Henry P. Laughlin, M.D., ScD., ScsD.  
(1916-2015)

Dr. Laughlin was born in Hagerstown, Maryland on June 25, 1916 and lived a rich and productive life for ninety-eight and one half years and deceased on January 29, 2015. Most importantly, for this issue of the Newsletter it is to celebrate the very productive life of the Founder and Life President of The American College of Psychoanalysts, and his extraordinary professional career while recording his numerous accomplishments. In a way, it might appear to be presumptuous of this eulogy, but in reality he was a very modest and humble man. His most palpable virtue was generosity. He gave much treasure that benefited various medical and secular organizations. He was also a gregarious person in that he just loved to get together with like-minds in one place and then deeply enjoyed the exchange of ideas, particularly scientific ones, to nurture his very curious mind and his need to know and learn from diverse and protean sources of knowledge.

Henry’s family included many physicians including his Aunt Mary who was one of the earliest women physicians in eastern Maryland. His father John was also a physician, but sadly passed away when Henry was just a year old and his mother was then tragically widowed with two children to feed, rear, and educate. She was remarkably successful. John, Henry’s older brother lost his eyesight soon after college, but was able to operate a store in New Jersey using his remarkable memory for voices. Henry’s oldest daughter married a psychiatrist/professor at the University of Louisville Medical School. Henry’s mother protected, nurtured, educated, and provided for her little family, like many women who bravely struggled similarly during the post WWI period and then in the Great Depression of the 1930’s. They fought poverty, suffered deprivation of food, shelter, etc., but with the virtues of fortitude, perseverance, and high goals for her children she succeeded in surviving to see her children succeed. Henry and his siblings indeed worked their way through school, but it is clear the guiding light and main factor in their survival was their mother’s strength of character that held her little brood together and most importantly instilled good moral qualities and a healthy ambition in her offspring to fulfill her own and her deceased husband’s dreams.

Henry graduated in 1934 from Hagerstown High School where he won a Third Place Award in the Eighth Annual National Competition of The League of Nations Association. By the help of working odd jobs including waiting tables, a millwright’s helper at a Du Pont factory in Deepwater, N.J., and not the least some significant scholarship money made education a reality. For two summer sessions in 1936 & 1938 he attended Johns Hopkins University and then graduated with a B. S. in 1939 (February 16) from Ursinus College, Collegeville, PA. From June to September of 1939 he was a “Beach Doctor” in Stone Harbor on the Jersey shore. It was here (where the Durkee family summered) that he met then sixteen year old Page and their very first date was celebrated but somewhat more educationally important as she accompanied him to his required attendance at a medical school lecture. He received his medical degree from Temple University Medical School on June 12th 1941 and served a Junior Residency in Psychiatry at Philadelphia State Hospital in Byberry (June-September, 1940). In August 1940, Henry was commissioned in the U.S. Navy Medical Corps in 1941 as a Lt. J.G. He served in the North Atlantic, Mediterranean, and Caribbean. But aboard the naval destroyer U.S.S. Strong in the South Pacific, he saved many lives from injuries in combat with the Japanese Navy and from several instances of surgical care of various conditions and especially a case of appendicitis. He was honored with many commendations, war medals, membership in The Neptune Society, and then in 1944 was promoted to Lieut. Commander (MC) in the US Navy. Before leaving naval duty, he was an Instructor in Tropical Medicine at Treasure Island (1944-5) and Officer-in-Charge, Neuro-psychiatric S.O.Q., Consultant, U.S. Naval Hospital, Bethesda, Maryland, and Instructor in Psychiatry at the Navy Medical School (1946-47). After discharge from the military, Dr. Laughlin completed
his Psychiatric Residency Training at Temple University Medical School Hospital under the direction of the Chairman of the Department of Psychiatry. He also served on the staff of George Washington Medical School Hospital and in private practice of Psychiatry and Psychoanalysis in Chevy Chase and Bethesda, Maryland. From January 01, 1949 to June 30, 1957 Henry served as consultant and Teacher at Walter Reed Hospital. In May 1948, he successfully passed The American Board of Psychiatry And Neurology Examination and was designated a Diplomate (Certificate # 2936). He joined the American Psychiatric Association and co-founded the local Washington Psychiatric Society and then composed the bylaws for it. As originator of the idea, name, and founding of The Academy of Psychoanalysis, he mobilized support for inaugurating that organization in 1948. For over forty years, he was an Examiner for the Board of Psychiatry and Neurology. In the 1950’s, Henry was a consultant to the U.S. Psychological Strategic Board; the Originator and Editor of “A Psychiatric Glossary” for the APA; Psychiatric Consultant to the U.S. Department of State; Consultant to U.S Mutual Security Board; President of the Washington Psychiatric Society; First President of the District Branch of the APA ; Treasurer and Designer of Certificates and Plaques for the Montgomery County Medical Society as well as for the Washington Psychiatric Society; Visiting Professor at St. Elizabeth’s and medical schools in Tokyo, Seoul, Taiwan, Bagdad, Beirut, Istanbul, and Athens; promoted to Associate Clinical Professor at George Washington Univ. Medical School; and Good Will Ambassador from APA to twenty-one countries; and Chairman of “Modern Founders” of APA. He lectured to the Association of Claimant’s Attorneys; member of the Medical Arts Society of Washington, and President of the Montgomery County Medical Society. In 1958, he began work on the Constitution and Bylaws of the American College of Psychiatrists and in 1960 he joined the Editorial Board for the Maryland State Medical Journal and was named Chairman of the Public Relations Committees of the Maryland State Medical Society and the American Psychiatric Association.

