sity in Cincinnati, Ohio. The second involves Dr Organ's lifelong fascination with Charles R. Drew, MD, one of his heroes who could have passed for white but insisted on wearing his true color as a badge of honor. Dr Organ always insisted that you had to "stand for something" and that others should know that quality in you. He was enthralled by the life and times of Dr Drew and how he was able to accomplish what he did as a surgeon/scientist when segregation was the order of the day. In fact, Dr Drew refused to join the American College of Surgeons because it refused to admit other well-qualified black surgeons, most of whom he had trained at Howard University. Dr Organ surely must have shared some of Dr Drew's pain for the remainder of his life after his Texas experience. Several years ago, Dr Organ gave one of the named lectures at the opening ceremonies of the American College of Surgeons of which he was president the last year of his life. His topic was "Charles R. Drew: A Doyen of American Surgery." I think that Dr Organ would have been thrilled to have been a contemporary of Dr Drew. His presidential address before the Society of Black Academic Surgeons several years ago was entitled "Dr Charles R. Drew: Died Too Soon." And so did Dr Organ: another surgical doyen who died too soon.

Dr Organ would always tell us that he did not want us to be as good as he was; we had to be better than him. We knew that this was impossible but it drove us to perhaps be better than we otherwise might have been. He insisted that it all started with hard work, preparation, and persistence. I have often commented that I spoke to Dr Organ more than I did my father and was not sure whether that made me a bad son or not. My mother died when I was flying home in August of 2001 from the final planning session for the Organ dinner, and my father died 2 weeks before the dinner. So for the next 4 years, Dr Organ was more than just a mentor. I shall miss him terribly forever, but I will always remember everything that he taught me and try diligently to live up to his high standards and to pass his teachings on to future generations of surgeons.

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In Memory: Claude H. Organ, Jr, MD

The Reassuring Voice of Optimism Across the San Francisco Bay

Haile T. Debas, MD

One of the great privileges of my academic life has been to have Claude as a close and inspiring friend and colleague. I know others will write about his enormous contributions to American and world surgery. I have, therefore, decided to write more personally and speak to what his presence in Oakland, Calif, meant to me—the reassuring voice of optimism across the San Francisco Bay.

I will miss the frequent telephone calls we exchanged across the San Francisco Bay, sharing our successes and our challenges. We confided in each other problems of the moment, and from my dealings with him, I learned that nothing is more important than having a trusted friend with whom you can share your happy and sad moments. Almost always, I got off the telephone with Claude with a smile on my face and with the belief in my heart that everything would turn out for the better. And often I got off the telephone laughing uncontrollably because, as only Claude could, he had shared a very funny joke that was just appropriate for the occasion.

An attribute of Claude that never ceased to inspire me was his uncompromising commitment to the career and well-being of his trainees. The calls from the East Bay were often about his trainees and about his plans for their research training. They obviously gave him a great joy and constituted an important part of his academic life. Given all the academic and municipal politics at the time, no one could have been able to establish the stellar general surgery residency that Claude created in the East Bay. He had a gift for identifying and recruiting trainees with potential. Once he did, he was totally committed to them as a teacher, mentor, and loving father figure. He made sure that his residents had access to training in the best research laboratories in the best universities in the country. Characteristically, even when these residents were away during their research training, he kept in close touch with the students and with their supervisors and assured that, at all times and in every way, they were well taken care of professionally and personally. I mention these details to indicate how Claude made his trainees his everyday concern. He loved them and was fiercely proud of their accomplishments.

Claude was a giant among men, a hero and inspiration to his trainees and to all minority academic sur-

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geons. He was a giant in American surgery and one of the most significant American academic surgeons of the 20th century. He will be sorely missed for these and all the many other attributes that are described by others in this special edition of the ARCHIVES. But in my personal world, it is that reassuring voice of optimism and friendship that frequently came on the telephone lines from across the San Francisco Bay that I will miss.

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West African College of Surgeons Bids Farewell to Claude H. Organ, Jr, MD, MS(Surg), FACS, FRCSSA, FRACS, FRCS(Ed), FWACS(Hon)

Samuel A. Adebonojo, MD, FCCP, FWACS

Lives of great men all remind us,
We can make our lives sublime;
And departing leave behind us,
Footprints on the sand of time

A Psalm of Life

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

The death of Dr Claude H. Organ, Jr, has left a gigantic footprint on the sand of the surgical world that is too big for many of us to step into. He was a distinguished and renowned African American surgeon who was well known and respected for his humanitarian work all over the world. Dr Organ first came into the West African surgical arena early in 2001 when he was nominated for an honorary fellowship of the West African College of Surgeons (WACS). Prior to that, Dr Organ had been working on building the "bridge of international collegiality" between surgeons in West Africa and our sister colleges in the United States, especially with the Society of Black Academic Surgeons and the American College of Surgeons.

On January 28, 2003, the WACS conferred Dr Claude Organ with an honorary fellowship during its 43rd Annual Scientific Conference in Abuja, Nigeria, in recognition of his love for Africa, his basic character, and his academic and professional contributions to the development of the science and art of surgery in black Africa. Fellows and members of the governing council of the WACS were also cognizant of his contributions to medical education and certification; his love for the West African surgical personality; and his commitment to merit, equity, and justice. It was heartwarming to fellows of the WACS to see that Dr Organ came to Nigeria to accept the award in person and to deliver a lecture on the myths surrounding the death of Dr Charles Drew.

Dr Organ was a loyal and devoted friend of his students, residents, and colleagues. He was an extremely pleasant person who

Prof E. Goudote, Republic of Benin; Prof Osato Giwa-Osagie, Pres, West African College of Surgeons; Dr Samuel A. Adebonojo; and Dr Claude H. Organ.

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