

IN MEMORIAM: FRED F. SCHUDY

George F. Schudy, DDS, MS; Don Niewold, DDS, MS

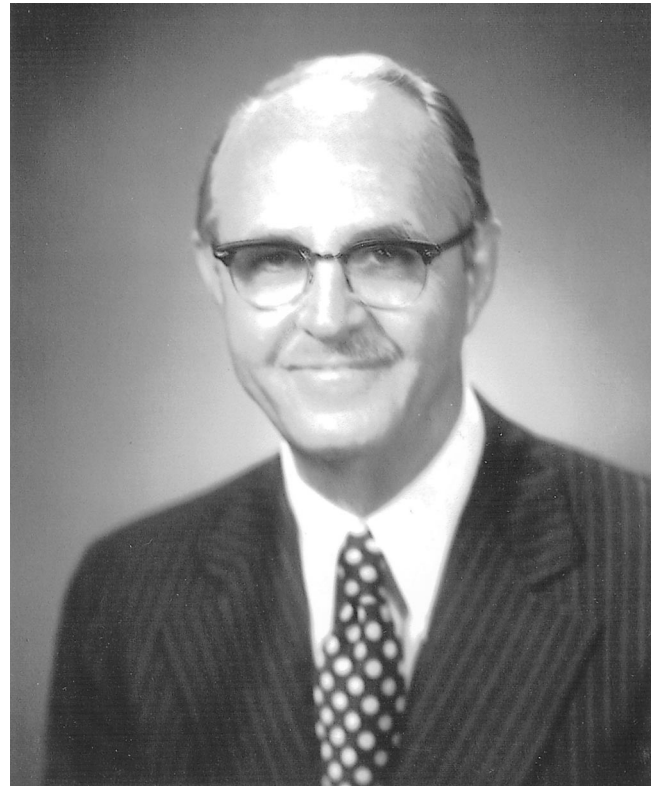
Fred F. Schudy passed away peacefully with family present on March 2, 2001. His passing followed a brief stay in the hospital as a result of a hip fracture. He had celebrated his 93rd birthday 16 days earlier.

Fred was born on a small farm in south Missouri near a general store, which was in Cold Springs, Mo. He was one of seven children of James and Josephine Schudy. As a boy, Fred watched a dentist work in a store window on the square in the neighboring town of Ava, Mo. Dentistry looked like a respectable, clean, and intelligent craft to him, and he set his sights on dental school. Fred loved education from an early age and even maintained contact with his first-grade (one-room schoolhouse) teacher until her death in recent years. He helped give her a 90th birthday celebration. Fred was the first of his family to complete high school and attend college and was the only one to do this as they were growing up.

After two years at Southwest Missouri State University, he entered Washington University Dental School in St Louis, Mo. Needing to work, he managed to do so 40 hours per week. His studies were the priority, however, and Fred developed the scholarly art of having one eye on his book and the other on the service station pumps he was attending. He was a member of Omicron Kappa Upsilon and graduated first in his class.

In 1932, Fred began his dental practice in Ava, where he practiced general dentistry for eight years. During those years, he met Florence Mae Summers. They married in 1936, and she blessed his life with style, beauty, and creativity for 53 years. Despite a great respect and love for general dentistry, he found his interest growing in the newly developing field of orthodontics. In 1940, he returned to school at Columbia University in New York to study orthodontics. After a one-year residency, he and Florence Mae moved to the then small metropolis of Houston, Tex. After imploring all branches of the military to take him, he reluctantly set up his own private practice, only to be conscripted by the army about 12 months later. In 1946, after the war, he returned from Ft Sam Houston in San Antonio to resume his private practice in earnest.

Initially, he practiced with Dr Al Westfall before starting his own office. They studied the then new and complex edgewise appliance. Those were exciting times of daily learning and growth. He learned well from Dr Westfall and from Dr Eddie Arnold, Dr C.T. Roland, Dr Hayes Nance, and others. Dr Nance would come to town and give small intensive workshops. Learning to bend wire and control and understand torque with only spotty instruction was a strug-



gle. Fred also learned from Dr Charles Tweed, and it was at a Tweed Foundation meeting in 1953 that he began to value the importance of the interincisal angle.

Fred came to orthodontics with a burning desire to contribute and to leave the profession a little better. Some of his aspiration may have been fueled by a desire to do well in his parents' eyes, for they had not been in favor of his pursuit of an education and different way of life. In 1955, the cephalometer was invented and soon became available to individual practitioners. The field of cephalometrics turned out to be a fertile one for Fred's curious mind and eagerness to contribute. He studied anatomy in the evenings using an exploded skull and queried every person he could on the subject. He had extensive, in-depth studies with Cecil Steiner of California, who was a mentor and friend. They exchanged small green phonograph recording disks in the mail as they traded ideas and pondered questions. The thoughts of Dr Reed Holdaway, Dr Bob Ricketts, and Dr Howard Lang were also important in influencing and shaping his concepts. To aid his studies, Fred would take a free head plate on all exam patients who were not ready for treatment and on others at no cost if they would return for periodic reobservation appointments. These serial films

gave him the material he needed to help answer some of his questions about the inconsistent results he observed in the generic treatment that was being applied to all patients.

