

9-1988

A Tribute to Dr. Boy Frame

John T. Potts Jr.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarlycommons.henryford.com/hfhmedjournal>



Part of the [Life Sciences Commons](#), [Medical Specialties Commons](#), and the [Public Health Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Potts, John T. Jr. (1988) "A Tribute to Dr. Boy Frame," *Henry Ford Hospital Medical Journal* : Vol. 36 : No. 3 , 140-142.

Available at: <https://scholarlycommons.henryford.com/hfhmedjournal/vol36/iss3/3>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Henry Ford Health System Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Henry Ford Hospital Medical Journal by an authorized editor of Henry Ford Health System Scholarly Commons.

A Tribute to Dr. Boy Frame

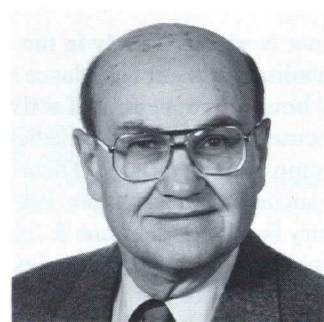
John T. Potts, Jr, MD*

I am deeply honored to be chosen to pay tribute to Dr. Boy Frame. Many of you knew him personally and worked with him over a much longer period of time than I. We began to work closely together when I served as his co-chairman for the previous symposium on calcium and bone metabolism given at Henry Ford Hospital a little over five years ago. From that time on I had the pleasure of getting to know Boy well and had the opportunity to learn firsthand of his devotion to excellence and his tireless energy.

I would like to speak about Boy Frame in terms of his remarkable professional accomplishments. He was an outstanding physician, a strong and original contributor in clinical investigation in calcium and bone metabolism, and a leader in medicine at Henry Ford Hospital and in the American College of Physicians. Boy was widely admired for his kindness and devotion to serving others. In order to capture something of the spirit of the personal qualities of Boy, particularly over earlier phases of his career when I did not know him so well, I will take the liberty of quoting from family, friends, and close colleagues who have paid tribute on earlier occasions to Boy Frame the man, as well as Boy Frame the professional.

A passion for education and learning, which marked him from an early period in life, took him east from Iowa to Cheshire Academy and then to Yale University. Yale held Boy's interest over an eight-year period; after graduating as an undergraduate, Boy continued in the Medical School, graduating as an MD cum laude in 1948 with an outstanding record of achievement, receiving awards for the best record in basic sciences and anatomy and the highest rank in his class. Boy then interned at the Massachusetts General Hospital from 1948 to 1949 and became an Assistant Resident from 1949 to 1950. As an early sign of his interest in the educational and training philosophy of different institutions, Boy then took an associate residency, from 1950 to 1951, back at the Yale Medical Center.

The Korean War interrupted Boy's medical training. He served as a captain in the United States Air Force in Korea. This period of serving in the military greatly impressed the then Captain Frame, and his participation in the great military events of that time seemed to provide a stimulus to his lifelong interest in history. Upon his discharge from the Air Force, Boy took an assistant residency in Neurology at the Neurological Institute and the Presbyterian Hospital in New York City from 1954 to 1955. He returned to the Massachusetts General Hospital as a Senior Resident, from 1955 to 1956, during which time he also served



Boy Frame, MD

as a Teaching Fellow at the Harvard Medical School. At this point Boy headed to the midwest and accepted his first staff and faculty position as Associate Physician in the Department of Internal Medicine at Henry Ford Hospital. This appointment signaled the beginning of Boy's remarkable career as a physician, clinical investigator, and medical leader. He served with great distinction in many phases of clinical and academic life at this institution over the next 30 years, until his death in August 1986, at which time he was serving as the Chairman of the Department of Internal Medicine, as well as Clinical Professor of Medicine at the University of Michigan School of Medicine.

The remarkable qualities of Boy Frame, the physician, are well known to his hundreds of patients whom he served with devotion and to his many colleagues with whom he worked over the years at Henry Ford and elsewhere. He served as Physician-in-Charge of the Fifth Medical Division and the Physician-in-Charge of the Bone and Mineral Division at Henry Ford from 1961 onward. Dr. Fred Whitehouse of Henry Ford Hospital referred to him as Michigan's "internists' internist." This phrase is often applied but I think in Boy's case, from everything I know, it was truly an understatement. From his many colleagues, one learns of his enthusiasm on ward rounds, his skill in bedside teaching, and his emphasis on the importance of bedside teach-

*General Medical Services, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston.
Address correspondence to Dr. Potts, General Medical Services, Massachusetts General Hospital, 55 Fruit Street, Boston, MA 02114.

ing. His interest focused not only on the difficult and challenging problems in patient diagnosis and management, but also, typical of his warmth and broad perspective, on the sociological and psychological aspects of the care of his patients.

I remember my pleasure in talking with Boy about his clinical practice and his devotion to the educational efforts needed to keep internists at their best informed and sharpest. He repeatedly undertook the recertification examinations of the American Board of Internal Medicine and helped encourage others to do so. I enjoyed personally perusing his marvelous collections of textbooks, teaching reviews, and anatomical and radiological atlases.

