

Shryock, E. Harold

(1906–2004)

RICHARD A. SCHAEFER

Richard A. Schaefer, B.A. (La Sierra College). Director of Community Relations, Loma Linda University Medical Center, 1976-2000. Historian, Loma Linda University Health, 2000 to the present. President, Loma Linda Chamber of Commerce, 2008-2010. Commissioner, City of Loma Linda Historical Commission, 2008-2020. Schaefer's numerous books include *LEGACY* (heritage of Loma University Medical Center), *Service is Our Calling* (50th anniversary of Loma University School of Dentistry), *A Century of Caring* (history of Loma Linda University School of Nursing), *Glory of the Vision* (history of Loma Linda University School of Medicine), and *Protons: A Beam of Hope*, *CREATION: "Behold It Was Very Good."* Schaefer is a prolific author, public relations professional, and public speaker who has presented and represented Loma Linda University history for over 50 years.



E. Harold Shryock.

Photo courtesy of the General Conference of Seventh-day

Adventists Archives.

Harold Shryock was a physician, medical educator, and medical school administrator.¹ His writings

encompassed the globe for 70 years and his contributions to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and Loma Linda University School of Medicine are legendary.²

Shryock worked for 41 years at the institution known today as Loma Linda University Health. He became a professor and chair of the Department of Anatomy and Dean of the School of Medicine. He wrote 621 magazine articles and 13 books. Among these were *Living*, a health textbook for grades seven and eight; *On Becoming a Man* and *On Becoming a Woman*, two sex education books; and *You and Your Health*, a three-volume set co-authored with Hubert Old. Swartout. A public speaker at church, school, and alumni meetings across the United States and Canada, as a physician he spoke to as many as 10,000 people at a time. He counseled hundreds of college students regarding scholastic, financial, and marital issues. And in a quest for the most qualified applicants, he overhauled the admissions procedures for what became the Loma Linda University School of Medicine.

Dr. Shryock set the standards for recruiting students. He established admissions policies by developing innovative ways of assessing premedical students, determining how letters of recommendation would be written and interpreted, and conducting on-campus interviews. He became the first dean to routinely visit Seventh-day Adventist undergraduate campuses throughout the United States, something subsequent deans have done ever since. His refinements and untiring efforts to determine the best-qualified applicants opened

doors of opportunity and service to hundreds of potential physicians.

Early Life

Born April 14, 1906 in Seattle, Washington,³ Shryock had no formal birth certificate. Instead, his father, Alfred Q. Shryock, M.D., mailed a postcard-sized "Birth Return" from the City of Seattle Department of Sanitation to King County, citing the essential facts of his son's birth. It included, among other pertinent information, that Harold was "legitimate." A photocopy of this document served as Shryock's birth certificate through the years.

The family arrived by train at the Loma Linda Depot on New Year's Day, 1910, about three months after the first freshman class had enrolled and within three weeks of the December 9, 1909, incorporation of the College of Medical Evangelists (CME), now known as Loma Linda University.

Alfred Shryock moved his family to Southern California and became Loma Linda's sixth physician. Alfred not only taught histology and human embryology, but also ran the pharmacy and drew blood from patients.

For the first seven years of his elementary education, Harold Shryock's parents decided that he would be homeschooled. At the age of 13, he began entered the eighth grade at a new, ten-grade Loma Linda church school.

As a teenager, Harold landed a few part-time jobs, becoming caretaker of the institution's laboratory animals, which included rabbits, guinea pigs, and a goat. He fed and watered them before and after school each day, and cleaned their cages on Sundays.

Later he labored part time in the maintenance department where he developed a great respect for the loyalty and sincerity of the College of Medical Evangelist's carpenters, electricians, plumbers, and welders. Shryock remembered that they would assemble each morning for a short worship service before taking up the work of the day. Those men exercised a tremendous influence on the young Harold Shryock, instilling in him a strong work ethic and a love for the creative process.

Shryock also worked as a janitor for a few hours each week, cleaning the medical school buildings. Earning 12 cents an hour, he eventually saved \$33, enough to buy a brand new bicycle from a Redlands bicycle shop.

While a premedical student at Pacific Union College, Harold Shryock met and admired a nursing student named Daisy Bagwell. However, he graduated from PUC without formalizing their relationship. He returned to Loma Linda and immersed himself in medical school. Now he decided to focus his energies unreservedly on academic pursuits. Meanwhile, Bagwell was completing her nurses training at St. Helena Sanitarium, not far from PUC.

Pushing himself to excel academically, Shryock began neglecting exercise and recreation. This His health declined, until he felt forced to drop out of medical school.

Bagwell graduated from the St. Helena Sanitarium and Hospital School of Nursing in August 1927. When she was a new graduate nurse, Harold caught a ride with friends to PUC, where he invited himself to stay in the men's dormitory and hiked down Howell Mountain in the direction of the St. Helena Sanitarium. The distractions of the trip combined with the opportunity to visit his sweetheart provided a wonderful diversion for Harold. His health improved so much that he resumed his studies.