This began a series of investigations examining the growth of the face as it relates to treatment. These studies served to illuminate and clarify Fred's observation that the vertical dimension was critical in its effect on facial form and mandibular growth. During those years, Fred trained three preceptees in his office: Dr Clarence Hertzler, Dr Tom Creekmore, and Dr Bob Natoli. These men were instrumental in aiding in this research. They made it possible for him to simultaneously carry-on a full-time practice, conduct extensive research, and raise a family. They were responsible for measuring (by hand) and recording most of the data. Fred and Dr Tom Creekmore developed the hi-pull face bow in 1965. Fred loved to teach, and he had a pleasant and mutually beneficial relationship with his preceptees. Ultimately, five articles were published on the vertical dimension, and one, "The Rotation of the Mandible Resulting from Growth, Its Implication in Orthodontic Treatment," was declared a classic by the American Association of Orthodontists (AAO).

Not long before his own death, Dr Alan Brodie urged members of the Foundation For Orthodontic Research to do research, saying, "just stick your spade in anywhere." He admonished that just by turning the soil over the researcher would discover unexpected concepts and his or her life would be blessed. Fred would certainly agree with this; his research helped keep him curious and enthused during a long career. It also helped him develop many fulfilling relationships with younger orthodontists through lecturing and teaching.

Later in his career, Fred wrote more about specific clinical applications and appliance therapy. In 1962, Dr Roscoe Keedy and Dr Hayes Nance were very early advocates of the extraction of all four second bicuspids. Fred heeded their advice and treated his first case of four second bicuspids shortly thereafter, and he became an enthusiastic proponent of this extraction sequence. In 1970, he became an early proponent of the use of two different-sized bracket slots in the same mouth, with 0.016-inch bracket slots on the six anterior teeth and 0.018-inch bracket slots on the posterior teeth. In recent years, Fred wrote extensively on the origin of the curve of Spee and published a book, *The Occlusal Plane and The Vertical Dimension*, in 1992.

Fred was a member of the AAO, the American Dental Association, The Edward H. Angle Society, and the Charles Tweed Foundation. He was a founding member and former President of the Charles Tweed Study Group of Texas. This study group is now over 50 years old and has more than 150 members. He also was a Fellow of the American College of Dentists and a diplomate of the American Board of Orthodontists.

Fred greatly appreciated the acknowledgments of his efforts during his career. He received the Martin H. Dewey Award from the Southwestern Society of the AAO. He also received the Merit Award for Achievement from the St

Louis Alumni Association, as well as the Outstanding Alumnus Award from Columbia University and Washington University Dental School. The American Board of Orthodontists honored him with the Albert H. Ketchum Award in 1982. In 1996, Fred received the Trail Blazer Award from The Edward H. Angle Society.

Although Fred loved research and studying growth, what he loved most was straightening teeth at the chair and interacting with his patients. He agreed strongly with what Dr Moody Alexander currently says, that the orthodontist should provide a "value added" over and above the straight teeth. Many times Fred took a recalcitrant patient into his private office to try to encourage better behavior, or he told a story at the chair to help a young patient see a better way of acting or thinking. Throughout his career he had enthusiasm even for the mundane aspects of orthodontics. Until his retirement at age 80, he would teach oral hygiene to an 8-year-old with as much patience and enthusiasm as ever. During the last 15 years of his career, he was joined in practice by his son, Dr George F. Schudy.

Fred's zest for life continued into his retirement years. He took a computer course at the community college and set up his own web page (<http://www.vsbw.com~schudyf>). This gave him a continuing interaction with colleagues around the world. He bought an organ so that he could fulfill a latent dream of playing the instrument. Through his church, he visited hospitalized parishioners. He also delivered "Meals on Wheels" for a Christian alliance organization in Houston, saying he was going out to deliver meals to "old people." His younger meal recipients called him "Pops."

I shall pass through this world but once. If, therefore, there be any kindness I can show or any good thing I can do, let me do it now, let me not defer it or neglect it. For I shall not pass this way again.

-Etienne de Grelet

This quote hung behind Fred's desk in his private office, and he tried to live its words. He was active at St Luke's United Methodist Church, which he helped found in 1947, serving on its Executive Board for 30 years. St Luke's honored him with its "Distinguished Life" honor in 1991. An active member of the Rotary Club of Houston for more than 25 years, Fred also participated in Big Brothers of America and worked for 10 years with two fatherless young men.

Fred Schudy lived a long and fruitful life and was blessed to traverse from the horse-and-buggy age with no plumbing or phone to space travel, cell phones, and personal computers. Professionally, he started orthodontics while custom forming all bands, hand soldering all tubes, and using platinum and gold archwires. When he retired, he was using direct bonding, nitinol wire, and computerized cephalometrics! The profession of orthodontics suited Fred well and blessed his life through a wonderful symbiotic relationship. A dental colleague for whom he had great respect recently said that he hoped God has a huge malocclusion and that, if so, Fred has already taken impressions and is planning His treatment.