His patients and colleagues know better than those of us who did not work directly with him what an outstanding physician he was. All of us, however, can appreciate from the published record his outstanding contributions to clinical investigation in calcium and bone metabolism. Among his 230 publications are many examples of descriptions or analyses of unusual clinical syndromes, particularly those involving the skeleton or mineral ion metabolism. Among the cases that interested him were migratory osteolysis, the association of spondylitis with hypoparathyroidism, osteomalacia induced by phenolphthalein, mast cells and osteoporosis, pseudohypoparathyroidism (the puzzling association of osteitis fibrosa and hypoparathyroidism in patients with pseudohypoparathyroidism), unusual presentations of hypervitaminosis-A, cases of totally unexplained hypercalcemia, unusual variations of osteosclerosis combined with hyperostosis, and the bone disease seen in total parenteral nutrition. At the same time that Boy tackled with enthusiasm and a questioning mind these puzzling cases that he encountered in his busy clinical practice, and which he enthusiastically shared with colleagues in an attempt to understand the pathogenesis, he wrote in many highly useful classical reviews on syndromes of osteoporosis, osteomalacia, and diagnosis and management of patients with hypercalcemia.

In the proceedings of the conferences on calcium and bone metabolism from this institution published in 1973 and 1983, one finds many unusual case reports of puzzling syndromes that Boy encouraged his colleagues to present and discuss. What I always admired about Boy was that he would present the clinical problem as it was seen, challenging us to try to explain syndromes that had an annoying propensity for not fitting in with any of our comfortable schemes of classification or pathogenesis. This was typical of his deep zest for new knowledge and the challenging honesty of his clinical investigation. His great interest in the unusual aspects of metabolic bone disease led to his much deserved appointment to the Life Science Advisory Committee of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration where he served with distinction.

A further and remarkable testament to Boy Frame's prodigious energy and personal effectiveness is evident when one considers his leadership role at Henry Ford Hospital and in his beloved professional organization, the American College of Physicians. Despite and throughout his busy life as a general internist, specialist in clinical problems of calcium and bone metabolism, and clinical investigator, he served with great distinction at Henry Ford Hospital and the College. At the hospital, as is evident from his curriculum vitae and from what I have

learned from his colleagues, he made remarkable contributions in wide-ranging areas of the hospital governance and issues of review and certification of professional standards and professional postgraduate education. The list of his hospital committee assignments is staggering. I was personally delighted when I learned that Boy had been named Chairman of the Department of Internal Medicine at Henry Ford Hospital in 1985, a recognition which he richly deserved and which is a measure of the appreciation of his colleagues for his remarkable leadership role. Unfortunately, he did not have the opportunity to serve very long in a post in which he would have greatly added to his own and the institution's distinction.

Boy did have the opportunity, however, to serve for many years in a variety of effective roles in the American College of Physicians. I know from my conversations with him and from many other colleagues around the country how important this activity was to Boy and how effective he was in his several roles with the College in its professional and educational activities. He served as the Governor for Michigan of the American College of Physicians from 1977 to 1982. He was made Chairman of the Board of Governors of the College in 1982 and then in 1983 a regent of the American College of Physicians. During this period of service, Boy made remarkable contributions to the vigor of the activities of the College, representing professional standards of physicians in Michigan and initiating a number of exciting postgraduate educational activities. Dr. Raymond Mellinger, in reflecting on Boy's service to the College, stated, "no one in my recent memory has contributed more to the life of the Michigan chapter of the College than did Boy Frame." Robert Moser stated, "the Michigan chapter became the prototype of what the ideal College chapter should be. He (Boy Frame) was like a bubbling fountain of new ideas. He exuded enthusiasm and optimism. His formula for the successful regional meeting became a College legend. It caught fire in a dozen states." Boy's remarkable contributions to the College were recognized by his colleagues posthumously by his election to the distinguished post of Mastership of the American College of Physicians.

I had the privilege of listening to an audiovisual tape of an interview that Dr. Marshall Goldberg held with Boy Frame after he became Chief of the Medical Service. Boy pointed out the enthusiasm that he had felt for the great medical educators in his past such as Dr. Peters at Yale and Drs. Walter Bauer, James Howard Means, and Chester Jones at the Massachusetts General Hospital. When he was asked why medicine had attracted him, he stated that he could not remember when it first occurred to him to enter medicine. Rather, he remembers only being sustained by two goals in his medical career: the intellectual challenge of medicine, and the opportunity to help patients with disease.

Boy spoke warmly of the strength and critical help that Jane Frame provided for him throughout their personal life together and his professional career. He explained how Jane had helped him in editing many of his papers. He admitted that at times he was so busy that he forgot to relax, but that it was Jane who reminded him that it was time for them to play tennis. I remember well, incidentally, how formidable Jane and Boy were as a tennis doubles team when they quietly trounced my wife and me dur-

ing an encounter on the court here at the time of the last symposium. Boy was devoted to his children Richard, Abby, and Robin and reveled in their successes in life and in work.

I recall, from the audiovisual interview, that Dr. Goldberg had great difficulty in getting Boy to list what he would like to be remembered by. Boy was very modest about any contributions that he had made and finally decided that if there was anything, it was the importance of strong and supportive interactions with patients and with young colleagues, most of all, stimulating young physicians to excel. When asked what advice he would give to young physicians starting their careers, he said the fol-

lowing: Set a goal and don't be diverted from achieving it. Maintain high standards and be broad as a clinician.

Boy Frame, indeed, epitomized in his own life these remarkable goals. His son, Dr. Richard Frame, in his moving tribute to Dr. Boy Frame, stated: "He had reached the pinnacle of his career and had done everything he wanted to do. There was really very little challenge left for him. In leaving this earth, I believe he transcended into a higher level of existence."

Dr. Boy Frame, we salute you. We hope that your example will inspire others; this is the greatest tribute that could be paid to you.