

Dr. Gordon Meiklejohn was a world renowned physician and Chairman of the Department of Medicine at the University of Colorado. He is best known for being a catalyst in researching, diagnosing, and inoculating for the flu virus, and was instrumental in the eradication of Smallpox. Dr. Meiklejohn was the son of Alexander Meiklejohn. He excelled in academics and sports, especially ice hockey, and was twice invited to participate on the U.S. Olympic Hockey teams.

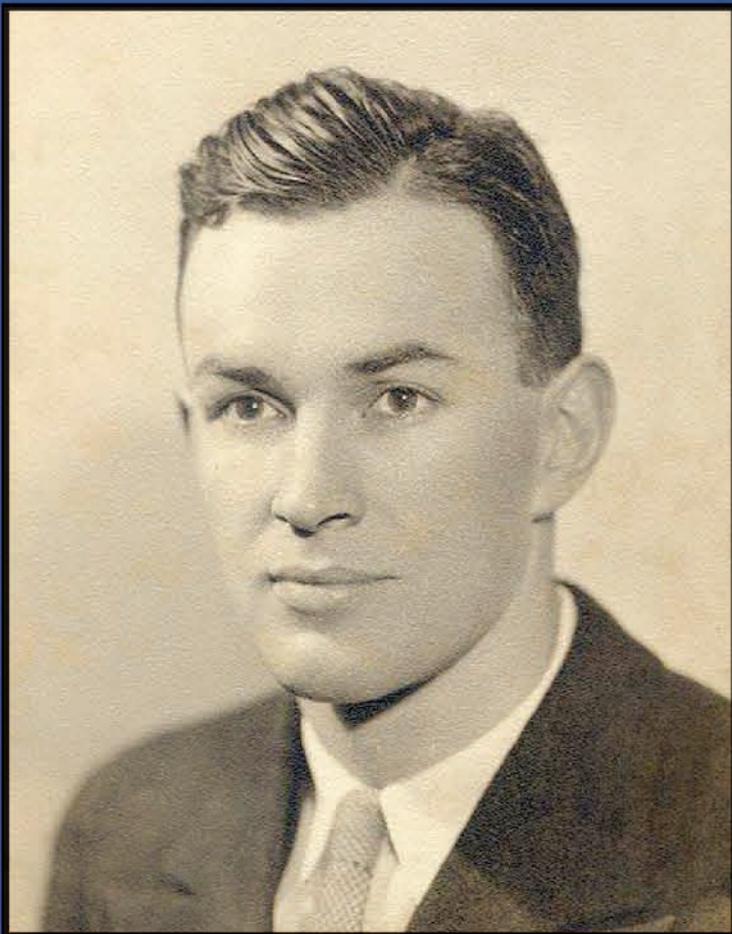
### **From Slap Shots to Flu Shots: The Gordon Meiklejohn Story**

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# FROM SLAP SHOTS TO FLU SHOTS



THE GORDON MEIKLEJOHN STORY

ANNIE KEMPE & ROBBIE MEIKLEJOHN BURT  
WITH PAT GRAVES

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## **CHAPTER I: THE MEIKLEJOHN CLAN..... The Back Story**

It was perhaps written in the stars that Dr. Gordon Meiklejohn would live a life of service, that he would be a force to be reckoned with, that he would greatly enhance the research, teaching and practice of medicine, that he would quietly but forcefully make his mark by changing the field of medicine in his time. The path he took is partly the result of the legacy of his unusual family. It's also a reflection of a man who lived life on his own terms, with grace and decency. It is therefore not surprising that one day he would seek a wife who possessed many of the same personal qualities. He was fortunate in finding Greta to share his life and help rear their three children, Robbie, Jamie and Nancy.

The threads that run through families are sometimes thematic. For the Meiklejohn clan, generations of Scottish textile colorists, the analogy is also literal. Threads of hard work, skilled labor, service to one's community, and doing the right thing regardless of the demand for sacrifice, colored the weave of the family.

Gordon Meiklejohn was welcomed into the world, in Providence, Rhode Island, on April 8, 1911 as the third son by his loving parents, Alexander and Nannine Meiklejohn. Alexander, often called Alec, was the youngest child of immigrant Scottish parents, James and Elizabeth, who had first moved to England and then later across the Atlantic to Pawtucket, Rhode Island where they settled. Alec's father, James, and his brothers had worked as highly skilled and respected colorists in textile mills in Scotland. Like his father before him, James sought to raise his family's lifestyle and environs by taking better positions in more prosperous regions such as Rochdale, England, where Alec was born in 1872.

By 1880, economic incentives lead the family to move again, this time sailing on the Britannia to New York harbor and on to Pawtucket, Rhode Island, (another textile town). On this voyage Alec was eight years old.

Times were hard everywhere, even for skilled workers, and the Meiklejohn's economized as they could, taking in newly arrived men as boarders, living as extended family and pooling their incomes.

Alec, ever proud of his Scottish heritage, recalled, "I was the youngest of eight sons in a Scottish Presbyterian, working-class family. My earliest allegiance was to the Scottish culture...My second loyalty came from my father's occupation." When Alec wasn't busy playing cricket or soccer in the streets, he would walk his father home from work and hear from him about how "true workmen should be fellow workmen," and that "a principle of justice, not of selfishness, must govern human exchange." Alec grew to believe that the working man was indeed an ideal, not a lesser citizen, as he developed his political and philosophical theories. He had a strong sense of community through his interactions with the friendly and supportive workers of the Pawtucket textile mill, as well as from his own large, close family.

