Thomas M. McMillan, M.D.

I

T WAS with mixed feelings that I agreed to write this foreword for the special issue of Circulation dedicated to Tom McMillan. The opportunity to speak publicly of a close friend was accepted with joy, tempered by the realization that the major purpose of this issue is to say at least a temporary farewell to the one person who has done more than any other to make this journal the foremost in its field. And farewells to those whom we love, however gay the celebration, can never be fundamentally other than sad.

It is probable that most of those who read these words have never known Tom as a person, but only as a thoughtful and distinguished editor. He first became famous in that capacity during the years 1946 to 1950, when he served as Editor in Chief of the American Heart Journal, then the official journal of the American Heart Association. When Circulation was created as the official journal of the Association in 1950, his unusual abilities had been demonstrated so convincingly that no other person was considered for the position of its Editor-in-Chief.

Hundreds of perceptive authors and readers have realized that he gave unusual attention to manuscripts and proofs, but few could possibly realize how much time and thought he gave except those who have been with him day after day in his home or his summer camp. For five years this journal has been his one major interest, aside from his family. To it he has given most of his thought and energy, his days and evenings, week-ends and holidays, and a large share of every so-called vacation. This can be said without hesitation, for it has been my happy privilege to stand within the circle of his friendship for many years, to know the lovely spirit of his home, to watch him spending happy hours of golden afternoons poring over proofs when he should have been swimming or seeking the elusive bass that (according to rumor) live in Bixby Lake. Perfection may be the goal of every editor worthy of the name, but surely none has pursued that ideal more persistently than he, or with greater determination and hope. That he has been successful beyond the brightest dreams of those who founded Circulation no one will doubt except Tom himself.

The first ten volumes of this journal will stand as a lasting monument to his ability and his consecration to the work that he loved. But he has created something else which, even though invisible and intangible, he may regard as much greater: the respect, admiration and abiding affection of all who have been privileged to know him. His students, associates and friends are agreed that few indeed have been blessed with such a rare combination of qualities: intelligence and understanding, complete sincerity, patience and tolerance, an unfailing gentleness rarely encountered in men, a sweet and happy disposition. The years in Philadelphia have taken away none of the consideration for others or the charming graciousness that he brought from his Alabama home. His inability to think or speak harshly of anyone has been an inspiration to those who recognize it as strength, not weakness, as another manifestation of a warm and lovable personality.
Though we say farewell to him as Editor-in-Chief of this journal that he has raised to such eminence, all who have worked with him will continue to cherish his friendship and seek his companionship. This is especially true of the members of the Editorial Board and of the Publications Committee, since they have been privileged to work more closely with him than most of his associates. But all those with whom he has shared the grace of his presence and the generous warmth of his personality will not easily allow these precious gifts to be withdrawn. Within the past few days he has given up the editorship of a famous journal, but he can never lose the affection and trust of those whom he has helped and influenced.

These inadequate words are written by one of the hundreds of friends whose hearts are united in gratitude for all that he has done and in the hope that his coming years will be rich in happy activities. Now that he has laid aside his editorial burdens, he may even find time to prove that there are bass in that lake!

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Circulation. 1956;13:lxi-lxii
doi: 10.1161/01.CIR.13.1.lxi
Circulation is published by the American Heart Association, 7272 Greenville Avenue, Dallas, TX 75231
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Print ISSN: 0009-7322. Online ISSN: 1524-4539

The online version of this article, along with updated information and services, is located on the World Wide Web at:
http://circ.ahajournals.org/content/13/1/lxi.citation

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