



ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

**George M.
Wheatley, MD**

Interviewed by

David Annunziato, MD

August 7, 1996
Long Island, New York

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Preface	i
About the Interviewer	ii
Interview of George M. Wheatley, MD	1
Index of Interview	29
Curriculum Vita, George M. Wheatley, MD	32

PREFACE

Oral history has its roots in the sharing of stories which has occurred throughout the centuries. It is a primary source of historical data, gathering information from living individuals via recorded interviews. Outstanding pediatricians and other leaders in child health care are being interviewed as part of the Oral History Project at the Pediatric History Center of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Under the direction of the Historical Archives Advisory Committee, its purpose is to record and preserve the recollections of those who have made important contributions to the advancement of the health care of children through the collection of spoken memories and personal narrations.

This volume is the written record of one oral history interview. The reader is reminded that this is a verbatim transcript of spoken rather than written prose. It is intended to supplement other available sources of information about the individuals, organizations, institutions, and events that are discussed. The use of face-to-face interviews provides a unique opportunity to capture a firsthand, eyewitness account of events in an interactive session. Its importance lies less in the recitation of facts, names, and dates than in the interpretation of these by the speaker.

Historical Archives Advisory Committee, 1996/97

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ABOUT THE INTERVIEWER

David Annunziato, MD, FAAP

Dr. Annunziato has been a pediatrician for more than 50 years. He is Professor of Pediatrics at SUNY Health Sciences Center at Stony Brook. He is currently the Director of Pediatric Education at the Nassau County Medical Center.

Dr. Annunziato has been active in local and national pediatric societies and has participated in numerous committees. He is a past president of the Nassau Pediatric Society and, after chairing several chapter committees, became President of Chapter 2, New York State, of the American Academy of Pediatrics in 1975. Since then he has been on the American Academy of Pediatrics National Nominating Committee, Alternate District Chairman for New York State, District II, and from 1987-1993 was the elected District Chairman, serving on the Board of Directors of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

He currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Senior Section of the American Academy of Pediatrics and is a member of the Historical Archives Advisory Committee of the AAP.

Dr. Annunziato has received numerous awards, including several from the Long Island chapter of the March of Dimes; citations for outstanding service from both the Nassau and Suffolk Pediatric Societies; a citation from the New York State Public Health Service; recognition from the New York State Perinatal Association for his lifetime of service to children; and the Richard L. Day Master Teacher Award in Pediatrics from SUNY Health Sciences Center at Brooklyn. In 1995 he was presented with the American Academy of Pediatrics' most prestigious Clifford C. Grulee award for his outstanding commitment to children's health and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Dr. 'A' has known Dr. Wheatley for more than 30 years yet was amazed at what he has done and continues to do for the American Academy of Pediatrics as well as his exciting and entertaining personal background.

Date: August 7, 1996
Place: Long Island, New York

DR. ANNUNZIATO: Let's start at the beginning. You were born in 1909?

DR. WHEATLEY: That's right.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: Tell us about your childhood as you remember it.

DR. WHEATLEY: I was born in Baltimore, Maryland. My father was William F. Wheatley. Interestingly enough, he was a civil war veteran and he was 65 when I was born on March 21, 1909. This was his second marriage. My mother's name was Teresa Milholland. Her father was a physician in Baltimore. There were four children by that marriage and I was the last, the fourth. The [first] two children died relatively early - under two years of age - which, as you know, was not uncommon in that early time. My sister, who was the third child, also died of a ruptured appendix when she was about eight. I might be jumping ahead of the story a bit.

This is an anecdote related in the history of the American Pediatric Society when Dr. [Howard A.] Pearson was updating that organization's history. My sister was attended by a friend of my grandfather's and that friend's name was Dr. William [D.] Booker. Booker happened to be one of the founders of the American Pediatric Society. He diagnosed my sister as having peritonitis, but he thought she had tuberculous peritonitis because my father had come out of the civil war with tuberculosis. Another interesting side in that respect, his doctor was Dr. Milholland, and my father's first marriage was about the time when my mother was just born. So, there's sort of an interesting connection there in my early days.

Getting back to Dr. Booker and his diagnosis, he tried to persuade my mother to have my sister operated on and I can remember - I was about six I guess - but I can remember the conversation very well. I was hiding behind the door listening. He was saying, "Well, when we open them up, it seems to help when they have tuberculosis." My mother was really pressing him saying, "Could it cure it?" He said he couldn't be sure or something like that. She just put her foot down and said she couldn't stand having her operated on. So, nothing was done and eventually after three or four weeks, she died. So, I remember the episode very well. In reading the history of the Pediatric Society, I saw his name.

There was another little episode in that connection. Booker was a very tall, sort of forbidding type. Obviously, he liked children, but he didn't pay much attention to me. But, my grandfather enjoyed his company and they often went to medical meetings together. He said that on one occasion, they went to Atlantic City and they went to a place that was a cabaret where there were girls walking around trying to get a drink from the men that were coming in. So, he said they took a table in order to rib Booker a bit and asked a couple of the girls to come over and sit with them. He said Booker got so upset that he just got up and left. My grandfather always joked about that.

Getting back to my early days, I was probably about 12 [when] my mother died too. She had a ruptured appendix also. My father lived about another year, to about age 80. I sort of took care of him after the period when my mother died. Of course, this was still in Baltimore. Then, I went to live with a half-sister. This brings up another aspect of my early life. I didn't even know I had half-sisters until one day my mother took me to the hospital. My father was having his prostate removed. Walking down the corridor, I saw these three women that looked about my mother's age. She turned to me and said, "George, these are your half-sisters." That's when I first realized I had more family than I realized. So, the reason I mentioned this was because the half-sister I went to live with had a house and home in Beverly, Massachusetts. So, I went up there and went to St. John's Prep [Preparatory School, Danvers, MA] for a year. I had gone to Calvert Hall in Baltimore up to that point.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: How old were you then?

DR. WHEATLEY: I was about 14, I'd say. I was planning to go to Harvard because my half-sister was married to a physician who had gone to Harvard Medical School and Harvard College. I still had sort of roots in Maryland and that area. I was down in Maryland the year I was living up in Massachusetts going to St. John's. I went down to Baltimore and saw my first cousin who was going to Catholic University [of America] and he was a year ahead of me. He said you could get in there without going another year to prep school if you just sent your marks in. I had pretty good marks.

By that time, I was interested in studying medicine because of my Dr. Ralph Stone, my sister's husband. I used to drive him around on his house calls. He got me a job at the hospital. I first started out at the local hospital waxing floors and taking out all the trash. I've never forgotten going to the operating room the first time. I guess I was about 15. I saw this leg cast; I thought it might be an actual human leg. [Laughs] But, I managed to pick it up and take it out. I then realized what it was.

You can't believe how things could be done in those days. My half-brother-in-law - [laughs] it's a funny way to describe it, but that's the way it was - the doctor, did the anesthesia at the hospital for the local surgeon, who was quite a character: Dr. Pier Johnson. Dr. Stone was my half-brother's name. He taught me to give the anesthesia too [laughs]. I used to help him out. I hadn't even gone to medical school yet. I don't know how they even permitted it. I was fortunate I never had any problems. In those days, we used nitrous oxide to induce. All you needed was about three or four whiffs. You'd ask them to count, "1-2-3," and they were out. You had to be sure you took it off and not get them any deeper. Then you began to use the ether.

Well, I applied to Catholic University and was accepted. I remember going there and being interviewed. We lived in dorms, in houses, really. My house was called St. Thomas, about 30-40 of us lived there. I was being interviewed by the priest; I can't think of his name. He looked at me and said, "How old are you?" I said, "15." I was 15 because it was September and I would have been 16 in the coming March. I thought he was going to throw me out right there. I thought he'd say, "You are too young for this, for college," but he didn't. He let me pass.

That started me on my pre-medical course. That's what I was taking at Catholic University. I spent four years there. I was President of the Dramatic Association, which has since become very famous. It wasn't when I was there. And I edited the paper called *The Tower*. Maybe six or seven years ago, I went back. They have awards for people who have done well in their careers, so I have that from Catholic U.