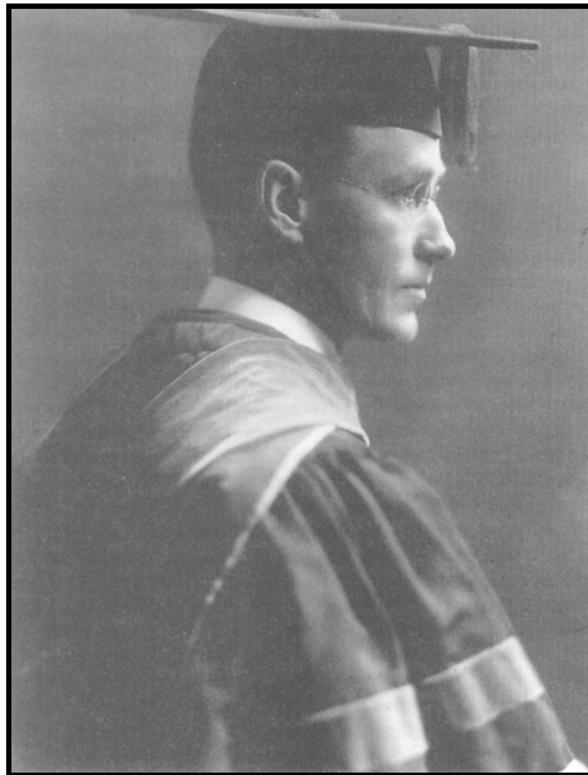
The Meiklejohn family was committed to educating at least one of the sons. It was determined that, as the youngest son, Alec should attend college, supported in that when his tuition was paid by the combined labors of his older brothers. Their decision was a very unselfish and pragmatic one. It was somewhat surprising that the eldest was not the recipient of that honor, but the luck fell to Alec. Brown University was chosen as the ideal school, due to its proximity to the family. In those days, there was great incentive for students to live close by. So with the \$150 per year tuition raised with the help of his family, Alexander would bike or walk the three miles each way to university.

At Brown University, Alec studied the classics, learned Greek, Latin, French, sciences, and mathematics. His own professors and the college president were all mentors for Alec, who was greatly influenced by his education in such a closely-knit, intimate setting for learning. In 1893, he graduated as valedictorian of his class at Brown, but remained there to continue studying an area of great interest to him, philosophy. He would soon earn his master's degree in philosophy. He then decided

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to pursue his doctorate at Cornell, where he eventually received his Ph.D.

Alec was also very active on competitive collegiate tennis and ice polo teams. He recalled, "...We had an 'Ice Polo' team at Brown, playing the same game on ice which the professionals were playing on roller skates on the New England rinks...my memory tells me we were never beaten. I do remember very vividly a game against Harvard, on Spy Pond. We had a lot of fun with a fellow who was a catcher on the Harvard baseball team and a tackle at football. I still have the feel of good comradeship during our talk, as we walked back towards Cambridge after the game."



Alexander Meiklejohn, President of Amherst College, 1912

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Nannine Annaletta La Villa

Eventually, their game morphed into ice hockey and they played a competitive game in Canada. “The Canadians beats us easily at hockey... Their game was more highly developed than ours, (as shown by their having a league); they had flat-bladed speed skates versus the ‘rockers’, which we had always used. Our hitting stroke, with one hand, wouldn’t move the puck along the ice, while their pushing stroke, with both hands, was effective...So we brought back with us flat skates, pucks, sticks and proceeded to try to forget old habits and take on new ones. Some of the happiest hours of my youth were spent in playing polo on Hammond’s Pond in Pawtucket.”

At Cornell, Alec met an Italian-born lady named Nannine Annaletta La Villa. As an undergraduate student at Cornell, she majored in art, literature and music and Alec shared her love of culture and the arts. Prior to their wedding in 1902, Nannine worked as an elementary school teacher.

Alec served as a Philosophy professor and Dean at Brown University in Rhode Island for several years. It was during this time that their sons were born: Kenneth in 1907, Donald in 1909 and Gordon in 1911. The boys’ early childhood days in Providence were often spent outdoors, skating and playing hockey in winter and tennis in the summers.

Alec and Nannine relocated in 1912. Alec had accepted a position as President of Amherst College in Amherst, Massachusetts. The college was a place where he made a profound and lasting mark, as he eventually would make on liberal education itself. He tried during his time there to change the way students were taught and how they learned, preferring a less traditional method of teaching for more discussion-oriented interactions and fewer exams. He hired exceptional teachers, including lecturer and poet Robert Frost, and gave them the latitude to teach in their own unique ways. He was a rebel from the start, never mincing words or equivocating about his beliefs concerning methods of teaching and learning at a liberal arts college. He would say, “No courses, no lectures, no examinations; that’s the negative

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program. Close personal contact between teachers and pupils; a community life which gives teachers and pupils the sense of kinship in service to the wider community...the recognition that the one contribution the college can make is the cultivation of an intelligence in which men can share; that is a start at a positive program.”



Gordon Donald Kenneth

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Annalette (Anne)

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During his inaugural speech at Amherst, Alec said he had taken the position, “to save boys from stupidity, to give them an appetite for the pleasures of thinking. Surely it is one function of the liberal college to make them sensitive to the joys of appreciation and understanding, to give our boys that zest that delights in things intellectual, to give them an appreciation of a life which is well worth living, to make them men of intellectual culture.”

He immediately began to change the curriculum to include more courses in the humanities, history, sciences, and government. Alec became a zealot for liberal education reform, and suffered the criticism of those wedded to the status quo. He was very popular with students, one of whom would later write, “On the platform, he had personal charm, pungent wit, dazzling dialectical skill, and the eloquence of a convinced crusader.”

It was during Alec’s Amherst stint that he and Nannine raised their four children: Kenneth, Donald, Gordon and their youngest, a daughter named Anne.



Alec and Nannine’s children spent their youths in creative play, exploring the grounds of the president’s house and college, reading stories with their dedicated mother, combining their studies with tennis and hockey games.

Alec had a strong influence on his own children’s educations, as he encouraged them to read widely, to consider profound thoughts, and to find their own directions in their future career plans.

The youngest, Annaletta (called Anne), several years younger than her three brothers was also well read and cultured. When Gordie was twelve years old and Anne was only seven, their mother Nannine died after being ill with stomach cancer. As Alec was occupied by his

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time-consuming position, the children were sent to boarding schools. It was difficult for them having lost their mother, to be sent to unfamiliar places. It was especially hard to work through their individual issues and sorrow. The boys were sent to Taft and Anne to another boarding school. Gordie remembered years later that, during those difficult days, he buried himself in his studies as a distraction from his sadness. Ironically, this dedicated immersive study pattern would become a habit and establish his lifelong work ethic, both in school and later in his profession.



Nannine and her boys



### The Brothers

Not surprisingly, Anne's memories are influenced by spending a great deal of time in her early childhood with her mother; it was a separate childhood from that of her brothers, making her loss of her mother that much more painful.

