

Eulogy for *Dr. N. L. Gault, Jr.*

January 15, 2009

Fifty years ago, Dr. N.L. "Neal" Gault, Jr., landed in Korea for the first time. To rebuild education and research in post-war Korea, he served as the overall advisor of the Minnesota Project, a cooperative program between Seoul National University and the University of Minnesota. After the Korean War, Koreans were left with nothing, unable to care for patients or to teach students. The successive misfortunes of Japanese colonization, the Second World War and the Korean War prevented Koreans from building capacity to develop medicine on their own initiative. In these circumstances, Dr. Gault stayed in Korea from 1959 to 1961 and made a profound contribution to the development of medicine in Korea.

Dr. Gault was a remarkable educator with profound insight. He did not try transforming Korean medical education according to a ready-made blueprint. Instead, while learning Korean values and culture, he first observed the state and situation of Korean medical education, and then tried to figure out what needed to be done. To his eyes, the most serious problem of Korean medical education was the didactic approach, making students accept and memorize teachers' words. Employing laboratory experiments and bedside clerkships, he encouraged the students and the faculty to study principles in an independent and creative way to solve problems of public health and disease.

As an efficient administrator, Dr. Gault supported renovating facilities of the hospital, medical school, lecture rooms and laboratories. He also supported purchasing library books. Recognizing a low autopsy rate due to Korean culture, Dr. Gault gave \$100 out of his own pocket to each faculty who promoted a postmortem autopsy.

Dr. Gault was a man of vision. He envisioned young scholars' initiatives for the sustainable development of medicine in Korea. With his arrangement and encouragement, many young Korean faculty members of the Seoul National University College of Medicine were trained at the University of Minnesota.

Dr. Gault's commitment brought success to Korea's modern medical history. The Minnesota Project resulted in the promotion of nursing education to the four-year collegiate level, the foundation of School of Public Health, and the introduction of clerkship, internship and residency programs. Above all, the faculty training program in Minnesota produced 73 Korean leaders of medicine whose influence was invaluable and far-reaching. Young and intelligent, they pioneered their medical specialties in Korea for several decades.

In 1960s and 1970s, Dr. Gault continued to serve as a consultant and medical educator in Korea as well as in Japan and Vietnam. In recognition of his remarkable service for medical education and university education in Korea, on the 50th anniversary of Minnesota Project in 2004, the Korean government awarded a medal to Dr. Gault, and Seoul National University granted Dr. Gault an honorary doctorate.

Dr. Gault used to say that the collaborative university-to-university spirit between Seoul National University and the University of Minnesota was the key to success of the Minnesota Project. All the Korean professors came to the University of Minnesota; all American advisors were from the University of Minnesota. The friendship, comradeship and fellowship between Korean professors and Minnesota professors led the project to succeed, he said.

Without Dr. Gault's leadership, the Seoul National University College of Medicine could have not made it on its own to where it is now. Most of all, Dr. Gault loved Korea. He cherished his friendships with Korean professors for a half century. Following his spirit, the Seoul National University College of Medicine will strive to serve more people, to lessen people's suffering, and to cure more diseases. Working with his legacy, the College of Medicine will do its best to educate future generations of doctors and medical researchers.



Jung-Gi Im, M.D., Ph.D.

Dean, Seoul National University College of Medicine