Then, after I got in, I was worried if I was going to get into Harvard because they took one person from Catholic U from the period that I looked up. But, I think through my half-brother-in-law's influence [I was accepted]. He introduced me to a number of the doctors. He used to take me to affairs there at the medical school before I ever went which enabled me to meet people. I remember meeting Dr. [Elliott P.] Joslin, you know, the diabetic specialist and Dr. [John] Homans who wrote a textbook on surgery. I am trying to recollect going to medical school. I don't want to get into too much detail on that.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: You started medical school in 1929?

DR. WHEATLEY: Yeah. I graduated in 1933. Let's see. Some of the people became quite well known. Dr. [J. Englebert] Dunphy, who later was President of American College of Surgeons. He was a classmate, Bert Dunphy. Merritt [B.] Low, past-president of the Academy was a classmate. One of my close friends, it was very sad, I read a few days ago that he passed away; that

was Charlie Ferguson. He was considered the father of pediatric otolaryngology. He wrote a textbook with Ed [Edwin L.] Kendig [Jr.]. I used to see Charlie at reunions. He lived down in Florida in his later years.

During medical school, I think it was one of the few schools where they had developed dormitory living accommodations for medical students. Up to that time, medical students generally had to live around where best they could. There never was much camaraderie. Harvard just had built this facility [Vanderbilt Hall] that practically took care of all the students. Hal [Harold S.] Vanderbilt was the one who gave the money, but it was Harkness money. My first year I lived with two other students who were in their junior year, which enabled me to meet more of the students of the other years. For example, Claude Welch was a friend of one of my roommates whose name was Winkler. Winkler was very bright. He had his master's degree before he came to medical school. I learned a lot from being in his company. Claude Welch, who recently died, was past president of the AMA [American Medical Association] and a very big figure up in Boston.

Four years at Harvard, and I took a rotating internship at Hartford Hospital. It was relatively rare in those days to get a rotating internship, but I felt I wanted to have experience at doing a lot of different things. I wasn't sure what I wanted to do. In fact, what I thought I really would do is to be a family physician somewhere in New England. But, as I went through my rotating internship, I got interested in pediatrics. I thought I'll go into family practice, and then in later years, I'll specialize in pediatrics. The doctors that influenced me at the Hartford Hospital, one in particular was Ernest Caulfield. I was pleased to see in the brochure the archives has put out, is a quotation from Ernie Caulfield. He was a very modest, unobtrusive man. I liked him very much.

I remember an article written by someone from Harriet Lane [Home]. It was a very good scholarly paper. I saw this Harriet Lane Home; this is a very strange kind of a place to have this kind of an article. I wanted to know more about it. I think I mentioned it to Caulfield one day and he laughed and said, "If you could get in there, it would be very remarkable." As it turned out, it was part of Johns Hopkins [University]. Actually, I saw something the other day, it was the very first children's hospital in the United States that was established.

I applied down there and Dr. Caulfield wrote a letter to Dr. Park, Edwards A. Park, terrific personality, such a real fine, almost kind of a saintly type. He was tall, and you'd think because of his size he'd be kind of a tough character, but he was gentle as a lamb, and a great teacher. He was very forgetful. It used to

be sort of a standing joke. He'd ride a bicycle from his home out in the country into the city, and then sometimes he'd go off to do an errand somewhere. Then, he'd get out and walk back to the office and forget where the bicycle was. Or if he'd take his car, he'd forget where he parked it. He was a wonderful person.

My first wife and I lived right across the street from the hospital. I had a telephone connection with the switchboard so that I could sleep over. We had one floor. You remember Eleanor - did you ever meet her?

DR. ANNUNZIATO: Yes, I believe I did.

DR. WHEATLEY: She was a very good typist and she had had business training, as well as having gone to Smith [College]. She got a job with Dr. Park; she worked for him. She typed his papers for him. I sort of envied her for having this close relationship with the teacher of all of us; but, here he was everyday dictating to her. She'd tell me little episodes and statements that he would make. That was a very, very interesting year.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: George, when did you meet Eleanor?

DR. WHEATLEY: In Beverly. My brother-in-law [Dr. Stone], the doctor, was the physician for Eleanor's grandmother. Actually, I had not met her. I had just heard about her. I remember going to a Chautauqua meeting. I don't know if you've ever heard of a Chautauqua meeting. They were sort of lectures in those days. It happened to be in Beverly. I was with a friend of mine. We went to school together. His name was Bud [Maurice] Ryan. We were sitting and I saw Eleanor walk down the aisle and I liked her looks and profile. I said to him, "That's the girl I'm going to marry." [laughs] I hadn't even met her. But, she went to Smith and was in the class of 1930.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: You were married when?

DR. WHEATLEY: Well, I got married after I graduated from medical school in 1933. I was very fortunate. My mother had died without a will, but she had inherited some money from her father, the doctor. My father didn't have much money when he died. He had been very prominent and successful in Baltimore. He had been president of a bank when he married my mother. Then, he had been sort of conned into doing this. I think prior to that he had been head of the Chamber of Commerce and was very successful at that. That's why they asked him to be president of the bank. A friend had persuaded him to do it. I guess the bank was in bad shape and they wanted a good front to try to save it. It wasn't long after my father became president that it went bankrupt and I think he probably lost most of his money then. So, he went into

the life insurance business. He worked as an agent for New York Life when I knew him, which is ironic because I tell about my years--I was 33 years with Metropolitan Life.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: Before you get to that, George, during your training under the great and famous Edwards Park. What other teachers do you recall that made an impression on you?

DR. WHEATLEY: Well, of course, at Baltimore at that time, there was [L.] Emmett Holt [Jr.], who was the son of L. Emmett Holt and the Harrisons [Harold E. and Helen] were there and since have become very well known. They were just starting their careers.

One I learned a lot from, and I don't think very many people ever heard about, was Harriet Guild. She was Dr. Park's right hand person. She took care of all of his private patients. As part of our training experience, we served and worked with her for a couple of months. I enjoyed that very much.

One other person who was very important was Horace [L.] Hodes. Horace became one of my closest friends. He was in charge of the dispensary when I was there and he would be there from early morning to late at night. He went over every one of our cases. He'd go over them and make notes over them, almost like correcting a paper, you know. He'd point out something, and ask, "Did you think of this?" He was a great teacher and a wonderful person.

And [Francis F.] Schwentker, I don't know if you ever heard of him, but he was the resident at that time. He had gone to the contagious disease hospital. I went out there for a couple of months and worked with him there. And Bob [Robert] Ward, he was the assistant resident. I worked with him a lot. [Helen B.] Taussig, the one who developed the first operation for tetralogy [was there]. Leo Kanner was the children's psychiatrist. We spent time with him.

I left Baltimore after a year and Dr. [Edwards] Park was very unhappy about anybody taking [only] a year in pediatrics. Of course, being married I was anxious to get out. Well, that's when I told him I might be a family physician and get more into pediatrics later. He spoke to one of his friends who was practicing in Pittsfield. I went up to Pittsfield, Massachusetts, and talked to the doctor there - can't remember his name now. He welcomed me and said things were pretty tough now. This was back in 1934 or 35. About that time, a letter came from Dr. [Adolph G.] DeSanctis, professor of pediatrics at Columbia [University College of Physicians and Surgeons] and head of pediatrics at [New York] Postgraduate Hospital. It no longer exists. It became part of New York University. At that time, it was affiliated with Columbia. DeSanctis said he had

an opening for a research fellow and Dr. Park brought it to my attention and so it came up. He said, "We can pay you \$1200." I said I was married and didn't think I could live on that. He said, "OK, \$1400." [Laughs] I said, "OK" and that started me in New York. We had a small apartment out in Jackson Heights. Those days you could drive a car into the city and park without worrying about anything.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: I don't remember those days.

DR. WHEATLEY: DeSanctis was a very good teacher. Postgraduate had these physicians who came from different parts of the country and spent two-three weeks having refresher courses. DeSanctis was a good talker, a very good lecturer. He was a very smooth type. The babies ward there, at Postgraduate, couldn't have been any more than 30 beds, maybe 40 or something like that. It was one floor in the hospital and it had some good people there at that time. A famous surgeon was Dr. Herdman. He did a lot of the rich people in New York.

