

# WORLD FEDERATION OF NEUROSURGICAL SOCIETIES

## REPORT ON THE INTERNATIONAL GAVEL\*

Information about the INTERNATIONAL GAVEL, STRIKING BLOCK and CARRYING CASE presented to the World Federation of Neurosurgical Societies on July 24, 1957 at the founding of the World Society in Brussels.

### ABOUT THE IDEA

The original idea was suggested by the Project Committee of the Women's Auxiliary of the Congress of Neurological Surgeons, United States of America. The plan was later developed by members of the same society.

The project was executed with the active assistance of the following neurosurgeons and neurosurgical societies:

1. DR. ROBERT G. FISHER, Hanover, New Hampshire, U.S.A., who selected the artisan and assisted in its fabrication.
2. DR. ERNEST SACHS, SR., New Haven, Connecticut, U.S.A., who furnished the neurosurgical relic and made the formal presentation on behalf of the five American Societies.
3. DR. WILLIAM B. SCOVILLE, Hartford, Connecticut, U.S.A., who enlisted the support of the five national neurosurgical societies of the United States of America.
4. DR. A. EARL WALKER, Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A., who arranged for the acceptance of the gavel by the President and Secretary General.
5. AMERICAN ACADEMY OF NEUROLOGICAL SURGERY, Founded 1938.
6. CONGRESS OF NEUROLOGICAL SURGEONS, Founded 1951.
7. HARVEY CUSHING SOCIETY, Founded 1932.
8. NEUROSURGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA, Founded 1948.
9. SOCIETY OF NEUROLOGICAL SURGEONS, Founded 1920.
10. Numerous neurosurgeons encouraged the project. The World President, SIR GEOFFREY JEFFERSON, Birmingham, England, and the World Secretary General, MARCEL DAVID, Paris, France, graciously approved presentation of the gavel.

\* Copies of this report submitted to Five National Neurosurgical Societies of the United States of America.

### ABOUT THE ARTISAN

The artisan was VIRGIL POLING, Instructor in Woodwork, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, United States of America.

MR. POLING was born in Ohio on June 3, 1908. He attended public schools in Ohio, later attended Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, Ohio and was graduated in 1930 from Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio. In 1949 he was awarded an Honorary Master of Arts Degree from Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire.

He taught special art at Hamden High School, New Haven, Connecticut, served as Art Instructor at Harley High School, Rochester, New York and was a Training Director at the School of American Craftsmen. In 1941 he joined the faculty at Dartmouth College as an Instructor in Woodwork.

### ABOUT THE GAVEL

The Basic Design was taken from a mallet used by carpenters at the beginning of the twentieth century when neurosurgery was emerging as a distinct and important medical specialty.

A Dummy Gavel was fabricated to ensure that the size and balance of the finished gavel would be practical.

The Wood selected for the Handle and Striking Block was native American bird's-eye maple. The head of the Gavel was constructed from native American birch. Black cherry wood was used for the Carrying Case. These woods were commonly used in colonial America to construct useful household items. The timber source was the Dartmouth College Grant Forests, income from which has been used for Dartmouth College scholarships for many years. One of the properties was granted to the college by the Earl of Dartmouth in the late 18th century.

The Neurosurgical Relic embedded in plastic and secured to the lid of the Carrying Case is a double-ended gasserian ganglion hook used by SIR VICTOR HORSELEY of England (1857-1916). This historic item was graciously presented by DR. ERNEST SACHS, SR., New Haven, Connecticut. An inscription plate inside the lid identifies the relic and its donors.

The Inscription Plate on the outside of the Carrying Case read essentially as follows:

PRESENTED TO THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION  
OF NEUROSURGICAL SOCIETIES BY THE NATIONAL  
NEUROSURGICAL SOCIETIES OF THE UNITED STATES  
OF AMERICA AT BRUSSELS, BELGIUM IN JULY, 1957.

Respectfully submitted,

James R. Gay, M.D.  
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania  
Chairman, International  
Gavel Project

JRG:dts