

Alton W. Moore Testimonial Dinner
August 12, 1962

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Presentation
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The moment the invitation was presented to me to participate in the first alumni meeting of the University of Washington graduates, the opportunity was tenaciously seized. Two sound reasons lay behind this decision; the University of Washington has in a dozen years produced orthodontic graduates of such competence that I am pleased to see that most of them have stayed right here in our backyard, otherwise known as the Pacific Coast.

The second reason, of course, is Alton Moore. While he has been ably assisted by others in the development of a strong orthodontic program, his inception of the plan and his continued leadership have been largely responsible for the eminence this department enjoys today. There was a very happy circumstance, of course, even before Alton Moore arrived in Seattle. I refer to the enterprising, well-knit orthodontic study club which existed before the University of Washington started its Division of Health Sciences.

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But if this amounted to good luck on Al's part, we should at least credit him with good judgment for working so closely with these men, bringing them into his department as his clinical staff. I refer, of course, to Pete Bishop, Emery Fraser, Paul Lewis, and Bill McGovern. There was a fifth man whose untimely passing kept him from being a part of the department, but if I failed to mention Milt Fisher the story would be lacking in accuracy. Many Washington graduates who never had the privilege of knowing him are nevertheless using his concepts today.

No one would relish the task of encapsulating Alton Moore's accomplishments in one, pat little phrase. But if this were required, this could be said: while successfully emphasizing clinical competence, he was at the same time made orthodontics an intellectual discipline and not merely a technical one. A long series of good graduate theses has come out of the department, and the winning of prizes has almost become commonplace. As a matter of fact, Dr. Bert Kraus who came here in 1957, won the American Association of Orthodontists' prize with two graduate students before he had time to unpack the Navajo bags he brought from Arizona.

Under these circumstances, it follows that if one is to talk about Alton Moore tonight, one should do it in a research-oriented atmosphere. It would not be appropriate to recount his life in terms of hearsay, or to report what students have told me in corridors, or mention what has been published about him in Confidential magazine.

Let us turn then to first-hand sources for reliable information; fellow-students and former teachers who were kind enough to send letters.

While Dr. Moore is a native of Idaho, he did his growing up in my town of San Francisco, and got his dental degree from the University of California.

His family felt that lavishing money on a young man was a mistake. This was a somewhat academic point of view, for if they had had the opposite opinion, they would not have been in a position to implement their ideas. Consequently the educational process was always accompanied by some kind of part-time job which would bring in modest revenue.

Not long ago in talking to Al I got a first-hand insight into some of this. I had been examining architectural plans for our Medical Center in San Francisco, and was astonished to find just how far above sea-level the first floor really was. I thought I would trap Al by asking, and he replied, "About 475 feet". The actual figure is 474. Since I hoped he would give me an erroneous figure, I demanded an explanation. It seems that he had been a newsboy tramping up and down that hill so often that he had become a pretty accurate altimeter.

Now it seems inevitable that if one is talk at all about San Francisco, one must also talk about good restaurants. I mention this because at one time Dr. Moore was connected with the restaurant business. As a regular patron of San Francisco restaurants, I can say that anyone who can pay \$3 for lunch may get a pretty good one. However, there is a substantial number which I walk past as quickly as possible. Herb Caen, the columnist on the Chronicle, recently made a discovery unknown to other San Franciscans.

This is the fact that Coit Tower, strategically located on Telegraph Hill, is not built merely as an observation point, but is in fact filled to the brim with brown gravy. Pipes run from Coit Tower to various restaurants, in order that food may be drenched with gravy. Dr. Moore's family printed menus each day for restaurants in downtown San Francisco, and it was Al's task to distribute them to the various customers. I am happy to report that there is no evidence that Al is responsible for the brown gravy.

Al Moore entered dental school, as I did, in depression years. At that time if one applied to dental school for admission, the dean would likely run down to the station and carry your baggage for you. There were, in fact, only 25 students in Al's class of 1941. I have learned from one of his classmates two things about Al. One is that he had a part-time job running a freight elevator, and the other that he didn't know much about girls. To me these two facts tie logically together, because how are you going to meet many girls in a freight elevator?

From California, Dr. Moore went to the Zoller Clinic at the University of Chicago for a period of internship. There he was discovered by Dean O'Rourke of the University of Louisville, who was intrigued by promising young teachers. Al accepted the invitation and joined the faculty. Since he was well-prepared in clinical oral pathology and endodontics, this became his field of instruction. A little known fact is that Al Moore introduced the rubber-dam to the state of Kentucky. "They hadn't nevah hea'd of it 'fore he came."