Dr. Marshall [C.] Pease was on the attending staff. I liked Pease the most out of the people I met at that time. He was a good teacher. Subsequently, he wrote some history about the Academy. I was trying to locate that the other day. I must have lost my copy. I want to see if I can get one.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: I think the archives would like to have a copy of that if we don't have it.

DR. WHEATLEY: Yes, I think you should. But, Pease was a scholarly type, too, and I'm trying to think now. The resident was Charlie Leslie. Leslie had graduated from Columbia Medical School. He was a very interesting fellow and we became very good friends. He subsequently came out here and was one of the first pediatricians in Manhasset.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: Sure, I know him.

DR. WHEATLEY: He had a very good practice. He was a good tennis player. We had great games together. Of course, he's gone too. I had a year at Postgraduate. It was a research project. It didn't amount to very much. Charlie and I studied the pH of the gastric juice of newborn infants. I don't know what conclusions we came to. I used to go over to Columbus. Remember Columbus Hospital? We had a pediatric service there and tested stomach contents of newborns over there. Toward the end of my year, Dr. Park, who kept in touch with people, he'd send these requests that came to him. He would send them up. One day he sent a letter that indicated that the medical school at

South Carolina in Charleston [Medical College of South Carolina] wanted an instructor in pediatrics. I responded to it and the head of pediatrics there came up and I took him around and examined some patients for him. I indicated that I was interested. He said, "Fine," and went back.

Meanwhile, I got another letter from Dr. Park saying New York City Health Department wanted a pediatrician for a study they were making of school health in New York City. The South Carolina job was about \$2,000 and the New York City job, I think, was \$4,000. I was interested in learning more about public health anyway, so the New York job looked more attractive to me. Meanwhile, a letter came for me from South Carolina saying that they appointed me instructor in pediatrics. I felt bad because I didn't really commit myself to this. I said I was sorry, but that I was taking another job.

I applied for the New York City one. I had a call one day when we were at lunch at the hospital and it was Leona Baumgartner and asked if I would come and have lunch. She wanted me to meet some of the people involved. They hadn't accepted me yet. They were looking. I went down there. The people I went to lunch with besides Leona, one was Dorothy [Bird] Nyswander. They introduced her and said she was directing the school health study, and Dr. Harold [H.] Mitchell, who was a health officer in Astoria, which is where the study would be, and Dr. George [Truman] Palmer. Palmer was Deputy Commissioner of Health. We had a very nice meeting. Pretty soon, they appointed me as assistant director. The project funds were made up of money from the American Child Health Association, a grant from Metropolitan Life, and Children's Bureau.

That's how I began to make these different contacts that have been in my life ever since. Dorothy Nyswander gave me the most interesting, valuable experience of any I had ever had, the three years I was with the School Health Study. She was an educational psychologist, very bright. Talk about oral histories. I have a book she sent me, her oral history that has been done by the University of California. She eventually became Professor of Health Education at the University of California. Do you know she's about 101 now? Unbelievable! Marvelous person! She can't see. I have a letter in there you might want to read. She describes where she lives in her bed. Her mind is as clear as a bell.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: You must have known Kitty [Katherine] Bain. She's 99 and we want to do a living history. She didn't want to do a history at this time. We're going to do it in October.

DR. WHEATLEY: Yes, you should. Yes, she's one I remember very well. She was, at that time, in the Children's Bureau. This was a four-year study. They had already done a preliminary one year, and then I came in. I was there until 1940 because I think the study finished in 1940. There's a book, I can show you a copy of it if you're interested, that was produced by Dr. Nyswander. It was called the Astoria School Health Study [*Solving School Health Problems*]. When the study ended, the Health Department wanted to put into practice the concepts and procedures that we had developed and so I was appointed Principal Pediatrician of the Health Department in charge of School Health Service. That was about 1940. I spent the year going around every part of New York City.

I guess I know the city about as well as anybody from that experience. Going by subway, sometimes coming up almost like I was in a foreign land, coming out of the subway. Sometimes I would take my car and travel through to Brooklyn or go across to Staten Island. If we wanted to hold a meeting to explain something to the whole organization - we had about 600 nurses in the city - I had to get the New York Academy of Medicine. We had meetings up there. The school physicians, about 200 of them, were part-time, and very few of them knew much about pediatrics, so while one school health study was going on we arranged to meet with the doctors on Saturday mornings to give them some instruction on pediatrics. The procedure that we developed was we took the children that had been called malnourished during the course of the school year. We got their records out. We said, "We are going to do a nutrition study. We want you to go into their homes and take a pediatric history, seeing if there is a mother there or someone who knows the history of the child, how the child lives, what the child eats, something about the birth history." To go along with that, I prepared something I called a commentary. After each question, it gave a reason why we were asking that. This went on all summer. We were able to do that because they were paid for the full week, but there wasn't anything for them to do in the Child Health Station on Saturday apparently. So that's why they told me, "We have these doctors and we'd like you to do something with them." So, that was an interesting side of the City Health Department.

At that time, the New York City Health Department was really a dynamic organization. Leona Baumgartner was head of what you'd call staff development. She recruited me. She recruited Myron [E.] Wegman. She recruited Bill [William M.] Schmidt. Both of them, you know. Wegman became Dean of the School of Public Health in Michigan [University of Michigan] and President of the American Public Health Association. Bill Schmidt went up to Boston and became Child Health Director there and also did a stint at the Children's Bureau. She went after pediatricians. It's very interesting to get that background and fit them into public health.

It reminds me [that] when I was taking my Boards which I did around 1941 or 42, I was examined by [Charles] Anderson Aldrich of *Babies Are Human Beings*, Gordon Casparis and Hugh Chaplin. I'm not sure who asked me - maybe it was Dr. Aldrich - to discuss cystic fibrosis. I had never heard of it at that time. I think it was just a year after it had been identified by Dr. Anderson. I fumbled around trying to discuss it, and Dr. Aldrich laughed and turned to one of his associates and said, "I think it's one of these public health fellows," and he passed me. I did better with Dr. Casparis, whom I saw toward the end of the day. He described a case of a youngster in school who was having difficulty and asked me what things I would think about. I said one of the things would be to get an IQ [intelligence quotient]. He said, "My gosh, you're the first one to think of that today." So, I managed to get through my boards as a public health fellow.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: So, then, you went up to the Metropolitan Life [Insurance Company].

DR. WHEATLEY: Yes, I was in charge of the School Health Service and during the period we were conducting the Astoria School Health Study, I attended a number of meetings at Metropolitan because the company acted as host for the committee that was supervising the project. On the committee was Dr. [Donald B.] Armstrong and Dr. [Louis I.] Dublin at Metropolitan, Dr. [Haven] Emerson, who was former Employment Commissioner of Health in New York City and Dr. [Philip] VanIngen who was president of the Academy. Incidentally, Dr. VanIngen mentioned the Astoria School Health Study in his presidential address. He was the eighth president of the Academy at that time.

During the course of a year, Dr. Armstrong called me into his office and said they were interested in bringing a young physician into the company in the Welfare Division, as it was called at that time. That division's sole responsibility was promotion of the health of policyholders and the public. At that time, Metropolitan was the largest insurance company in the world. They had something like 40 million policyholders. That was a substantial influence in public health at the time. The division was always directed by a professional health person, Dr. Lee Frankel, who was the first head of the Welfare Division. He became President of the American Public Health Association and Dr. Dublin also became President of the American Public Health Association. Dublin was a very famous statistician of the time and he used to give many statistics of the Metropolitan experience with various health problems to focus attention on them. His findings served as the basis for many of the programs that I was involved with such as rheumatic fever, heart disease, weight control . . .

DR. ANNUNZIATO: Which were all taking lives at the time.

DR. WHEATLEY: Absolutely. It's hard to believe at this time that tuberculosis was the leading cause of death. That's what began a lot of Metropolitan's health promotion work. It was directed at trying to deal with this disease.