"It's hard to remember them, as I saw so little of my three brothers. Gordie was the closest in age to me, but he was five years older. They were a tight unit and stuck together. I do remember them always teasing me. One memory is of our cat having kittens. There were four kittens in the litter and my brothers gave me the runt!"

She also recalls that her two eldest brothers always seemed to compete (as did Gordie), but in the case of Ken and Don, they

continued an often intensely competitive conflict throughout their adult lives, which she considered a disturbing waste. The fact that Gordie didn't engage in those destructive behaviors would hold true in his own version of a friendly competitive spirit throughout his life. To him, competition was a game and not to be taken too seriously.

While Alec made dramatic, innovative changes in Amherst's curriculum and faculty hiring practices over the years, his critics became more vocal, expressing concern and anger over his expenditures, both school-related and personal, as well as his sweeping and revolutionary alterations in Amherst's liberal education. A sign of the times, Alec's marriage to Nannine was considered an interracial marriage, as she was Italian while he was a Scotsman. This union was frowned upon and created difficulties for Nannine. She, a rebel in her own right, had spent many days traveling and shopping for antiques throughout Europe.

Eventually, his critics would oust him as president, after eleven years of teaching and leadership, during which time he was becoming recognized as a nationally prominent liberal arts education reformer.

The Amherst group who comprised Alec's most pronounced critics included some faculty and several members of the Board of Directors, a group powerful enough to eventually request Alec's resignation from his post as President of Amherst.

Never idle, Alec published numerous writings concerning his philosophical views on liberal education and became, at the invitation of a colleague from the University of Wisconsin, the founder of the Experimental College on that campus in 1927.

At his final address at Amherst in 1923, he said, "I differ from most of you on most of the issues of life, and I am going to keep it up." When Alec left, thirteen faculty members resigned to protest his firing, and several students refused to accept their diplomas at the graduation ceremony.

With his reputation as a rebel established, it is difficult to know just how strongly Alec influenced Gordie in his ideals of justice, ethics

and integrity, but Alec's sense of unwavering conviction and commitment must have made its mark on his youngest son.

Gordie recalled his perceptions of his father years later, "He wanted to make a lively intellectual institution out of Amherst. But in those days, they didn't want you to do too much talking, and didn't want anyone rocking the boat. He was a philosopher and an educator."

Alec and Nannine were very proud of their children, as reflected in Alec's words concerning the importance of instilling sportsmanship in his children: "My interest in hockey was so keen that as soon as my three boys could stand on their feet securely, I got them on skates and tried to teach them the game. Perhaps I had better luck there than in teaching philosophy, as two of the boys were captains of their college hockey teams and Gordie was twice chosen to play on the United States hockey teams at the Olympics."

The Meiklejohn children were challenged to do well in all areas, to be well rounded, to be themselves. Gordie felt stifled at times during his upbringing in New England, but undoubtedly had many uncommon experiences, both educationally and in his travels.

He would continue to be influenced through observing his father's work, which included writing extensively about and being very vocal in supporting freedom of speech issues, as well as those concerning workers' rights.

Many years later, after writing and working tirelessly for such issues, Alexander Meiklejohn was honored to receive the new presidential Medal of Freedom, a national and very prestigious accolade. This award is the highest civilian honor a president can confer in peacetime on those who have significantly contributed to the quality of American life. The meaningful presentation was dampened only because the late President John F. Kennedy, who had been scheduled to present plaques to Alec and the other recipients, was assassinated before the ceremony took place. Gordie must have been deeply affected when his father received this award and many other

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honors. His own professional resume would eventually be heavily padded with many such accolades.

Till the very end of his life, Alexander retained his central belief that to protect and encourage freedom of the mind was not only the best way of developing an individual but also of preserving democratic principles against the inroads of competing ideologies.

In his own words, “No matter what a person believes in, we must hear it!”



Receiving Presidential Medal of Freedom  
from President Lyndon Baines Johnson – December 6, 1963

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Gordon, Donald, Kenneth

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Gordie

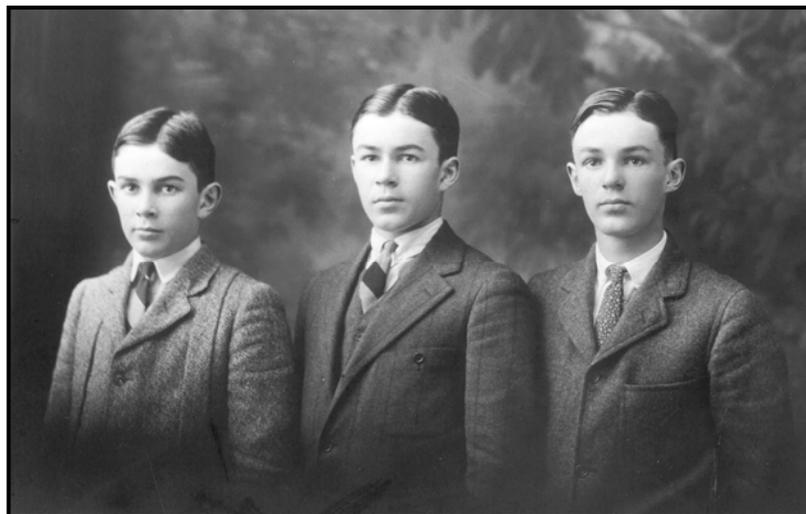


Hockey on the pond

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Gordie at Taft



The Brothers

## **CHAPTER II: GORDIE... Providential Scholar**

Many children in those days attended high school in a boarding school environment; Gordie was a student at Taft School in Watertown, Connecticut from 1923-1927. There, he consistently excelled academically, as well as continuing to play both ice hockey and tennis very competitively. In a letter to Mr. Taft, Alec Meiklejohn wrote, "Gordon is of the lovable, casual type who seems never to be trying very hard, but always does surprisingly well."

Because of Gordie's exemplary work, it was with much surprise that the school's principal, Horace Taft, learned in a meeting with Gordie during his senior year that he would be enrolling in the Experimental College founded by his father at the University of Wisconsin.

Horace's response to this was, "My God! No one from Taft has ever gone to a state institution. You, my boy, are just throwing away a good education."

