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.

Accepted for Publication: August 31, 2005.

Correspondence: Haile T. Debas, MD, Global Health Sciences, University of California, San Francisco, School of Medicine, 3333 California St, 285, San Francisco, CA 94143-0443 (hdebas@globalhealth.ucsf.edu).

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.

Author Affiliations: Department of Surgery, Wright State University School of Medicine, Dayton, Ohio; and Chief, Surgical Service, Dayton VA Medical Center, Dayton.

©2005 American Medical Association. All rights reserved.
Downloaded From: http://archsurg.jamanetwork.com/ on 11/29/2015

combined a charming disposition with an exemplary character. He exemplified a consummate passion for the welfare of his fellow human being. He was a good friend of the WACS, and he helped in training several medical students and residents from the west African subregion. He was a true and genuine human being, lover of all and father to many. Dr Organ was a soft-spoken gentleman who did not like to ruffle feathers. He said what he believed in and believed in what he said. He was unshakable, yet flexible. You always knew where he stood, and he was not ambiguous. He was a man of few words. Dr Organ had planned to attend the 46th Annual Scientific Conference of the WACS in Accra, Ghana, in February 2006, but this was not to be, because his illustrious journey on earth ended on Saturday, June 18, 2005.

The king whose earthly journey's done
Has posed his scepter to a chosen one
We say farewell with grief and pain
Yet hope to see his face again
In memories of yesterday,
Trails he blazed, residents he trained
The part of us he took with him
Left empty space, flowerless stem
We'll call upon his righteous deeds
And nurture all his planted seeds
Of wisdom, virtue and noble thoughts
To fill the void his absence wrought
We'll honor him in future years
With worthy causes, not with tears
And when our journeys' ends shall come
We bid his spirit "guide us home"
Where those things that seems to be woeful endings
Are now joyful new beginnings

Dr Organ was a beacon of hope for the hopeless and an outstanding role model to all of us. He led by example and governed by consensus. He was a man of humility, respect, honor, and integrity both in his professional and private lives. Indeed, his selfless service to his fellow men and to fellows of the WACS will never be forgotten. Dr Organ will always be remembered by all his friends, colleagues, residents, and students as a man of truth, fairness, and discipline and as a man who dedicated his life to the service of humanity. But the time has come to give him back to the Dear Lord who gave him to us.

Yet, as Thou did not lose him in giving,
So we have not lost him by his return
For what is ours is Thine always,
And life is eternal, and love is immortal;
And what we call death is only a horizon
And a horizon is nothing but the limit of our sight
Lift us up O God that we may see further
Cleanse our eyes that we may know ourselves
To our beloved who art with Thee
That where they are and Thou art
We too may be with our Lord

The president, members of the governing council, and fellows of the WACS say adieu to a great friend, teacher, and colleague. May his good work on earth precede him to paradise and ensure his welcome to the bosom of the Almighty Lord.

Accepted for Publication: August 25, 2005.
Correspondence: Samuel A. Adebonojo, MD, FCCP, FWACS, Wright State University School of Medicine, 4100 W Third St, Dayton, OH 45428 (samuel.adebonojo@wright.edu).

Claude H. Organ, Jr, MD

International Surgical Giant

John Terblanche, ChM

While on sabbatical leave with Tom Starzl, MD, PhD, in Denver, Colo, in 1978, an old friend, Ben Eiseman, MD, with his usual wisdom, arranged for me to meet Dr Organ during the Surgical Boards Examinations. Thus started a close friendship, which was to grow later that year during a visiting professorship to his department in Omaha, Neb. Here my wife and I first met and were charmed by Betty Organ and recognized Claude Organ's pride in his close-knit family. Claude and I had in-depth discussions on various aspects of surgery, and I would later incorporate many of his innovative methods of departmental chairmanship when I became chairman in Cape Town, South Africa, in 1981.

In May 1986, at the admission ceremony in Cape Town, Claude Organ was awarded the Honorary Fellowship of the College of Surgeons of South Africa by the president, the late Phyllis Knocker, ChM. With his well-known support for women in surgery, he was delighted that the then president of the multidisciplinary Colleges of Medicine of South Africa (Rondebosch), was a female surgeon. He was proud of this award. Two pictures of the ceremony were included in the chapter on his life in the book *A Century of Black Surgeons*.[1] He was also typically not frightened to defend his position as a visitor to South Africa. In 1988, he wrote an editorial in *Oncology Times* entitled "Apartheid and Medicine"[2] in which he praised the Colleges of Medicine of South Africa for their college credo, which had been adopted by the College Council in 1986. He quoted the whole credo and pointed out that it in-

Author Affiliations: University of Cape Town, Rondebosch, Cape Town, South Africa.

©2005 American Medical Association. All rights reserved.
Downloaded From: http://archsurg.jamanetwork.com/ on 11/29/2015