Dean O'Rourke felt no compulsion to follow the well-polished grooves most dental deans feel safest in, and it is quite likely that some of his original ideas quickened Al's interest in dental education. Phil Blackerby was also on the staff, and he too must have been stimulating. Al's stay in Louisville came to an end when he wanted further education, and the school encouraged him in this, in the vain hope that he would return.

As one who lived in Chicago, I can assure you that it takes a firm decision to move back again. Yet Al decided to do this so that he might study orthodontics. He entered the University of Illinois, where the department of orthodontics ^{is} was housed in a tower. You could look out the windows and see to the left a psychiatric hospital, and to the right, the county jail. If you could survive there 18 months and not wind up in either place, you were an orthodontist.

These were yeasty times in orthodontics, for only a few years before, every etiological factor was unerringly ascribed to environmental influences. Only a few years before extraction instigated by orthodontists was equated with malpractice. But in the forties great emphasis came to be placed on heredity, and extraction came to be accepted by different people at different levels. Reading the literature was not very profitable, for what you read was likely to be denied out of hand by the teacher, unless it had been written the day before yesterday.

Dr. Moore did his thesis on growth sites, using a madder-stained monkey-skull. This ^{was} a sort of portent for the future, for it won the research essay contest sponsored by the American Association of Orthodontists in 1949. Now while it is true that his first research paper won a prize, and that his paper for the certifying board was chosen for reading to the national convention, he is nevertheless in some respects a renegade.

This was manifest when he was starting out at Illinois. At that time the University of Illinois looked upon alginate impression material much as the Council on Dental Education looks upon California's system for training orthodontists. Plaster of Paris was the material of choice, guaranteed to build character in the orthodontist, and rated only slightly below holy water.

The instructor in charge had a substantial black mustache, and because of a shortage in personnel, he had to double as both instructor and patient. Dr. Moore managed to embed so ~~much~~ plaster in the mustache that pliers were required to break it loose. Shortly thereafter Illinois changed from plaster to alginate. At the present time I am searching for a plausible way to embed the Council on Dental Education in Plaster of Paris. Of course, if you look at it from a figurative point of view, in many respects they already are.

A second instance when Al was a burr under the saddle also took place at Illinois. Dr. Brodie had published a signal paper demonstrating the stability of the growing face. Some of the older orthodontists will remember that prior to 1940 some people actually believed that a child could have a cold for two weeks and get a Class II malocclusion as a consequence. Just when the newer idea was coming into acceptance, Dr. Moore provided the first cephalometric evidence that the facial pattern could change, particularly in the pubertal years. You may be sure that if he were a member of the Kennedy administration, he would steadfastly refuse to jump into swimming pools in evening dress.

The final example of Dr. Moore's cantankerousness occurred at the University of Washington, and I had the dubious honor of being the victim. We were in the process of putting together a graduate course in orthodontics, and concurrently, one in Public Health. We were going to work together, and the other department head had, or thought he had, a distinguished statistician to join us. After the two different classes were enrolled and well launched in their programs, the statistician from afar decided after all not to come.

Dr. Moore promptly assured his colleague in public health that no problem existed, since Dr. Wylie could teach statistics quite well. What he really meant was that I knew more statistics than he ^{himself} did; this may have been true, but it would not have met the graduate standards at Slippery Rock State Normal School. Now neither Dr. Powers nor I had any business teaching statistics, but he made an even worse decision -- we would teach it together as a team. The consequence was that we would stand before the blackboard and argue endlessly. The students would patiently sit it out, hoping fervently that one would produce a derringer to discipline the other.

The recounting of Alton Moore's accomplishments as a virtuoso could go on indefinitely, and I suppose a few more stories could be added which would make him a renegade as well. But I have chosen to terminate the saga with the beginning of his career at the University of Washington. All of you are as familiar with his record as I; the specific accomplishments at Washington are recognized for the long-time future by the formation of an alumni association, and specifically they are recognized tonight by the presentation of a book written especially for him.

Drs. Bert Kraus and Dick Riedel are to be complimented for thinking of the idea, and for meticulously seeing it through to completion. Twenty-five distinguished authors from all over the world contributed to the book, and it is interesting reading. One man invited to participate, who for some reason could not, was quick to assure me that he had been invited. Thus it is apparent that in 1962 being a part of this book is a status-symbol. Since the book is dedicated to Alton Moore, all of us who have managed to get their name in are quite pleased.

Only one word of caution seems appropriate for Alton as I close.

Because a testimonial dinner has been given tonight, and a festschrift besides, I would remind him that he has been here only 14 years, and both the University of Washington and the orthodontic profession expect a lot more mileage from him. We confidently anticipate that the future will afford a like number of capable graduates, and that there will be continuing productivity in research. Some men are allowed ^{to} coast after their testimonial dinner, but this privilege does not extend to you.