In Gordon's words, "I spent three years at the Experimental College, from 1927-1929 before I went to China." At the experimental college, Gordie studied one culture per year in great depth. "We would study the literature structure, economics, and the whole business. I finished my undergraduate work at Wisconsin."

Years later, Gordie interviewed with longtime colleague and former Dean of Colorado University's School of Medicine, Dr. Robert Glaser, for Alpha Omega Alpha's series entitled "Leaders in American Medicine." During the conversation, Gordie spoke about his life and professional choices.

When asked why he chose Medicine as a career, he answered: "Well, I decided almost accidentally when I was spending that year in China, during my third year in college. Before that, I had never even considered medicine as a career."

Dr. Glaser pointed out that Gordie grew up in academia, and asked if Gordie might have considered an academic career. He replied,

“Rather vaguely, but not in medicine, probably in the social sciences...I had no fear or notion of what I wanted to do when I went off to China. One, I wanted to get away from home, which many children want to do. Two, I wanted to go as far away as I could and three, I wasn’t sure if I was ever coming back. I worked my way over on a freighter, the old U.S.S. Pierce, the Dollar Line.”

Gordie recalls the restlessness of youth and the great sense of adventure he had in those days. “When in China from 1929-30, I didn’t even plan to enroll in the university. I wandered around Peking for about six weeks and then got lonesome, so I went to Yenching University. While walking around Peking, I used to pass by the Peking Medical College every day and see the decrepit souls outside; it seemed to me that there was something socially useful that I could do, so I started my pre-medical work there where they had a very good course.”

He recalls with relish, “I was in China for a year, had a wonderful year, played hockey. We organized a hockey team there, a couple of Russians, three Chinese fellows, and me. For the first time, a Chinese team won the North China championship, a very proud day for me.”

Gordie was one of the most distinguished hockey players in intercollegiate circles and reflected, “I started playing hockey at age four. I only got more and more interested in the sport as I grew older. Ice hockey became a lifelong passion for me.”

Following his year in China, Gordie traveled to Europe. “My friend, John Davies and I got on the Trans-Siberian Railroad in Manchuria; it took twelve days to get to Paris. I acquired amoebic dysentery in Manchuria and got off the train at the other end, fifteen pounds lighter, and very, very weak.” Following these unusual adventures, it was time once again for Gordie to focus on completing his formal education.

“When I went back to Wisconsin, I continued to play hockey and also chose to go into medicine. I applied to Wisconsin, McGill and Harvard medical schools, and got into all three. I chose McGill in

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Canada since I could play hockey there as a medical student, and I didn't want to go back to New England; I had been brought up there and I had had enough of it." He would study at McGill from 1932-1937. As ever, Gordie knew the importance of balancing sports and studies. "I enjoyed playing hockey in the winter and running on the track team in the fall; I managed to graduate at the head of my class."

Wisconsin Hockey Team



Chinese Hockey Team (Gordie – far right)

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McGill Hockey Team (Gordie – top row, fourth from right)

His hockey career at McGill was so distinctive that he was offered a job with the Canadian professional hockey team in Montreal, which he turned down. While in medical school, it seems that, like several of his fellow students, Gordie had an ongoing interest in infectious diseases. He completed two years of residency at Montreal General Hospital in 1939-40.

The influence of his parents was evident in Gordie as he developed a strong work ethic, a liberal viewpoint, a love of participating in competitive sports, and a sense of the need to better the world around him.

Gordie was asked on two separate occasions to join the US Olympic Hockey Team. He refused to participate in 1936 because Hitler was in power and the Olympic Games were being held in Germany. He was unwilling to support the rules of participant segregation and exclusion that Hitler demanded (no Jews, etc).

He was asked again four years later to represent the U.S. in the 1940 Olympic Games in St. Moritz, Switzerland. However, the Korean War had begun by then and Gordie placed his duty to serve his country as a naval officer above the draw of the Olympics. It was a great honor to be asked and something of which he was justly proud.

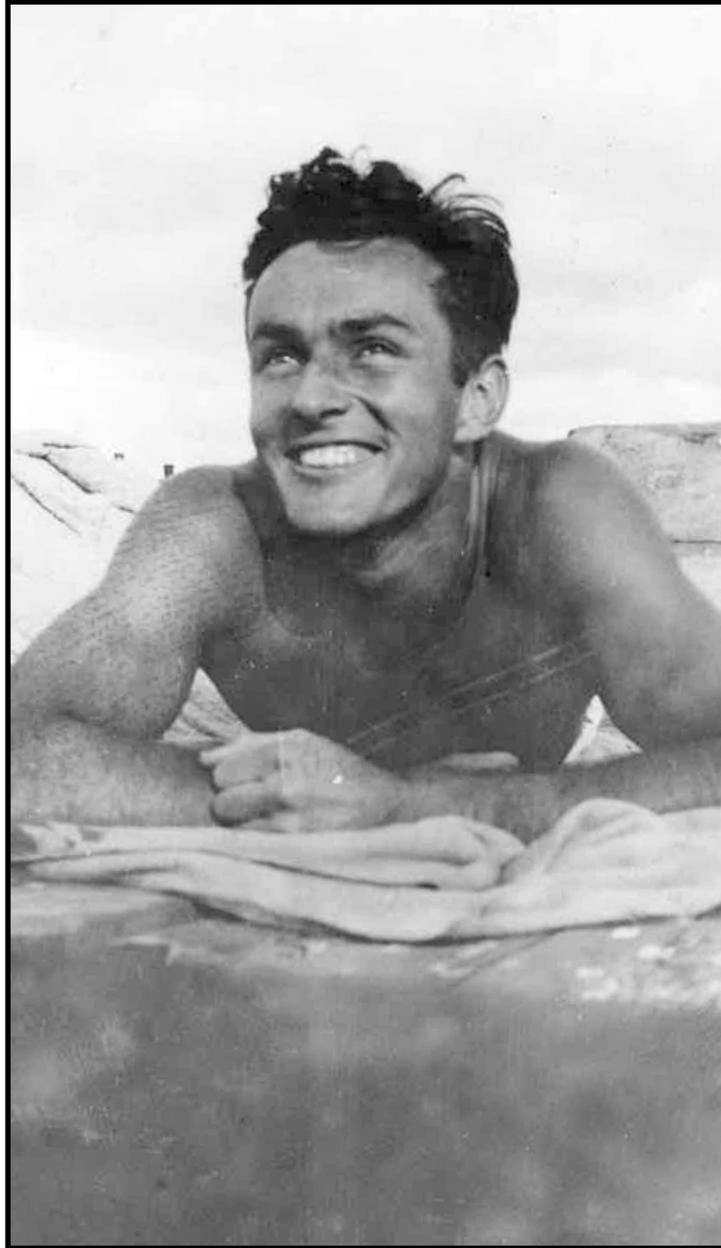
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His sports prowess is described in a letter from the U.S. Olympic Committee.