So, that's when I began with Metropolitan in 1941, in January 1941. I took my Boards, I think, in that year and soon thereafter I joined the Academy. I was influenced by Dr. Harold [H.] Mitchell, who was the first chairman of the Academy's Committee on School Health. Dr. Harold Mitchell was the health officer for the Astoria District of the city where the School Health Study was conducted. When I first joined Metropolitan, I remember I was taken around to meet the chief executives of the company. I was brought in to meet Mr. [Leroy Alton] Lincoln, who was then President of Metropolitan. He asked me if I was really sure if I wanted to come into the company. He said, "You know, it's like getting married." I said, "Yes, I have thought about it." That's a different attitude than anyone who would be hired today. It was unbelievable in those days that anybody would ever be fired once they came in to join the company.

Then I saw Mr. [Frederick H.] Ecker, who was the honorary chairman. He was probably in his 80s at the time and very vigorous and continued to come in to the company everyday. I think, in the last analysis, he was still running the company. Dr. Armstrong brought me into his office and we sat down and he turned and said, "Why are you interested in coming?" Mr. Ecker turned to me and said, "You're a good doctor. He's just a cat doctor." [laughs] I said, "Well, I believed your advertising. I would have an opportunity to do more for a great many people than just as an individual practitioner." He said, "Well, we can't play all the instruments in the band." That's the first time I ever heard that kind of expression. At that time the only advertising by the company was about health. Every month there was a full-page ad in the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Readers Digest*, the popular magazines of the time. We did the first ad on alcoholism that anybody ever did. We did the first ad on syphilis.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: Did you write those ads?

DR. WHEATLEY: No, Young and Rubicam was the advertising agency. When I became active in the company, I would have a meeting with the advertising people at the beginning of the year and discuss what we considered were important health problems. They would bat it around because they would think of who it would disturb if we did this. I remember when we were talking about seat belts, they were worried about one of our biggest customers,

General Motors, for example. To demonstrate that the company was really serious, Dr. Armstrong told me one time that one of our publications had something about nutrition [stating] that beans were a very good source of protein and you didn't have to eat as much meat as you might think. We began to hear from the one of the meat packing companies that we were hurting their business or something. He said he was called into the chairman's office and was asked if what we were saying was true. Dr. Armstrong said that we were stating it correctly. The chairman said that's all he wanted to know. We never had pressure to avoid anything.

I remember at one meeting when we had the annual report of the company, we usually had a luncheon and reporters would come in. Some of the officers, including myself, would be sitting around, and the president would be discussing things. I remember one reporter asking him about smoking. Before he could reply, I made a comment that it was bad for your health. That kind of electrified everybody because you didn't talk too much about tobacco and all the investments that a company like Metropolitan has.

In my whole experience I never had any problem about trying to say what was right. As you know, I was with them about 33 years. From the beginning, and I think it was because of the reputation of the company, I never felt embarrassed about being a representative of a business organization. Our relationships with the Academy and with other medical groups had never been an issue. When I approached any project that I was involved with at Metropolitan, I always wanted to get a professional organization that had an interest involved also. I remember going up to the Academy of Medicine and meeting with the director at the time. It might have been when we were campaigning about rheumatic fever and the director of the Academy said to me that we had the same interests that they had, to keep people alive. I think that was the difference between having a product that you are trying to sell, like a formula or something, and life insurance, which doesn't get into the decision.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: You joined Metropolitan Life in 1941 and you became a member of the Academy in 1942, and immediately went on the Committee on School Health, in 1942. Actually, the Met Life projects blended in well with the Academy.

DR. WHEATLEY: I think the first one, I was pulling out some of the early stuff. Did you ever see that?

DR. ANNUNZIATO: I never saw this. In fact, I never knew there was a Committee on Rheumatic Fever at the Academy, and you worked on that committee.

DR. WHEATLEY: Yes, that might have been when I met Dr. [Clifford G.] Grulee.

I think I am jumping around here. Beginning with the Met immediately gave me more opportunity to travel, and get into any health matter that seemed important. The company expected me to participate. At that time, rheumatic fever was a real pediatric problem; it is so hard to imagine today.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: It was still a problem when I was in training.

DR. WHEATLEY: I got the idea of sort of putting something like this together. I realized that Metropolitan published all this material and we had the budget for it. We could do something like this and it might do some good. I prepared this with the help of all these people that are listed.

I think it was in San Francisco at the annual meeting, perhaps earlier [that] I first met Dr. Grulee. You know the Academy, the size of it today just astonishes me because I remember going to Dr. Grulee's office on Church Street in Evanston. It was just a small doctor's office. Here he was; he was the Academy! Whatever business I transacted was there. He was very efficient. He'd be asking the questions. He didn't go through any committees; it was just yes or no. I remember going into the lobby of the old Palace Hotel in San Francisco. Here he was sitting there on the couch with his cigar, sort of holding court. If you were chairman of a committee, you'd come up and give him a report. And he'd say, "OK," or something; no notes or anything. If you had to have a decision from him on something, you'd get it in the mail from him in a few days. He was remarkable in his ability to transact business and quite a personality.

I remember when Chris [Einor H. Christopherson] came in, after the war. I wondered; Chris was very quiet. I happened to be at the board meeting; I think I might have been reporting as a committee chairman. I was not on the board, but I was in the room. Chris was sitting in the back of the room; he never said anything. I thought, "Boy, he's going to come in and take Grulee's job and he's such a contrast," and I wondered. Chris was every bit as successful and even more so in his quiet way and his ability to size up people. He was, of course, executive director when I was president. We got along very well.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: You were District Chairman of New York state in 1959. Then, you became Vice President in 1959. What are some of the highlights that occurred in New York and who were the celebrities in pediatrics in New York in those years?

DR. WHEATLEY: Well, I wrote a little piece on that a few years back - a sort of history of New York pediatrics. I think Rusty [Rustin] McIntosh was an outstanding personality, person, during that period. Harry Bakwin was another.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: Sam [Samuel E.] Levine was at New York Hospital?

DR. WHEATLEY: Sam, yes, it was through Sam that I was on the staff at New York Hospital. I started to mention that when I went to the Met [Metropolitan Life Insurance Company], that was a worry I had. I was on the staff and I told Dr. Armstrong I had this appointment. He said to keep it up as long as I could. When I later became chief medical director at Metropolitan, any doctor who wanted to take time to be on the staff at any of the hospitals could do so. I didn't insist, but we gave permission for it. I felt it would be keeping them closer to clinical experience. I kept it up for a number of years until I did quite a bit of traveling and going to various meetings, so that I would be breaking appointments. I felt it would be unfair to the patients because at New York Hospital you saw patients on an appointment basis. That's when I gave up clinical practice.

I think maybe Harry Bakwin may have had much influence in my rise in the Academy. Prior to becoming district chairman, we did the Child Health Study [Study of Child Health Services], which I think, as I look back, was one of the most remarkable projects that the Academy has ever undertaken. It came right after the war. It was kind of an outgrowth of what was called the EMIC [Emergency Maternity and Infant Care] Program, which was a program that the Children's Bureau had sponsored to provide maternity and child health care for the wives and children of servicemen. There was a lot of concern among pediatricians about whether this was an entering wedge to take over more of pediatric practice. Like I said, there was a lot of concern. As a means of trying to deal with this kind of unrest that was prevailing in the Academy at the time, and with the participation of the American Pediatric Society, a committee was organized to undertake a nationwide survey study of the status of health care of children as well as pediatric education. The Children's Bureau, the Public Health Service, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Pediatric Society all joined together. Money was raised to have a national office and then each state through the Academy chapters was organized to conduct the study at state level.

I had charge of New York State. That was another learning experience. We started from scratch. I raised the money to organize the staff. I had representatives full-time in different parts of the state. In each of the major cities, we were able to get the [local] pediatric society to form a committee that would be responsible for their part of the study. We collected data with the

cooperation of the state health department, data on health services available for children. With the cooperation of practitioners, we found both GPs [general practitioners] and pediatricians and the number of children they were seeing each day. You know about this, don't you?

DR. ANNUNZIATO: Yes.

DR. WHEATLEY: I think that would have been 1946-49.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: Well, I see you were on the Committee on Rheumatic Fever and the Committee for the Improvement of Child Health.

DR. WHEATLEY: That was the committee that was a follow-up of the national study that I was just speaking about. It was called "The Itch Committee." [laughs]

DR. ANNUNZIATO: You were on the Committee on Accident Prevention.

