, 1949, to give the keynote address at the dedication of the University’s foundation. He returned several years in a row to visit the University as a visiting professor.

On January 19, 1954, the leadership of ΑΩΑ received a letter from Boyd Lester, MD (ΑΩΑ, University of Oklahoma College of Medicine, 1953), the President of the University of Oklahoma ΑΩΑ Chapter, requesting that they be allowed to confer faculty membership on Sir Fleming during his visiting professor lecture that year. Sir Fleming’s membership to ΑΩΑ was approved and presented to him April 18, 1954.

Review of the Center for the Study of Tobacco and Society: Multimedia Exhibitions

This review prompted me to visit the online exhibit. Unfortunately, the segment on the Anniversary of the Surgeon General’s Report was not available. Hopefully it includes Dr. Oscar Auerbach (ΑΩΑ, Rutgers New Jersey Medical School, 1979, Faculty), the physician whose seminal work made that report possible. He was the professor of pathology at New Jersey Medical School who did the smoking dogs study at the East Orange VA.

Dr. Auerbach presented his work to our class of second year students: pictures of obviously happy dogs puffing away, and some of the 20,000+ slides he personally reviewed showing the resulting chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and malignancy.



Oscar Auerbach, MD

We had many good teachers, but Dr. Auerbach was unique. We respected him for his impressive body of work, and loved him for his support and appreciation of our efforts to be good physicians. The class of 1986 Rutgers New Jersey Medical School dedicated the yearbook to Dr. Auerbach and remain in awe of him as a physician and human being.

Cynthia Burdge, MD
ΑΩΑ, 1985, Rutgers New Jersey Medical School
Kailua, HI

Physicianship and the Rebirth of Medical Education

Jack Coulehan’s review of *Physicianship and the Rebirth of Medical Education* by J. Donald Boudreau, Eric J. Cassell, and Abraham Fuks is spot-on. Coulehan says it “is one of the most exciting books about medical education that I’ve ever read. It might be the best export McGill University has sent us since William Osler departed for Philadelphia.” I second that.

As I was reading the book, I kept wondering about the implication of the authors’ assertion that “the focus of medical education should not be on disease” but on “the patient and the patient-doctor relationship.” What would it be like, I wondered, to attend a medical school where every teacher has such a clear-eyed, shared, and commonly cherished vision of what the doctor’s job is, and how it is to be accomplished. Or, in my case, if *any* teacher had such an idea. I suppose that’s a little harsh; there probably were faculty and resident teachers, distant descendants of Francis Peabody, with such an inner, guiding vision. However, they kept it carefully hidden from me.

Boudreau and his co-authors make a strong case for clearly appreciating and publicly articulating the fundamental goals of doctoring.

Francis A. Neelon, MD
ΑΩΑ, Duke University School of Medicine, 2002, Faculty
Durham, NC