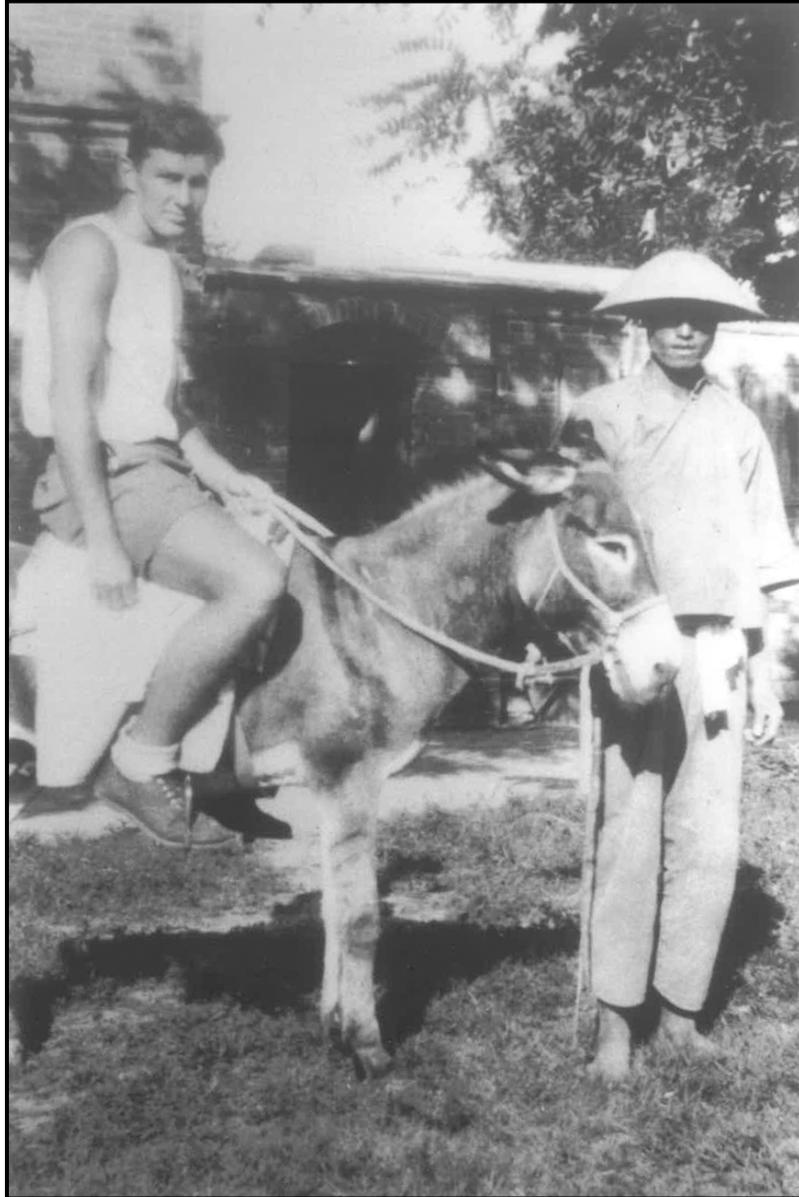
*“I believe I can assure you that the hockey squad, once it is chosen will represent the highest amateur standards of the U.S. One of the players we think is essential that we have on our team if we are to be successful is Dr. Gordon Meiklejohn, who is now at the Montreal General Hospital in Canada...Dr. Meiklejohn played on and was the first American to captain any Canadian team. He served as captain of the hockey team of McGill University, at a time when it was one of the best amateur teams in Canada. He is among a very small group of the best hockey players this country has ever seen.”*

Even as a young man, Gordon represented the epitome of a well-rounded, cultured person, yet perhaps because of his humble beginnings, he never lost his awareness or commitment to societal issues. He became a positive force in any community within which he found himself.

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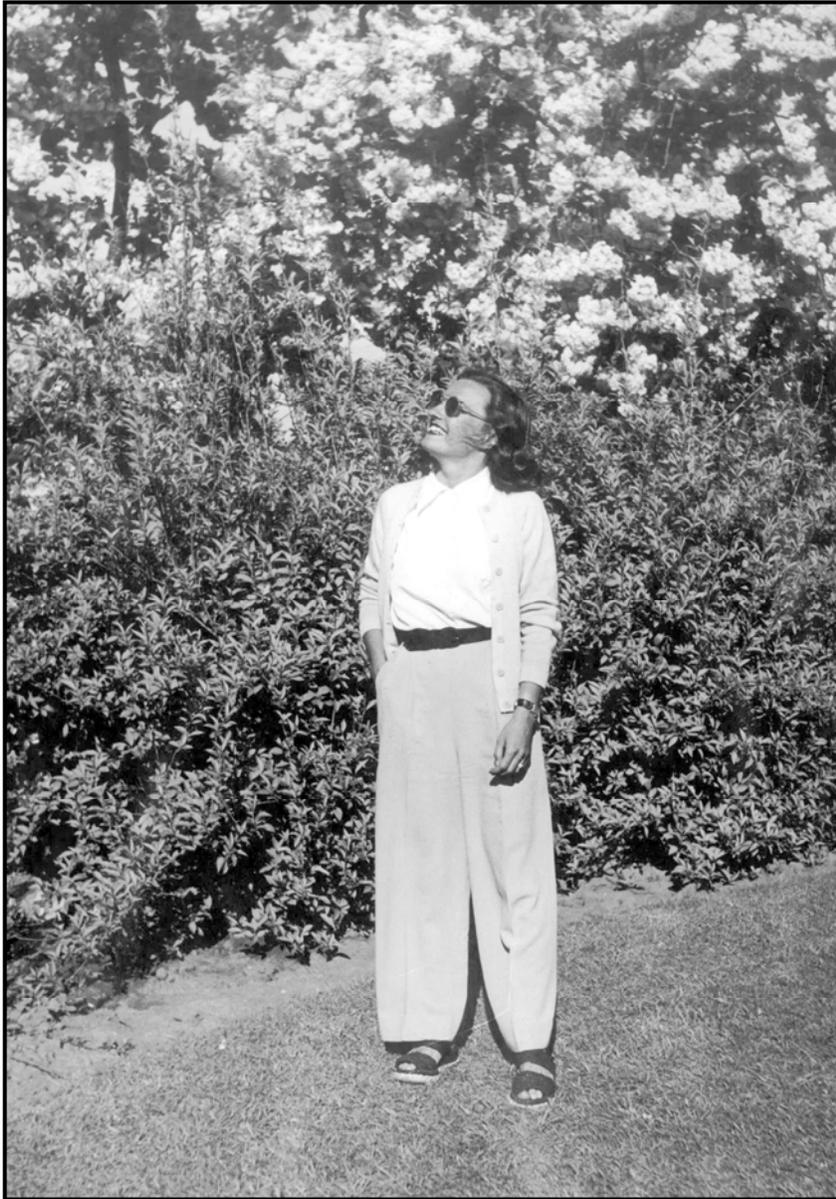