DR. WHEATLEY: I was the first chairman of that.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: The Nominating Committee; you were the representative from New York, I assume.

DR. WHEATLEY: Yeah.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: You were on the Committee on Environmental Hazards, now the Committee on Environmental Health, the Committee on International Child Health, the Ad Hoc Committee on Public Health Pediatrics . . . You really bestowed much time to the American Academy of Pediatrics.

DR. WHEATLEY: Well, as I started to say earlier, I couldn't have done it if I had been in private practice; I make no bones about that. That was an advantage to me as far as progressing in the Academy. I think that subsequently it's been recognized that in order to have membership participation, you did have to compensate the position for the time that is involved.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: When I was on the Board, we used to have informal discussions about how it was difficult to be a practitioner and still devote all the time necessary to the Academy. We postulated that probably in the future only full-time people could do it. Hopefully, though, some of the practitioners will be able to do it.

DR. WHEATLEY: Always to me, it separated pediatricians from other physicians. I don't know any group as a whole that has, I'd guess you'd call it the public spirit, of pediatricians as a whole to give their time to benefit children as a whole. I think this, again, is the reason why I've always been interested in doing what I was able to do for the Academy, because I don't know any [other] group that has this public spirit. I think it's also responsible for the growth of the Academy. It's a good organization and it has maintained that objective of being concerned of the welfare of children. You commented on the name of that Welfare Division. Soon after I went to the Met, I got them to change that. It was called Health and Welfare, and, later, they changed it to just Health Promotion or something like that. The "welfare" struck me as not having quite the tone for what we are doing.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: But, when you think about the word, "welfare," it really means good health.

DR. WHEATLEY: Yeah, well, the Academy has changed that, haven't they?

DR. ANNUNZIATO: I don't think they have a Welfare Committee.

DR. WHEATLEY: But, in its mission statement, it states, "the health and welfare of children."

DR. ANNUNZIATO: Oh, yes, the health and welfare of children.

DR. WHEATLEY: I think I mentioned how Dr. VanIngen got into the picture.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: I wasn't aware that he was from New York, to be honest with you. The only presidents from New York that I knew, presidents of the Academy were yourself, of course, and Bakwin, I thought that was all. But, VanIngen was a New Yorker.

DR. WHEATLEY: Yeah, New York City.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: Was there another?

DR. WHEATLEY: Yes, the one who wrote the history. Paul [W.] Beavan.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: Paul Beavan was also from New York and a past president.

DR. WHEATLEY: He was from Rochester, I think.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: Yes that's right. I didn't remember him. While you were president, Christopherson was the executive director. You really had a very, very active presidency. You wrote profusely.

DR. WHEATLEY: I started a monthly page and I thought it was the best way of trying to keep in touch with the membership.

I was thinking of a couple of my worst moments as president. Probably the worst moment was when I checked into the Orrington Hotel with my wife and we were just getting ourselves settled in the Presidential Suite and the telephone rang. The operator said, "There is a man having a heart attack on the next floor. Would you please go and see him?" I dropped everything and ran down the stairs; I don't think I took the elevator. I got down the hall. I saw this lady standing in the hall who was Mary Schade. She said, "I think George is having a heart attack." I walked into the room. George Schade was the district chairman for District IX; he was from Oregon. He was in his shorts with his hand like this; on his left wrist. There was no pulse; he was kind of blue. Mouth-to-mouth had been talked about; that was the only thing I could think to do. I breathed on him a couple times. I could see him come back; he was getting a little pink. I said to get Dr. [Carl C.] Fischer; he was president-elect. He came in quickly and he started chest massage.

We worked on him until the ambulance came. It seemed like forever until I heard the ambulance come down the road to the Orrington. They came in with oxygen, but he had gone. I think I was working on him just when he expired.

He was a very fine person. We were just beginning the annual meeting. The executive board meetings were pretty terrible, of course. To go through that, and then have to make the announcement while everybody gathered at the hotel, the Palmer House I guess it was. And Mary Grace took Mary Schade back with her to Oregon to take the body. We had to go on with the meeting.

I think that was the most traumatic. I think the most difficult thing I had to do was to ease Charlie [Charles D.] May out of the editorship [of *Pediatrics*]. You probably don't remember him.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: Yes, I remember Charles May very well.

DR. WHEATLEY: I liked Charlie. I got along with him. He rubbed a lot of people on the executive board the wrong way. He was pretty arrogant and thought everyone else was kind of stupid. He made a couple of presentations to the board that didn't win him any friends. I guess there was some other stuff

that involved him with a nurse out there at the hospital. I think he eventually married her, but he left his wife. That was sort of in the background. Professionally, of course, he was a very bright and able person and he did a good job on the magazine. He had a good strong editorial board. But our board said, "Look, you've got to get rid of him," not quite as bluntly.

That was the message to me, and so Chris and I went to Atlantic City where there was a meeting of the American Pediatric Society where our editorial board was meeting. I had to make a presentation to them. Charlie was not in the room, fortunately. I remember going over the whole background indicating that we were really unhappy about it and that was our decision. I thought maybe the board might just up and resign. But, Charlie [Charles A.] Janeway, who was on the board, spoke up. He backed our board's decision, so I brought Charlie in and sort of indicated that they were going along with us. That was my hardest moment.

What was very good was Chris was so good at being able to deal with problems like that. He got hold of Clem [Clement A.] Smith and persuaded Clem to take the editorship over, so I was in a position of being able to offer a good substitute. I think it would have been very bad to just remove him and then go hunting around to find somebody. So, we had that all lined up.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: Those things are always very difficult.

DR. WHEATLEY: I think one of the kind of highlights in my career as president was a trip, actually I took it as president-elect. We went to South America, to Brazil. Went to Rio, San Juan, Puerto Rico, went to Caracas [Venezuela] for the Pan American [Congress of] Pediatrics, and I guess, Peru. I started out with Chris. Of course, I was leaning on him. He spoke Portuguese and Spanish. He was going to be my spokesman. He got sick in the first place, which was Rio, so we had to leave him behind and go on. We picked him up at the Pan American meetings.

When I would get up, they would have an interpreter beside me. I would make these few remarks and then, all of a sudden, all of this Spanish would come out and he would spend twice as much time with gestures over what I had said. [laughs] It was a great experience. There were a lot of lovely people down there.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: The Academy had a big contingency in South America in those days. It has dwindled quite a bit, they say because of the expensive dues. That's something the Academy should reinstitute somehow, get South American pediatricians involved in the Academy more.

DR. WHEATLEY: Yes, I think Chris was more responsible for that than anyone because of him being stationed in Brazil during the war. Then, he maintained a lot of his contacts there, and [his] being able to speak the language made them feel very much a part of the Academy. It's too bad we've lost that. That was one of the interests I had in being chairman of the International Child Health Committee. We were able to get, through Johnson & Johnson, money [so] that we could send pediatricians down there to work in their hospitals to teach some of our methods.

When I was there, it struck me that they were continuing to rely too much on the lecture process, more the European style, than what we're accustomed to; we could encourage them to be more like our own. I think Mexico City was more like ours. But, a place like Buenos Aires, it would have 300 or 400 students in the amphitheater, and you're trying to teach them pediatrics; it wasn't very good.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: When you finished with the presidency, you were still very, very active in the Academy, continuing on committees. I noticed that you had your longest tenure, probably, on the Environmental Hazards Committee and on the Accident Prevention Committee. That's when they really took off, when you were active on those committees. Do you remember any highlights from those?

DR. WHEATLEY: Well, my chairmanship initiated the Committee on Accident Prevention. That would have been in 1950. I think it's like they say, it was an idea whose time has come. It was apparent from our Metropolitan statistics, for example, that children were threatened more by accidents than communicable diseases in that 1950 period. Having physicians more aware of the risks that young children were subject to would be an important thing to undertake. The way we approached it was to collect information about the frequency of various kinds of accidents and it very quickly showed that many of the accidents were related to the stage of development of the child. But the people who had been doing accident prevention up to that time, like the National Safety Council, didn't really understand about what children could be expected to do or what trouble they could get into. That is the kind of contribution pediatrics has made to the accident problem. I think one of the interesting programs that we put on was, first of all, we had to get the pediatrician to feel that this was a part of his professional responsibility. Dr. McIntosh at Columbia was very helpful there. I got Metropolitan to make a small grant to do a study of child behavior in relation to accidents. Do you remember Bill [William S.] Langford?

