

Lee Stauffer

Lee Stauffer memorial 10.16.16

It surely wasn't easy for Lee Stauffer to step into the job of Dean in the early 1970s. He followed Gaylord Anderson, Founder and Dean of the SPH and a highly regarded national leader in the public health.

But, in addition to Lee's solid character and his fair, forthcoming, and orderly manner, there were things going for him.

Soon the academic health center had its 1st Vice President, Lyle French, who was a sound and ever stronger figure on this campus and who gave Lee and the SPH great credit and support.

Then, Lee was able to use the power of "obligate age-retirement" which he began to impose already when Ancel Keys reached the ripe old age of 67 in the early 1970s. Keys was asked to step down, which he did with a quiet growl and then proceeded to work, live and write productively, without pay, for another 33 more years in retirement.

Lee also derived powers at that time from the absence of formal tenure among SPH and AHC faculty. This, along with the absence of formal requirements for faculty searches, rendered many things simpler in those days.

He sought widely the opinion of the University's power community about the fate of the LPH with Keys's retirement. Many said that such independent research structures built by one forceful character usually withered when the force was gone, and thus the LPH should be shut down; its space and state funding turned to current needs in the AHC.

Years earlier, Gaylord Anderson, along with several national figures who served on the accreditation body for schools of public health, including Milt Terris, had strongly supported the LPH move from Physiology to the SPH. They noted the relevance of the work in Memorial Stadium to the broader public health and its unique contribution to the research position of the school at a time when there was much less research.

Lee also sought counsel from the heads of medicine and cardiology here, under whom I had trained. From their joint recommendations, and that of Assoc Dean Sullivan, he offered me the chance to see if the Lab should survive. Now, Al Sullivan was such a close friend of mine from medical school that we had taken our residency together in Paris. In 1950, I even accompanied him and his wife Tess on their honeymoon in Tirol.

On those sorts of relationships and credentials were careers made in olden times. Lee charged me with integrating the LPH research program with the broader research, training, and service functions of the school and gave me the job. He spent several decades thereafter generously supporting the LPH and giving it eventually the fuller academic role of Epidemiology. And for years, he expressed regrets for taking away the state funds of Keys's salary with one hand, while he offered me Keys's job with the other!

We remained good friends.

His last kindness was an offer to pave the way for my wife Stacy and me to enter the

elevated and privileged Estate of the
University's Senior Residence at "~~6668~~"
~~Larpenteur~~. 1666 Coffman St.

We will miss Lee. No longer will his e-
mail address be responsive, the joint one
he maintained for years as "Lee and Donna
Stauffer!"

Henry Blackburn

