rested," and to maintain "1 night for working, 1 night for reading, and 1 night for family." In fact, the theme of the graduation dinner was typically one of thanksgiving to our families. As each graduate was celebrated and presented to the audience, he made certain that their spouse and partners were on stage and recognized for their enormous role in our success.

In closing, we speak for a generation of surgeons in expressing the deep honor we feel for having been trained by Dr Organ. He will live on in the work we do and in our contributions to the field of surgery. He will also live on in the patients we treat and the future surgeons we train. We would like to extend our deepest sympathies and our heartfelt appreciation to Dr Organ's family, and to thank them for sharing Dr Organ and themselves with us over the years. We are forever in their debt. As his disciples, we have dispersed around the country, passing on his lessons and quotes to the next generation of young surgeons. Some of us are finishing residency or fellowship, and others just beginning our careers as junior faculty in academic medical centers. We are however, united in our training, our memories, and the guiding principles of scholarship, compassion, and excellence, instilled in us during our tutelage under Dr Organ. If we are indeed Dr Organ's legacy, it is our responsibility, indeed our honor, to do him proud. He expects no less.

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Claude H. Organ, Jr, MD, as Resident Advisor

Alden H. Harken, MD

In the late afternoon of Saturday, June 18, 2005, our 7 chief residents convened at the Claremont Hotel in Berkeley, Calif, to celebrate their traditional graduation dinner. News circulated that Dr Organ had just died. One of the chiefs broke down. I was surprised. My guess is that he had not cried in 30 years. Dr Organ was a powerful presence in our department. We wrestled with the idea of canceling the graduation ceremony. It soon became clear, however, that Dr Organ had planned and precisely timed this inevitable event. It was logical that he pass his professional baton to this new wave of young surgeons at exactly this moment. He was intensely proud of his residents. And, it was clear that he was much more than a department chair to them. But, it was tough love. Excellence was the only acceptable standard, and either you measured up or you did not—there was no gray zone.

Fifteen years ago, Dr Organ saw an opportunity to coalesce 3 struggling surgical programs into a single residency unit within the University of California system. By virtue of his leadership at the American Board of Surgery, Philadelphia, Pa, and the Residency Review Committee for Surgery, he (not the program) was trusted. Claude insisted on a formal university base and complete university integration. I would not have been that smart. He later explained that you want to relate most formally with the group whose goals are most concordant with your own. This has subsequently proven a blessing.

Indeed, as blessings go, Claude and his wife Betty were happily religious. Claude loved to quote scripture to seal an argument. The implication, of course, was that he had recently descended from the mountaintop, that he had possession of the Tablets, and that, as he spoke as an extension of the Lord, he was the reluctant but committed purveyor of truth. This dialectical strategy proved persuasively overwhelming to all but the rare opponent.

Claude loved to spend time with the residents as an advisor, mentor, counselor, and friend. His door was always open. On frequent occasion as I passed Claude's office, I noted a resident engrossed in conversation. On delightfully frequent occasion, Claude would invite me in or drop by my office. He was always embarrassingly sensitive to any potential inconvenience. He loved to talk about local, regional, and national surgical issues. He also delighted in sharing his liberal political views, teasing his more conservative colleagues, or sharing a recent quip from Molly Ivins. He was always gratifyingly protective of me and the residents. His observations and advice were sensitive and thoughtful but spiked with subtle wit.

In creating an extraordinarily successful surgical residency program, Claude Organ's accomplishment is reminiscent of Barbara Jordan's 1977 Harvard commencement address in which she said: "What the people [surgical residents] want is simple. They want an America [surgical residency] as good as its promise." Dr Organ provided that.

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