DR. ANNUNZIATO: Yes.

DR. WHEATLEY: Well, Bill Langford did the study and Dr. McIntosh reported on it. We were able to set up a joint meeting of the Academy and the National Safety Council when they were both meeting in Chicago. Rusty made this speech at a general meeting describing the findings of this study and indicating the importance of accidents in children.

We were talking about the joint meeting with the National Safety Council. In connection with that meeting, I had arranged through an organization that developed health education programs to put a program on that dealt with child accidents. It was going to be on national radio, but it would be performed live at this joint meeting of the Safety Council and the Academy as a part of the program. This organization paid for having professional actors put on this skit; I can't remember exactly what it was. They had well-known actors especially for this project. It was put on and then I made a few remarks at the end about accident prevention. It was all taped and the evening finished.

The next morning I got a call on the phone from the fellow who was promoting this. He said that they'd had a catastrophe. By some mischance, the tape was put into the erase file and it wiped out the whole thing. He wanted me to come down and repeat my remarks and they would bring the actors at another time. They were still going to do this. They put it together and it was on national radio some weeks afterwards.

I think the accident program enabled the Academy to become involved with a number of organizations, sort of outside the usual sphere of pediatrics. I was thinking of the program we developed to reduce the lead content of paint. We worked with the organization called American Standards Association, which was a business organization representing all manufacturing interests, who come together to try and deal with a problem they had through voluntary participation to create uniformity in the manufacturers, maybe nuts and bolts or something like that. So, we used that organization to see if they could come up with a standard for paints that were going to be used indoors or in areas where children might be exposed. I think it did produce a standard for lead content, which subsequently has been further reduced as time has gone on. It was a way of getting something started.

Getting the closures for medicine bottles was also worked out with the cooperation of manufacturers. We had to bring various groups together like that.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: You were on the Committee on Environmental Hazards for a long time. It's now called the Committee on Environmental Health. What was their biggest project while you were with them?

DR. WHEATLEY: You know, I draw a blank on that one. I just wonder why I can't seem to recall very much about it. It would seem to me that it is so close to accident prevention. Talking about paint, certainly the lead content represents an environmental hazard. We had a project on the flammability of fabrics started as a result of children being burnt when they had what looked like woolly chaps. They were some kind of nylon; they were very flammable. That was also approached through the standards association to avoid selling fabrics that had this kind of potential.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: You retired from Metropolitan Life in 1974.

DR. WHEATLEY: That's right.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: That was your first retirement.

DR. WHEATLEY: [laughs]

DR. ANNUNZIATO: Then, you took up a new endeavor.

DR. WHEATLEY: Well, I didn't feel like I was ready to give up in 1974, and about that time, Mary McLaughlin, who had been commissioner of health in New York City took the position as Commissioner of Public Health for Suffolk County. So, I called on her shortly after she was out there and told her that if there was anything that she thought I could do, to please call me. She called me in a few days and asked if I would like to be medical director for the Medicaid program in Suffolk County. I said I didn't know anything about it, but I was willing to try. When I went out there, they told me I was the eleventh doctor that they had had and this had been going about five or six years. I didn't know what I was getting into.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: What year was that, George?

DR. WHEATLEY: That was 1974. I went right to work the next month. I retired in April and then in May I went out to County. I did that for 21-22 years, something like that.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: That was a challenge.

DR. WHEATLEY: It was very interesting. I wish it was possible to do more. You see the opportunity to do it, but either you don't have the resources, or . . . We did a very interesting project that you probably know about. It involved the Academy. Again, as I've said earlier, I always felt that was one of the ways to get things done was to work in cooperation with other organizations and we did this as kind of an outcome of my involvement in the Committee on Third Party Payment Plans, where we talked about Medicaid a lot and I was involved in it everyday.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: That was a committee of the Academy, too, the Third Party Payment Plans. I never heard of it. Even being active, I had never heard of that committee. 1969.

DR. WHEATLEY: Yeah.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: I guess that's when pediatricians were feeling the pinch of third party payers. I noticed that originally when the committee was formed, and you were very active in the beginning, the Academy was really an organization for welfare of children. I think it's evolved into not only their welfare, but also the strong health and prevention, and now it focuses a little bit on welfare of pediatricians too. I think that's fair, and medicine is changing quite dramatically as you well know. Certainly, not the medicine that you and I know. Do you have any thoughts on where we're going with medicine in general and with pediatrics specifically?

DR. WHEATLEY: I think it's going to much more organized care. It seems to be that each generation comes out of training having been more regimented than the previous generation; I think more susceptible to salary. When you think about it, the current generation of graduates from medical school must be very much in debt and the way they're going to overcome that is that they've got to have income. The quickest way to get income is to join an organization that will pay them a salary and it's very attractive.

I think in hospital work now, they are more accustomed to having time off and working so many hours. It's a whole different experience than you and I have had. So, I can't help but think it will be more of a structured kind of delivery of medical care. I doubt you can escape the third party payer because the cost involved is horrendous when you look back at what things did cost.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: We have so many new facilities and new innovations in medical care. I feel that the care in the United States is, by far, the best in the world. But, it is expensive, there's no question. But, the doctors are suffering because they get a fee for their service from a third party payer. They feel they have lost control, I believe. The government now is entering welfare reform at this stage, and I understand

that Medicare and Medicaid will be cut dramatically. Do you think that's going to have an effect on the health and welfare of children?

DR. WHEATLEY: Yes, it is. I think it will have. I don't know whether the outcome will be as gloomy as the predictions.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: That's great that you're optimistic about it.

DR. WHEATLEY: Yeah, I think that there are so many organizations that are interested in the welfare of children that the many deficiencies will be quickly be identified. I'm not as pessimistic. I can see that Democrats would make a big issue of this. I think there's a lot of money out there available, if it's properly used. I've seen some things that have happened in my own personal experience. I think that if Medicare were more alert, they could prevent some of the waste that is going on.

We might just go back to the Accident Prevention Committee, of which, as I mentioned, I was the first chairman. In 1950, when we started, poisoning was the most important childhood accident. It was brought to our attention by a number of practitioners who said that one of their most difficult problems in practice was a frantic mother calling and saying that their child had swallowed some household product or taken some medicine. She didn't know what to do. The physician, himself, really didn't know what to say in many situations. We got the idea for having some resource available for the practitioner. I believe that New York City, in the health department, had an expert on dangerous chemicals and other household products. They received calls from physicians. We were talking about it with Dr. [Edward] Press, who was a member of our committee. He was very much interested in poisonings. I asked him if he would take this problem over and see what he could do with it. He was then in the Illinois Crippled Children's Commission.

He organized around Chicago the first Poison Control Center, which was a resource for a whole area and was publicized locally. We discussed it at Academy meetings. The whole idea was picked up very quickly. Many hospitals set up an answering service and used a publication that came out about that time. This publication was called, *Clinical Toxicology of Commercial Products: Acute Poisoning Home and Farm*. It was developed by Marion [N.] Gleason and Dr. Robert [E.] Gosselin, who was Professor of Pharmacology at Dartmouth, and Harold [C.] Hodge, who was Professor of Pharmacology at the University of Rochester. Marion Gleason was a research associate. She did a terrific job of putting together this publication, which furnished information about a whole host of products by trade name and antidotes. In fact, it was a handbook that the house staff could use to deal with

almost any product that could be brought to their attention. This has gone through innumerable editions at many hospitals. They used this book, really, as a basis for their Poison Control Centers.

Marion Gleason is an honorary member of the American Academy of Pediatrics; she received the membership for this work. As I said, the idea of having available an information resource on toxicity and treatment of [poisoning by] these household products has been a tremendous development which the Academy sponsored. Now, we have innumerable centers around the country and in other parts of the world.

