



A Miracle and a Privilege: Recounting a Half Century of Surgical Advance

Francis D. Moore

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Francis Moore entered Harvard Medical School in September of 1935, seven years before penicillin became available. During his remarkable career in surgery, research, and education, Moore has witnessed and contributed to some of the most important biomedical advances of the century, and his students now practice surgery worldwide. In this autobiography, he brings humor and warmth to the story of a lifetime at the forefront of medicine.

In this fascinating book Moore describes his work in radioactive isotope research, burn therapy, breast cancer treatment, transplant science, and understanding the process of convalescence.

Moore's colleagues have included such medical pioneers as George Thorn, David Hume, Thomas Starzl, John Gibbon, Steven Rosenberg, Harold Urey, and Nobel Prize winner Joseph Murray, and he recounts the setbacks and victories of their work. For example, he writes of the adventure he had with Charles Hufnagel in which 25 dogs, implanted with Hufnagel's experimental heart valves, made their escape into the Connecticut countryside and had to be recovered by dog control officers wielding stethoscopes.

Yet Moore recalls with equal clarity the young mother who gave him a silver dollar for delivering her baby, the husband who begged that his ailing wife be allowed to die with dignity, and the desperately sick patients who made themselves available for experimental surgery and treatment. In one of his early operations he relieved "the pain, anguish, and threat to a wonderful small boy" by removing the boy's diseased appendix. He describes this capability as "a miracle and a privilege."

The book includes a gripping account of the aftermath of the Cocoanut Grove nightclub fire in Boston in 1942, when Moore learned the horrific details of death by fire. He recounts both his experience with M.A.S.H. units and battalion aid stations in Korea and the sudden request from the U.S. State Department that resulted in his treating King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia.

Moore's life story reflects his serious commitment to human well-being as well as his appreciation for the wonder of human life. Physicians, medical students, and all readers alike will find this book informative and inspirational.

Francis Daniels Moore, M.D., is Moseley Professor of Surgery, Emeritus, Harvard Medical School and Surgeon-in-Chief, Emeritus, Peter Bent Brigham Hospital, Boston.

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