Dr. Edward Risley, dean of the School of Medicine, remembering that Harold had done well in his chemistry studies with the dietician students years before, invited him to teach half-time while continuing as a student half-time. He taught dietician students organic chemistry, the same course he'd taken as a student four years earlier. He also taught a class in psychology.

Marriage

Shryock and Bagwell made plans to get married in the summer of 1929. Halfway through his second year of medical school, however, Harold began experiencing some of the same mysterious symptoms he'd suffered earlier. The heavy program of teaching and studies he'd endured for 18 months was taking its toll. To keep the illness from worsening, Harold decided to drop out of medical school again. Harold Shryock and Daisy Bagwell married on April 30, 1929, with A. O. Tait officiating. Following the honeymoon, Harold took a job driving a truck for Dixie Bakery in Portland, Oregon.

Daisy Shryock continued to encourage him. "If you want to be a doctor or teacher, then that's what you should be," she often told him. "Life is a series of choices. So sit yourself down and figure out what's most important to you, and then choose the best way to make it happen!"

In November 1929 the Shryocks returned to Loma Linda. Harold worked part time as a technician in both the Anatomy and Chemistry departments, while Daisy served part-time as a registered nurse at the Loma Linda Sanitarium and Hospital. He completed his second year of medical school in May 1930 and continued his technician job throughout the summer. Then once again he suspended his medical education, this time to teach at Pacific Union College.

The Shryock family grew with the addition of a daughter and a son, Patricia Helen and Edwin Forrest Shryock.

Career

Harold Shryock graduated from the College of Medical Evangelists on June 18, 1933. He served an internship at the Loma Linda Sanitarium and Hospital, where he administered anesthesia and assisted in surgery.

Although Harold Shryock wore many professional hats during his lifetime, he was primarily a medical educator, teaching future physicians. He also held several administrative posts, including Dean of the School of Medicine, at the school that eventually became known as Loma Linda University.⁴ However, he was best known

internationally as an author. During his career, he became the most prolific Adventist physician-writer for lay readers in the denomination since John Harvey Kellogg, penning a vast array of books, magazine articles, advice columns, and reports for *The Alumni Journal*.

While teaching freshman medical students, he discovered he was in fact holding down two jobs: lecturer as well as counselor, encouraging students in their adjustments to medical school and transitions to professional life. In this capacity, he was exposed to the wide range of scholastic pressures, financial difficulties, and marital conflicts that plague young people. His one-on-one conversations with students in the quiet of his office provided real-world insights into some of the difficulties they endured. Shryock's ongoing attempts to help his students untangle their personal problems drove him to a deeper study of human relations, mental health, personality problems, and human psychology.

Harold Shryock's reputation as an accomplished author, with his faculty position at the College of Medical Evangelists, and his experiences as a student of psychology, made him a much sought after counselor and public speaker. Students at the schools he visited especially appreciated the fact that someone on the CME faculty would take time to listen to their concerns. Harold also counseled relatives of students and institution employees. His clientele included medical professionals who sought his advice years after sitting in his classes.

Shryock retired as Professor of Anatomy on August 31, 1975, after 41 years of service. Being active in the production of book manuscripts cushioned Harold's adjustment to retirement. He received great satisfaction from his professional contribution, by proxy, through the impact of his former students—the quantity, quality, and variety of contributions made by those who once sat at his feet.

While endeavoring to balance devotion to God, family, and career, he contributed to the physical, mental, and spiritual wellbeing of countless members of both the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the public. Most important, Harold Shryock recognized and answered God's callings. As a result, he made bold, creative, and unparalleled contributions to Loma Linda University.

Harold Shryock died following a brief illness on March 3, 2004. He looked forward to being reunited with his beloved Daisy in the hereafter. His daughter, Patti Shryock Wallace, had her father's casket covered with daisies. During his memorial service, Randy Roberts, senior pastor of the Loma Linda University Church, displayed Dr. Shryock's Bible and, referring to the underlining, highlighting, and notes throughout, stated, "Whoever owned this Bible ... was certainly a friend of God."

When he pondered the providential heritage of Loma Linda and recalled how it unfolded right before his eyes...when he reviewed the eternal influence of its graduates who've gone to the ends of the earth...and when he recalled the part he played in the school's mission, Dr. Harold Shryock could only exclaim, "What hath God wrought!"

SOURCES

Adventist Review, June 24, 2004, 17.

Richard A. Schaefer, *On Becoming Shryock, A Life of Surprise and Inspiration*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2005.

NOTES

1. ARH, June 24, 2004, 17.
2. Unless stated otherwise, information in this article is from the author's book *On Becoming Shryock, A Life of Surprise and Inspiration* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2005).
3. ARH, June 24, 2004, 17.
4. www.adventistbookcenter.com/on-becoming-a-woman, accessed October 21, 2019.

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