Soon after this development began, there were so many centers springing up around the country that I was able to get Metropolitan to make a small grant to hire a toxicologist to visit centers around the country to see how they were performing and to evaluate the need for some kind of standardization in their operation. This was Dr. [Edward] Cranch, who was retiring as medical director and expert toxicologist from the Union Carbide Company. Through his efforts, his findings were brought to the leaders and these various poison control centers and out of it developed the American Association of Poison Control Centers. We also thought it was desirable to have a clearinghouse where information being discovered in one location might be communicated to centers elsewhere. Through the assistance of Dr. Aims [Chamberlain] McGuinness, another pediatrician/Academy member who was part of the Public Health Service, the meeting was convened at the Public Health Service where I was able to encourage them to form a unit which would serve as a national focus for this whole program. This is still functioning today as a national clearinghouse for poisoning. One of the most active members of the Accident Prevention Committee in recent years has been Dr. [Howard C.] Mofenson, who has been instrumental in developing a very strong Poison Control Center at the Nassau County Medical Center, where he provides monthly information on current poisoning problems in children.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: I am sure those Poison Control Centers have saved numerous lives. George, tell me, when you joined the Academy, it wasn't a very large organization. We're almost 50,000 strong now, or just about 50,000. What are your thoughts on that growth?

DR. WHEATLEY: Well, I think it's been remarkable. I believe it's due, to a large extent, to the dedicated interest that so many members have had in promoting child health and doing good for children over and above the demands of their daily practice. I think that's what sets the Academy apart from other medical organizations. I think physicians, those that are pediatricians, want to

belong to an organization like this that is so highly respected by the country as a whole, and I think it will continue to attract pediatricians because of that.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: You're retired, but aren't you still active with the [AAP] Partnership [for Children]?

DR. WHEATLEY: Yes that has been a very interesting experience. It's kind of an outgrowth of the activity that we put together to raise money for the new building. I remember when the Academy's headquarters was built in Evanston, we thought that was the last word. It cost a million dollars. But, the Academy had been very frugal up to that point through the efforts of Dr. [Edgar E.] Martmer, who was the treasurer of the Academy for many years. There were many good investments on his part. The building was paid for from the start. This new building was a very substantial undertaking. We put together contacts in various parts of the country that assisted us in raising the money for the new building. As a result of that experience, it was felt [that] a continuing unit within the Academy structure to raise money for beneficial programs for children would be a desirable thing. There was a lot of discussion about whether it should be a foundation. The Academy, of course, by its own definition and the interpretation by the Internal Revenue Service, is considered a charitable tax-free organization itself. So, we didn't see the need to create a foundation for that purpose. The partnership was organized and at the present time, it's undertaken to raise money for a new Academy program called the CATCH Program, which is a program which enlists the practicing pediatrician in a community effort to improve child health in his area. It was initiated with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, which made a grant for a period of about four years. The partners are trying to raise the money that will continue this program in the future. Probably as many as a thousand pediatricians in various parts of the country have established programs to improve child health, and we think it's a very good example [of] what I've been talking about, dealing with something for the community as a whole that sets the Academy apart as an organization.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: George, you've received a number of honors over your lifetime, but I'm sure you cherish The Grulee Award. Do you have any words about the Grulee Award?

DR. WHEATLEY: Well, I guess it's a recognition of service to the Academy, which I was certainly very proud to receive. I don't know I can say much more.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: Having reviewed what you have done, no one deserved it more. You know, I just got that Grulee Award last year, and I'm so honored to be in your company.

DR. WHEATLEY: We are certainly delighted that you did receive it.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: Well, thank you. Tell me now, what are your plans for the future? I understand that there are some changes being made.

DR. WHEATLEY: Well, yeah, I am looking forward to it. We are pulling up stakes here, on Long Island, and going to live just outside of Richmond [Virginia], in a facility that is just being put together which provides total care from being upright to being prone. [laughs] We have our own little cottage down there that we are planning on moving into before the end of the year. It's a retirement community with all amenities and also a little nursing home with medical and nursing assistance if you need it.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: Well, don't forget to leave your phone number. I am sure people will want to call.

DR. WHEATLEY: I am looking forward to our Academy friends down there. I've been in touch with Ed Kendig and hope to see more of him. I always enjoy seeing him at the annual meeting.

I received a call from the president-elect the other day, asking for suggestions. We were having a conference that was coming up of the executive committee and the executive board. The only thing I just thought about, wondered about - I don't know if I have an answer, but it relates to the growth of the Academy. The growth of the committees and the sections, it's a dilemma related to growth. It's becoming hard to really kind of see the woods for the trees now. I just hope that the Academy is not going to be fractioned up so much so that you lose a sense of the whole. In the years when we were able to meet in one hotel and have a relatively smaller group, one got to know more of the Academy and could sense a kind of direction. I think it's a problem for the current leadership. And as I said, I don't know if I have any way to answer that. But, it seems to me it must be troubling to some of you.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: I am sure it is. George, thank you so much. This is going to be a very important document for the Academy and I am sure that a lot of people will want to hear this interview. I was talking with Ed [Maurice E.] Keenan and he said that what he hoped people would do is after meetings, sit around and listen to these things as a rather routine thing in the future.

DR. WHEATLEY: That reminds me, I didn't mention the large concerts that the Academy used to have. I judge that we're not having one this year.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: I understand that one of the other companies is going to take it all over so that they may be renewed.

DR. WHEATLEY: I thought it was a highlight of the Academy meetings and it came about, you know, during the administration of Harry Bakwin. Harry and I used to lunch together quite frequently over the years and he called me one day. He said he'd had kind of a bad experience with a representative from Johnson & Johnson calling at his office. It was about that time I was working with Dr. Henderson, who was Medical Director of Johnson & Johnson, something about the Accident Prevention Committee. So, I called Henderson and I said, "You've got kind of a PR problem here because Dr. Bakwin, who was president-elect of Academy, was kind of annoyed at something." Henderson said we should get together for lunch to talk this over. I called Harry and asked if he would have lunch with us. Harry was still suspicious and said he wanted to have lunch at his place which was a little Balkan restaurant over on the East Side. So, sure enough, I put it together; the three of us had lunch one day. The conversation went very well and they started asking each other about their interests. Of course, you know Harry's interest in music....

DR. ANNUNZIATO: And art.

DR. WHEATLEY: Yes, and Henderson said that he'd love to play the organ. Bakwin asked if he would be interested in sponsoring a concert. I almost fell off my chair because it was the last thing I was thinking about. Henderson immediately said, "That's a great idea - we'll do it!" The meeting was scheduled when Harry was going to be president and it was in New York. So, they had the NBC Symphony Orchestra [Symphony of the Air]. The concert was given up at an auditorium at Hunter College, about 68th Street or something. It was right by Harry's home; it was about 73rd Street where he lived.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: 71st.

DR. WHEATLEY: And Harry had a nice cocktail party before the affair and some of the Johnson & Johnson people were there. We all walked into the auditorium; it was a great evening. And from that time on, we had a concert sponsored by Johnson & Johnson. So, it was sort of an "off-the-cuff" type of thing.

DR. ANNUNZIATO: That's a very interesting highlight. I think most people feel that that was the one of the highlights of every meeting. Hopefully, that'll come back.