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China

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Greta...Nova Scotia Girl

## CHAPTER X: GORDON MEIKLEJOHN'S LEGACY

In measuring the legacy one leaves behind it is important to recall the thoughts, memories and words of one's friends and family. It may be in our writings, works, or in our personal contributions in ways large and small.

For most of us, it's a few people who will miss us, those whom we influenced or loved. In Gordie's case, his influence is much more far-flung, ongoing and profound. He changed the field of medicine as we know it, in his own time. By this he affected all of us, even those who were never privileged to know him personally. Every time we receive a flu vaccine, we have him to thank for helping protect us.

Pat Graves shares,

"Last year when the H1N1 flu outbreak occurred in Mexico and the entire US became so aware of influenza, I would look at all the signs in doctors' offices and hospitals to 'be aware to wash your hands'. If you had a fever or cough to 'put on a mask' that was provided so you would not spread the flu. There is a great deal of media now about the importance of getting a flu shot to prevent flu. It makes me chuckle and wish Dr. M. could be here to see this.

I went to get my flu shot this year at the Lowry Complex. My doctor graduated from the University of Colorado Medical School, and was one of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year students to whom I gave an influenza lecture. To my delight, second year medical students were giving flu shots in her office. I asked the young man who was inoculating patients how many shots he'd given. He said 'two', and assured me he had been a corps man in the Navy and had substantial experience. We had a great talk about the vaccine and I told him about my work with Dr. Meiklejohn. Interestingly, I now go to the Lowry clinic to get my flu shot instead of giving influenza shots there to Air Force personnel."

**The Memorial Service**

The following are contributions from Gordon Meiklejohn's memorial service.

Pat began, "Lessons learned from this gentleman must be passed on."

**Dr. Bob Schrier**

Dr. Bob Schrier named the department chairpersons who had led under Dr. Meiklejohn:

"There were three faculty members when Gordon came in 1951. He chose the first leaders. He brought to the school on a full time basis:

Dr. Joe Holmes, Father of Ultrasound, Nephrology

Dr. Roger Mitchell, Head of Pulmonary

Dr. Gill Blount, Head of Cardiology

Dr. Matthew Block, Head of Hematology

Dr. Fred Kern, Head of Gastro-Intestinal Medicine

Dr. Dave Talmadge, Head of Allergy and Immunology"

**Dr. Henry Claman**

Dr. Henry Claman, Prof. of Medicine CU School of Medicine said,

"We all have our own Gordon Meiklejohn. He led his department with a light hand. He chose his division heads and basically left them alone. We were all very proud of the full-time system and things were much simpler then. Gordon was quiet, affable, perceptive, sympathetic, and he always had his pipe. He was a superb tennis player, and played often with Bill Wadell, Dave Talmadge and Arthur Robinson. It almost seemed that to become a chairman around here, one had better play tennis, and well at that! We heard about his refusal to sign the loyalty oath at the University of California in San Francisco. We came to understand that this was not an instance of disloyalty, but rather a loyalty to a larger and more important concept: freedom of

inquiry and expression, no doubt in part inherited from his distinguished father, one of the finest educators in the United States. He and Greta were gracious hosts. Their house had wonderful things in it, including the best Kalim rug I have ever seen in my life. Gordon, Henry Kempe, and Bob Glaser enhanced and solidified the medical school, particularly during some pretty tough town and gown disputes. Gordon was very fatherly to me, but he didn't give me advice, even when I asked for it. He just played with his pipe. He would say, 'Make your own decision. You will be okay.' I do remember one bit of his advice, 'Never get involved with committees that deal with tenure.'

Gordon's low-key appearance overlaid a firmness of will and purpose. Once, Dr. Wynonna Campbell was called to a Colorado prison because an inmate had a very bad sore throat; she wanted to send him to a hospital, but no hospitals would take the prisoner. In his soft voice, Dr. Meiklejohn called the hospital director and said, 'Surely we can find a bed for someone with diphtheria.' And so they did.

I looked to him as the conscience of academic medicine. One of my tests was 'What would Dr. Meiklejohn think?' In assessing people's abilities, he would give his approval by saying, 'so and so has the right values.'

We were all dismayed when his health began to flag, undermining what had been a superb athletic body. I was relieved that his mind was spared. He was independent and stubborn, not always a fault. In his later years, I saw him in the parking lot, struggling to get his walker into his car. I went to help him and said, 'Gordon, it must really drive you crazy to be dependent on this thing.'

He looked at me with a sly twinkle and said earnestly, 'Not really. I am much better with it than without it.'

That was always Gordon's attitude, unflinching, realistic, unsentimental, straight ahead. Gordon Meiklejohn had the right values."