In the decade of the 1960’s, he was President of the Ursinus College Alumni Association; Chair of the Ethics Committee of the Washington Psychiatric Society; Vice-President and President of the Washington Medical Arts Society and was cited by them for medical leadership. In 1963, he founded The American College of Psychiatrists in St. Louis, Missouri, elected the First President and Chairman of the Program and Finance Committees. He designed the seal, membership certificates, forms, logo, rosettes, and plaques, and presidential medals of the College. In 1964, he and Page established an award fund for the Board of Regents of the College. In 1966, he was a visiting Professor at the University of Athens Medical School in Greece and was given the Distinguished Alumnus Award and Medal for “scholarship, dedication and devoted service to Ursinus College Alumni Association.” A special Henry and Page award fund was established for the most deserving physician in Maryland and another fund for the Royal College of Psychiatrists in London.

In 1969, he founded The American College of Psychoanalysts on May 07, 1969 in Suite # 1170 of the Bal Harbour Hotel in the city of Bal Harbour, Florida. Present at that meeting were Drs. Nolan D. C. Lewis, Edward O. Harper, Arnold M. Rubin, L. Siegel, Benjamin Simon, and James P. Catell. Dr. LeRoy Leavitt, Mental Health Commissioner of Illinois was due to be there, but was delayed by travel problems. Henry designed the seal, certificates, logo, rosettes, medals, rings, plaques, ties, and scarfs for the College. He became the first President and was reelected the next year to serve a second term as well as the Eighth’s President and serving as Arrangements Committee Chairman more than once.

In the 1970’s, he was named a Fellow and Council member of the American Association for Social Psychiatry, and the Author of The Neuroses, the second printing of this book and it was named the main selection of the Behavioral Sciences Book Club in New York City. He was a co-developer of the Southern Manor Country Club in Boca Raton, Florida. From January 17, 1971 to February 15, 1984, Henry served as the Liaison Officer of the American College of Psychiatrists and in July 1971 was a delegate from the American Psychiatric Association to the Royal College of Psychiatrists of Great Britain. The same year he was made an Honorary Citizen of Baltimore and a visiting Professor at Walter Reed Hospital. Then in 1972 he was commissioned as a Colonel by Mississippi Governor William Lowe Waller and the same in Tennessee and Louisiana in 1974; in Kentucky and Georgia in 1975, Alabama in 1976, and South Carolina in 1972 and in that same year he was a visiting Professor at the University of Michigan Medical School. From 1972-1997, he served on the Board of Directors of Ursinus College. Another interesting fact is that in 1972 Henry was President of the Great White Hunters of Lingamore County and
hunted prong horn deer in Idaho with Roy Rogers for many years. He received the Distinguished Service Award Plaque for his service to the Eastern Psychoanalytic Association as Founder and as President from 1962-1965. For five years (1992-1997), Henry was a member of the Council on Internal affairs of the APA. In 1972, Henry was Delegate of the APA, The American College of Psychoanalysts, and The American College of Psychiatrists to the Royal College of Psychiatrists in London and was named a Fellow of the Royal College in 1973 and the same year a visiting Professor at the Royal Hospital of St. Bartholomew in London. That was a busy year since he was a visiting Professor in San Juan, the W. S. Hall Psychiatric Institute in Columbia, S.C., at Walter Reed and received an award for twenty-five years of service to George Washington University Medical School. He received a citation in “grateful recognition of outstanding service as Chief of Psychiatry and Neurology (10 years) 1954-1964, an Attending Staff Member in Psychiatry (twenty-six years, 1949-1975) at George Washington University Medical School. The Henry P. and Page Laughlin Special Award Fund were established in 1974. For Vol. 15 (XV edition) of Encyclopedia Britannica, 1975 he wrote: The Psychoneuroses. At the same time Henry had a part time practice of Psychiatry and Psychoanalysis December, 1974 – September, 1978 and full time from September 1978-January 25, 1982. He was elected the Eighth President of the American College of Psychoanalysts and the College was incorporated in Maryland on March 25, 1975. Along with all these honors, he was a member of the local Elks and Rotary clubs in Frederick, Maryland. For ten years (1977-1987) Dr. Laughlin was an Advisory and Consulting Editor in Psychoanalysis for Psychosomatics (Journal of The Academy of Psychosomatic Medicine). In 1977, he was named a Commodore for the U.S. Navy psychiatrists and in 1978, he joined the Sons of the American Revolution (National # 15501) and in became President in 1982 for three terms of the local SAR Club in Frederick. The Laughlin Prize in Great Britain was offered for ten years 1979-1989, in continuo) by the Royal College of Psychiatrists. In May of 1979, he was named Honorary Life President of the American College of Psychoanalysts. That same year was published his 2nd edition of The Ego and Its Defenses that was the main selection of The Psychotherapy and Social Sciences Book Club (Jason Aronson, Inc., New York. In June 1979, he delivered the Commencement Address at the Menninger Foundation Post Graduate Program in Psychiatry.