INDEX

A

accidents [childhood], 19, 20
advertisements, 11
Aldrich, Charles Anderson, 9
American Academy of Pediatrics, 3, 7, 10, 11,
12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24,
25, 26
American Academy of Pediatrics Ad Hoc
Committee on Public Health Pediatrics, 15
American Academy of Pediatrics Board of
Directors, 15
American Academy of Pediatrics Committee
for the Improvement of Child Health, 15
American Academy of Pediatrics Committee
on Accident Prevention, 15, 19, 23, 24, 26
American Academy of Pediatrics Committee
on Environmental Hazards, 15, 20
American Academy of Pediatrics Committee
on International Child Health, 15, 18
American Academy of Pediatrics Committee
on Rheumatic Fever, 12, 15
American Academy of Pediatrics Committee
on School Health, 11, 12
American Academy of Pediatrics Committee
on Third Party Payment Plans, 21
American Academy of Pediatrics Partnership
for Children, 24, 25
American Association of Poison Control
Centers, 24
American Medical Association, 4
American Pediatric Society, 1, 14, 17
American Public Health Association, 9, 10
American Standards Association, 20
Anderson, Dr., 9
Armstrong, Donald B., 10, 11, 12, 14
Astoria, 8, 11
Astoria School Health Study, 8, 10, 11

B

Bakwin, Harry, 13, 14, 16, 26, 27
Baltimore, Maryland, 1, 2, 5, 6
Baumgartner, Leona, 8, 9
Beavan, Paul W., 16
Beverly, Massachusetts, 2, 5
Booker, William D., 1, 2

C

Calvert Hall, Baltimore, Maryland, 2

Casparis, Gordon, 9, 10
CATCH Program, 25
Catholic University of America, 2, 3
Caulfield, Ernest, 4

Chaplin, Hugh, 9
Chautauqua meeting, 5
Children's Bureau, 8, 9, 14
Christopherson, Einor H., 13, 17, 18
Columbia University College of Physicians
and Surgeons, 6, 7, 19
Columbus Hospital, 7
concert [annual meeting], 27
Cranch, Edward, 23

D

DeSanctis, Adolph G., 6, 7
Dublin, Louis I., 10
Dunphy, J. Englebert, 3

E

Ecker, Frederick H., 11
Emergency Maternity and Infant Care
Program (EMIC), 14
Emerson, Haven, 10

F

Ferguson, Charlie, 3
Fischer, Carl C., 17
flammability of fabrics, 20
Frankel, Lee, 10

G

Gleason, Marion N., 23
Gosselin, Robert E., 23
Grulee Award, 25
Grulee, Clifford G., 12, 13
Guild, Harriet, 6

H

Harkness, 4
Harriet Lane Home, 4
Harrisons, Harold E. and Helen, 6
Hartford Hospital, 4
Harvard Medical School, 2, 3, 4

health education, 19
health promotion, 10
Henderson, Dr., 26, 27
Herdman, Dr., 7
Hodes, Horace L., 6
Hodge, Harold C., 23
Holt, L. Emmett, Jr., 6
Homans, John, 3

J

Janeway, Charles A., 18
Johnson & Johnson, 18, 26, 27
Johnson, Pier, 3
Joslin, Elliott P., 3

K

Kanner, Leo, 6
Keenan, Maurice E., 26
Kendig, Edwin L., Jr., 3, 26

L

Langford, William S., 19
lead content of paint, 20
Leslie, Charlie, 7
Levine, Samuel E., 13
Lincoln, Leroy Alton, 11
Low, Merritt B., 3

M

Martmer, Edgar E., 24
May, Charles D., 17
McGuinness, Aims Chamberlain, 24
McIntosh, Rustin, 13, 19
McLaughlin, Mary, 21
Medicaid, 21, 22
Medical College of South Carolina, 7
Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, 5, 8,
10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 19, 21, 23
Milholland, Dr., 1
Milholland, Teresa, 1
Mitchell, Harold H., 8, 11
Mofenson, Howard C., 24

N

Nassau County Medical Center, 24
National Safety Council, 19
New York Academy of Medicine, 12
New York City Health Department, 8, 9
New York Hospital, 13, 14
New York Postgraduate Hospital, 6, 7

Nyswander, Dorothy Bird, 8

O

Orrington Hotel, 16, 17

P

Palmer, George Truman, 8, 17
Pan American Congress of Pediatrics, 18
Park, Edwards A., 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

Pearson, Howard A., 1
Pease, Marshall C., 7
Pediatrics, 17
Pittsfield, Massachusetts, 6
Poison Control Center, 23, 24
poisoning, 23, 24
Press, Edward, 23

R

radio show [accident prevention], 20
rheumatic fever, 10, 12
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 25
Ryan, Maurice [Bud], 5

S

Schade, George, 17
Schmidt, William M., 9
Schwentker, Francis F., 6
Smith College, 5
Smith, Clement A., 18
smoking, 12
South America, 18
St. John's Preparatory School, Danvers,
Massachusetts, 2
Stone, Ralph, 2, 3, 5
Study of Child Health Services, 14
Suffolk County, 21
Symphony of the Air, 27

T

Taussig, Helen B., 6
tuberculosis, 1, 10

U

U. S. Public Health Service, 14, 24

V

Vanderbilt Hall, 4
Vanderbilt, Harold S., 4
VanIngen, Philip, 10, 16

W

Ward, Robert, 6
Wegman, Myron E., 9

Welch, Claude, 4
**Welfare Division, Metropolitan Life
Insurance Company**, 10, 15
Wheatley, Eleanor, 5
Wheatley, William F., 1
Winkler, 4

RESUME

GEORGE M. WHEATLEY, M.D.

Personal: Born - March 21, 1909
Widower

Education: B.S. - Catholic University of America, 1929
M.D. - Harvard Medical School, 1933
M.P.H. - Columbia University, 1942

Medical Training:

1933-35: Intern, Hartford Hospital, Hartford, Conn.
1935-36: House Officer, Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, Maryland
1936-37: Mead-Johnson Research Fellowship, New York Postgraduate Hospital (University Hospital)

Specialty Certification:

1942 Pediatrics
1949 Public Health and Preventive Medicine

Experience:

1937-41: New York City Health Department
1937-40: Assistant Director of the Astoria School Health Study, New York City. Research and development of health supervision procedures for children in the public schools of New York City's Astoria Health District.
1940-41: Principal Pediatrician, School Health. Introduced into the public and parochial school systems of New York City the program developed through the Astoria Study. Administered school health service of 200 part-time M.D.'s and 800 public health nurses in more than 1,000 schools of the City.
1941-73: Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, New York City
1941-45: Assistant Medical Director, Health and Welfare Division.

- 1945-49: Assistant Vice President. Assistant to Vice President in Charge. Program involved administering visiting nurse service for policyholders at cost of approximately \$3,000,000 annually; developing health education materials, including motion pictures with a budget of about \$500,000 annually; participation in creating national advertisements concerning health at a cost of \$4,000,000 annually; investigating and advising on Company contributions for health.
- 1949-61: Third Vice President. Participated in phasing out of the nursing service, which affected more than 800 communities in the U.S. and Canada without impairing the public image of the Company. With the retirement of the Vice President in Charge, became head of the Division in 1959.
- 1961-65: Third Vice President and Medical Director.
- 1965-69: Senior Medical Director.
- 1969-74: Vice President and Chief Medical Director. Responsible for administering the Company's Medical Department; includes Medical Underwriting and Claims, Employee Health Services, Biochemical Laboratory and Health and Welfare Division. Annual budget - \$4,400,000. Number of employees - 224.

Company Policy Committee Memberships:

Contributions
 Claims
 Underwriting
 Advertising

- 1974-96 Medical Director, Suffolk County (New York) Department of Social Services.

Significant Extra-Company Professional and Business Involvements:

American Academy of Pediatrics:

District Chairman - 1954-59
 Vice President - 1959-60
 President - 1960-61
 Founder and First Chairman of Committee on Accident Prevention, 1952
 Past Chairman - Committee on Rheumatic Fever
 Past Chairman - Committee on International Health
 Past Member of Committees on Improvement of Child Health, School Health, Environmental Hazards, and Nominations

National Safety Council: Member, Board of Directors

New York Chamber of Commerce and Industry: Member, Board of Directors

American Red Cross, New York Chapter: Member, Board of Directors

American Heart Association: Member, Board of Directors

New York Heart Association: Chairman, Executive Committee;
Member, Board of Directors

American Social Health Association: Vice President

Johnson and Johnson Institute for Pediatric Service: Member, Board of Trustees

Industrial Health Foundation: Member, Board of Trustees

Medic Alert Foundation's Medical Advisory Committee: Member

Foundation for Child Development (formerly the Association for the Aid of Crippled Children): Council Member

New York Academy of Medicine: Member

Honors: Charles V. Chapin Memorial Award, presented by the City of Providence, Rhode Island

Clifford G. Grulee Award of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Award of Merit, American Heart Association

Distinguished Alumnus Award, Catholic University of America

Injury Prevention Award, American Academy of Pediatrics

Publications: Child Health Services in New York State: A Cooperative Study. New York: New York State Study Committee, American Academy of Pediatrics, 1949.

Health Observation of School Children. Third Edition. McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1965.

Numerous articles on child health, accident prevention, medical economics and health services.