**Dr. Charlie Smith**

Dr. Charlie Smith, often called the Father of Arthritis, related, “Gordie was nationally known as an investigator, a superb teacher, and a great administrator. He was a builder. He was an architect in the sense that he laid the foundation fifty years ago for what we are today, nationally known as an outstanding medical department equal to any in the country and indeed abroad.”

**Dr. Herb Rothenberg**

Former Chief Resident Dr. Herb Rothenberg said, “He was the finest man I have ever known, not only by his words, but by his actions. He kept standards so high that they were really unreachable by ordinary people. He did so in such an effortless and unassuming manner, that his standards always seemed attainable. Tolerance, humility, fairness and a concern for others, indeed a respect for others, always characterized his behavior with colleagues, patients and students.”

**Dr. Stuart Schneck**

Dr. Stuart Schneck, (a colleague and later Gordon’s personal physician) reminisced, “He was a man of blunt honesty, a wise mentor, and the epitome of courage. Gordie strongly supported the concept that we were one faculty, not just a collection of disparate departments, each with its own agenda. Once he believed that his position was correct, he was unshakable.

In his final years, Gordie suffered from a terrible disease of the nervous system, which progressively stiffened and weakened his muscles. It caused him to fall frequently until he could no longer walk and robbed him of his voice. It was heartbreaking to see this physically and mentally strong person slowly and literally bend under the burden of his illness. At no time did I ever hear a word of complaint about his fate, or his injuries due to falls. I had the impression he was simply shrugging off his broken fingers, black eyes, and cuts, much as he had

when he played competitive hockey. When he did speak with regret, it was only in reference to the burden of care he placed on his family.”

**Dr. Edwin Kilbourne**

Dr. Edwin Kilbourne, a Research Professor who had flown in for the memorial service from New York Medical College said quietly, “I am here because there wasn’t any way I could stay home.

A week ago, Charlie Hoke and I were at an annual, rather dull, ceremony to decide about influenza vaccine formulation. Certain questions came up, all obvious questions. We all admitted that we had no way of getting the answers.

The main reason we didn’t have the answers was because no one was doing the kind of work that Gordon Meiklejohn and Pat Graves did with influenza; the field studies, the military and so forth are just no longer available to us, and nobody did them more incisively and cogently than Gordon did.

At one time, Gordon was on the Epidemiological Board, (the Flu Commission), and I was presenting one of my first series of experiments. I looked over at Gordon and there was that half smile we all know that gave me the courage to proceed. This did not mean that he would not be as critical as anyone else of what came out of my trembling lips, but at least there was a feeling there that it was a different time, a time of kindness and friendliness, not of adversarial proceedings among investigators. I wish we could repair to that, but until we have another Gordon Meiklejohn, which seems highly unlikely, we will not.”

**Colonel Charlie Hoke, M.D.**

Colonel Charlie Hoke, M.D. (Division of Communicable Diseases, Walter Reed Research Institute) spoke of Gordon’s influence,

“I trained with Gordon. I came from Washington D. C. to represent the Department of Defense. Gordon served on the AFEB (the Armed Services Epidemiological Board). When WW1 ended, there was

an epidemic of influenza from which the troops suffered as they returned home.” (The AFEB was established specifically to deal with influenza epidemics and respiratory diseases as World War II began.) “This board was very important, as it makes authoritative recommendations on ways to protect soldiers from illnesses that would affect their ability to carry out their mission in the defense of the United States.

Gordon was objective, thorough, and wise in providing advice and guidance. From 1971-73, he was the director of the Commission on Influenza and contributed greatly to the good of our country. My job was influenza surveillance in the USA. As a young EIS officer, I made a presentation on the side effects caused by influenza vaccine. There was lots of hostility in the audience, many of whom did not want to hear what I had to say. Dr. Meiklejohn gave me wise and friendly counsel about standing my ground and in believing in the data. Years later, I studied Japanese encephalitis and dengue fever, and wherever I poked in Asia, I found the footprint of Dr. Meiklejohn.”

**Dr. Ted Eickhoff**

Dr. Ted Eickhoff recalled, “Gordie was responsible for forty unbroken years of influenza study at Lowry Air Force Base. This will probably never be repeated. Ever a determined and methodical investigator, he was a master of epidemiological problem solving. An example of this was his receiving the Bristol Award, the highest award the society can bestow.

Interestingly, I was to present this to Gordon but he wasn’t there to receive it. He had other priorities, higher priorities in his view. Where was he? He was off in India helping with the WHO global smallpox eradication program.”

**Dr. Bob Bretell**

Dr. Bob Bretell, (a resident under Gordon in 1951, and later chief resident in 1954, and Gordon's primary physician), spoke,

"I'd make an appointment with him and go up to his office. I'd start with my chief complaints. He would light up his pipe and pretty soon he would be encased in a cloud of smoke. I'd do all the talking. We all knew how quiet and non-committal he was and we'd have a wonderful visit. I always felt so good when I walked out of the room. Ten steps from his door, I'd realize we had not settled anything!"

**Dr. Dennis Jahnigen**

Dr. Dennis Jahnigen (Head of the Division of Geriatrics at the University of Colorado School of Medicine) discussed Gordon,

"I took over Dr. Meiklejohn's primary care when Dr. Bretell retired, during the later phase of Gordon's life, when he faced the certainty of his own decline. I think that is a good time to learn about people because a disease process really tests their character. It reveals how they feel about their own mortality, and the strength of their personal relationships with family and others. Gordon had a progressively debilitating illness that slowly sapped his physical strength and speech.

His stubbornness and amazing coping skills were remarkable and an inspiration to me. He remained a gentleman throughout this difficult time. He retained a great sense of humor, which he manifested from time to time; he was always mindful of the difficulties that his family faced and he greatly appreciated this. He remained steadfastly in charge of his own care as long as he could.

I got to know his family quite well. His wife, daughters and son's efforts to maintain him in a supportive system at home kept him safe and looked after. I give full credit for the efforts that they put forth to help him remain at home in this dignified fashion. As Gordon said, this was the most important thing to him at this difficult phase of his life. At no small emotional price, they dealt with his needs and

supported him at home dealing very well with all manner of calamities. Near the end, his family helped provide hospice care to him at home so he could pass on, surrounded by people who loved him. They were with him when he passed away.