In the decade of the 1980’s, Henry began his interest in preserving the environment as Director for six years (1981-1987) at the Catoctin Area Mountain Park Environmental Resource, U.S. Park Service in Thurmont, Maryland where he designed the membership and environmentalist patches and for the Frederick County Fish and Game Protective Association at Camp Kanawha, Point of Rocks, Maryland. He received a Plaque for Outstanding Service to the Catoctin Park facility and 1984 became a member of the Wilderness Society. In 1982, he received a Meritorious Service Award and medal from the Maryland Chapter of the SAR and the same year was designated a Diplomate in The Pan American Medical Association as well as named an Honorary Deputy Sherriff for Frederick, Washington, and Fremont Counties. On February 16, 1985, Henry was the featured speaker at the Arlinger Chapter of SAR in Hagerstown, Md. The title of his speech was: “The Maryland Line and The Southern Campaign in the American Revolution.” In May 1986, The American College of Psychoanalysts gave Dr. Laughlin a beautiful Lalique crystal bowl in May 1986 in his honor as the Founder, First and Eighth President of the College. In September of the same year he was named Chairman of the Constitution Day Meeting, Francis Scott Key Memorial at the Sheraton Hotel in Frederick, Maryland. In June of the next year he was named a Charter member of that group as well as a Delegate to the Ninety-seventh National Congress of the SAR in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania and then served on the Council of State Presidents of SAR. The business community in Washington, D.C. honored Dr. Laughlin for his “time, energy, expertise, and contribution as a National Park Service Volunteer,” Rock Creek Park Day, on September 26, 1987.

In March, 1988 Dr. Laughlin was commissioned as an Admiral in the Texas Navy (Honorary) by Gov. W. P. Clement, Jr. On July 4, 1988 and July 3, 1989 he was the Grand Marshal in the National Independence Festival and Parade and then received the Grand Marshal’s plaque in August 1988. He received the Grand Marshall Emeritus Award in March 1989. He became a member “Of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War” in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania in August 1988. Henry was named Founder No. 2 of The George Washington Fund of the Sons of the American Revolution and in 1988 received a plaque inscribed “with grateful appreciation for patriotic service and faith in America.” Henry was made a member of the Lincoln-Cushing Camp., No. 2, Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War and also a member of The National Huguenot Society as well as of the local
Maryland Chapter. Henry became a Director of the National Institute of Emerging Technologies in December of 1988. He joined the Washington, D.C. Society of the War of 1812 member No. 320 and General Society No. 4625. In February 1989, Henry was honored with a plaque from the University Of Louisville, Kentucky “in respect for your many National Achievements and in grateful appreciation for your 15 years of service to the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences…” Grand Rounds, University of Louisville Medical School, February 23, 1989. On March 30, 1989 he received membership number No. 2132 in the National Society Sons of the American Colonists and on April 2, 1989, he joined the General Society Of the War of 1812 No. 4645, D.C. Society No. 320; in May 1989, The Continental Society Sons of Indian Wars, No. 49; later in May, the Military Order of the World Wars-WW No. M89633.

A desk Clock was given to Dr. Laughlin by the Washington Psychiatric Society Fortieth Anniversary Gala and inscribed: “With gratitude to the Founder Henry P. Laughlin M.D.” at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., June 1989. He was also honored by the National SAR with a certificate of appreciation for his service to that organization.

On July 4, 1989, The National Independence Day Festival and Parade Committee awarded Dr. Laughlin a Certificate of Award as “Grand Marshal Emeritus and Grand Marshal for 1989”…. “In commemoration of our founding fathers and mothers who struggled to secure Independence and Liberty, who established a Constitution for ‘We the People’. This Award is presented for your outstanding example and participation in the Nation’s Historic Salute to the Liberty Program, July, Washington, D.C., July 4, 1989.”

This record of Dr. Henry P. Laughlin’s many achievements is most impressive in length and variety, but it was not ever his principle aim to impress. Rather, he wanted to gather people of like mind and spirit to exchange ideas, strong sentiment, and conviction in our expanding science and then to communicate our knowledge in friendly discourse and dialogue without rancor or disrespect. It was his genuine love for all people and an equally strong love for truth that motivated him to create organizations and invite others to immerse themselves in the rich human libraries of wisdom in all of us in the College of Psychoanalysts as well as to participate with him in all those other organizations he was invited to join.

These photos were taken at the Nursing Home in Frederick, Maryland.

Dr. Henry P Laughlin and wife Page Durkee Laughlin

Dr. Henry P. Laughlin receiving the David Dean Brockman Award June 2008