

Alexander R. Stevens

May 9, 1876 — June 1, 1968

Dr. Alexander Raymond Stevens died on June 1, 1968, at the age of ninety-two years, after a brief decline associated with a fractured femur. He was born in Baltimore and received his B.A. degree from Johns Hopkins University in 1896. His collegiate expenses were partly met as a pianist in summer hotels, but to enter medical school it was necessary that he spend a period with the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey. During this time he helped draw the original map of Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

In 1904, after he received his M.D. degree from Johns Hopkins, he served a year as a medical intern under Sir William Osier. A vacancy occurred on Halsted's surgical service so he served three months as an intern there. The famous Dr. "Popsy" Welch suggested that he become associated with Dr. Hugh Hampton Young who was just developing a urological service. The association with Dr. Young lasted approximately eighteen months. I once heard Dr. Young refer to Dr. Stevens as his first resident, though no doubt the residency was then quite informal. Dr. Stevens' first medical paper was one with Dr. Young and Dr. John T. Geraghty on chronic prostatitis in 1906.

Additional training was received at Presbyterian Hospital in New York, and Dr. Stevens' practice of urology was begun in that city in 1908. By at least 1911, he had transplanted the ureters into the bowel—and the patient on whom his operation was performed was still alive in 1940! In 1913, and again in 1914, he reported his experiences with transurethral electrocauterization to remove the obstructing prostate and thus became a "grandfather" of transurethral electrosurgery on the prostate. Because Dr. Stevens' sister was the wife of Dr. Guy Hunner, it was impressive to Dr. Stevens' later associates that he rarely dilated ureters in spite of what must have been strong influences to do so!

In World War I, he served in France as a major in the Medical Corps.

In 1919 he married Miss Mary Lane Davis, a nurse at Presbyterian Hospital. Early in his urological career he became associated with Bellevue Hospital and in 1925 was appointed Surgeon-in-Charge of Urology. In 1937 he succeeded Dr. E. L. Keyes, Jr., in charge of the Cornell urological service in the New York Hospital. Retirement came in 1946, and he was elevated from Attending Urologist to Consultant on the hospital staff and from Professor of Clinical Surgery (Urology) to Clinical Professor, Emeritus, of Surgery (Urology) in the Medical College.

In addition to the famous medical personalities already mentioned, he was at some time associated with F. Tilden Brown, David MacKinzie, Benjamin Barringer, and Meredith Campbell. His fellowship in the American College of Surgeons extended over a period of forty-seven years. He was certified by the American Board of Urology. His memberships included the American Medical Association, the Harvey Society, the Practitioners Club of New York, and the Century Association of New York. He was president of the New York Urological Society in 1923 and of the American Association of Genito-Urinary Surgeons in 1944.

In addition to his urological achievements, Stevie is fondly remembered by his former associates and trainees as a gentle gentleman and a wise counselor. Few have adjusted so well to retirement. Once a professional organist, he played the march at his son's wedding in 1947. He still skied in his eighties and drove his automobile in his nineties. He lived for twenty years after a coronary occlusion. Fortunately, his gallstone remained completely quiescent for about thirty years. He was among the last of the founding generation of urologists, and his personal high qualities will rarely be encountered again.

His devoted wife; a physician son Alexander R. Stevens, Jr.; and three grand-children survive.

Victor F. Marshall, M.D.