He taught me a great deal:

- ❖ How to cope and not surrender.
- ❖ How to stay intellectually active and continue to grow even when the body is declining.
- ❖ How to laugh in the face of absurdity what life sometimes passes our way.
- ❖ How to continue to make the world a better place than he found it well into the most advanced stages of his disease.

I would argue this is the best possible testimony to the man's greatness and passion, how he faced this most difficult and final challenge.”

**Dr. Dick Krugman**

Dr. Richard Krugman, (Dean of the University of Colorado School of Medicine), recalled, “He induced knowledge in the students and the residents with whom he was working, rather than imparting it. I was in awe of his teaching skills on rounds. His advice to me when I was thinking of becoming Dean was, ‘You could probably do this job, but just remember to listen to your faculty.’”

**Dr. Vincent Fulginiti**

Dr. Vincent Fulginiti, (Chancellor of the University of Colorado Health Science Center) had a powerful message,

“We think CU Health Sciences Center is one of the premier institutions of our country. We have to look to the bridge to our past, an amazing period of time when Drs. Gordon Meiklejohn, Henry Kempe, Bob Glaser, Dave Talmadge, Ted Puck and Arthur Robinson were all giants in their disciplines. They made this institution what it is today because they had the foresight at the time to realize that certain

principles had to be adhered to and certain activities had to occur. Gordon hired some of the best division heads that academic medicine had known at the time.

When Gordon and Henry did rounds together, I didn't allow anything to interfere with my attendance. These two men, who were thoughtful and incisive, were able to see beyond the immediate case or problem that was being presented, and were able to give one a world view. We felt very privileged to be in that environment.

My two arms tell more about Gordon Meiklejohn than anything else I can think of to say. On one arm I have a smallpox scar. My grandchild does not. On the other arm, I have a little tiny nodule from my influenza injection this year. We must recognize that Gordon was the progenitor of much of the vaccine that we use today and much of the epidemiological knowledge that has led us to largely eliminate influenza as a major threat to individuals.

**Dr. Bob Schrier**

Dr. Bob Schrier remembers his own experience of Dr. Meiklejohn and the ways in which Gordie's colleagues and former students would pay homage to his legacy.

"I was recruited by Gordon in 1972 from the University of California in San Francisco to head the Division of Renal Diseases and Hypertension. I found Gordon to be a man of great integrity and enjoyed very much working with him. He was truly a role model as a gentleman and scholar. In 1976, I succeeded Gordon as Chairman of the Department of Medicine, a position I held for the next twenty-six years.

On becoming Chair, I felt that it was extremely important to recognize Gordon's contributions to the Department and the School of Medicine for his 25 years as Chair. The following are the ways that we honor Gordon and maintained his legacy at the University of Colorado.

The Department:

- ❖ Established the Gordon Meiklejohn Endowed Chair with over \$one million in gifts from faculty, students, former house staff, and Colorado Foundations. This was the first Endowed Chair at the University of Colorado School of Medicine. Now there are over fifty such endowed Chairs.
- ❖ Established the Gordon Meiklejohn Conference room where his portrait hangs with those of his Division Heads.
- ❖ Established the Gordon Meiklejohn Clinical Service on the medicine wards as an indication of his commitment to excellence in patient care.
- ❖ Established the Gordon Meiklejohn Visiting Professorship and Lectureship – a different renowned scholar visits the Department yearly as the Meiklejohn Professor.
- ❖ Supported his successful nomination for an honorary degree from his alma mater at the University of Montreal.

While Gordon was a very modest man, I know that he appreciated these efforts to recognize his contributions and realized how important tradition is for great academic institutions. With the move to Fitzsimons, the Meiklejohn Conference Room and the Medical Clinical Service have been continued; the Endowed Chair, Visiting Professorship and Lectureship and the honorary degree have been established in perpetuity.”

**Kathleen Bryant**, Gordie’s Speech Pathologist, made the following remarks at the memorial service, speaking directly to his grandchildren:

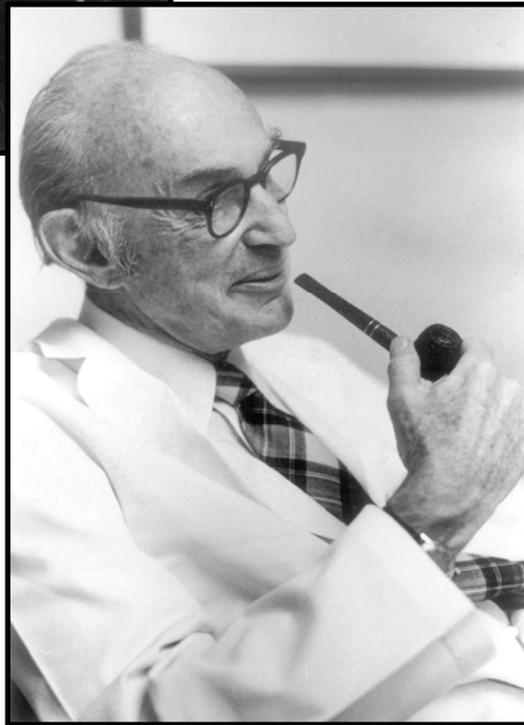
“... To Jamie, Nicki and Ryan,

All the wonderful things people have said about your Granddad are true, but you have a secret; you know how he made people happy. You know how he loved to teach you children. Teaching was to him as important as healing the sick. In a talk he once wrote, ‘When one

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compares life to teaching academic medicine, the advantages appear to get greater as the years go by and one reaches an older age. I have found it fun and rewarding, and that continues to the present time. I wish you the same experience of happy and productive lives.’ This is the legacy that he gives to you: Make life fun and rewarding. Experience happy and productive lives!”

*FROM SLAP SHOTS TO FLU SHOTS*



Dr. Gordon Meiklejohn was a world renowned physician and Chairman of the Department of Medicine at the University of Colorado. He is best known for being a catalyst in researching, diagnosing, and inoculating for the flu virus, and was instrumental in the eradication of Smallpox. Dr. Meiklejohn was the son of Alexander Meiklejohn. He excelled in academics and sports, especially ice hockey, and was twice invited to participate on the U.S. Olympic Hockey teams.

### **From Slap Shots to Flu Shots: The Gordon Meiklejohn Story**

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