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Papa Lyman Remembers

Longevity: John Wiley & Sons, The Charleston Conference and More

by Lyman Newlin (Book Trade Counsellor)

The **Charleston Conference** was great. If you weren't able to attend, you missed probably the best session in several years as the format again allowed adequate time for dialog between audience and speakers/presenters. The fifteenth birthday party was hugely attended and the cake and champagne were hugely consumed.

May I modestly hope that you missed my column in *Against the Grain* (v.7, no.5, November 1995). I did write a column and I got a lot of help from Charleston Conference alumnae. But the editor in her modesty decided that the subject of my column was much too laudatory and would not publish it. So a bunch of us created **Charleston Conference Special Birthday Publication** which had **Papa Lyman** and his crew remembering Charleston Conferences of days gone by. If you haven't seen this, just make your request to 800-532-5950 or email <AL764@FREENET.BUF-FALO.EDU> and you will receive this *Festschrift* by return snailmail.

Here I want to thank **Wiley** for help in the production of our **Special Birthday publication**. **Athena Michael**, a Wiley library rep, was instrumental in contacting writers, and **John Chambers**, Wiley's director of library sales was responsible for his firm's substantial contribution to production costs. I have to add here, and I don't know anybody in the library book vending business who will contradict me, that **John Wiley & Sons, Inc.** epitomizes what booksellers appreciate in publishers.

The **CEO Panels** at the November's Conference prompted me to remember a few Buyouts, Mergers and Acquisitions I have witnessed since Holt, Rinehart & Winston were merged by Clint Murchinson. Murchinson was a Texas millionaire, who was alleged to have kept healthy by following Dr. Jarvis' advice in *Folk Medicine*, a Henry Holt best seller. Take for example the arrival of the recent *LMP* (*Literary Marketplace*), 1996. Before we get into its subject matter, I can't resist wondering how many librarians and booksellers have suffered broken wrists from lifting and broken toes from having dropped this 9-pound behemoth! Contrasting the current edition to the 1969-1970 edition (the oldest one in my collection which I could lay my hands on easily), I started looking at the changes in publishing in this relatively short period of time. **Simon and Schuster** occupies less than two pages (8"x 9") in the 1969/70 edition. Turn back a page and you find **Charles Scribner's Sons** filling less than one column in one page. Compare that to **Simon and Schuster's** entry in *LMP* 1996. (I had occasion to try to find a proper address so I could write Charles

Scribner, III after learning of the death of his father, Charles Jr.). Charley finally shows up in the fifth column — or about 500 lines into the copy.

Now back to the 1969-70 edition of *LMP* ... in browsing the "S" section the name **Scott, Foresman and Company** immediately precedes **Scribner's**. Scott, Foresman, a great name in publishing, that is fast disappearing. S.F., Chicago's textbook house par excellence, which is not to say that it has never dabbled in "trade" titles. I remember an S.F. book of poems that my mother treasured. And believe it or not, S.F. owned in 1969-70 **William Morrow & Co.**, recently threatened to be dumped by its present owner, Hearst. S.F. also owned in 1969-70 **South-Western Publishing Co.**, of Cincinnati, a leader of business (accounting, typing) texts for high school and college, now in the hands of **International Thomson**. Scott, Foresman, publishers of **General Henry Martyn Robert's Rules of Order** which has sold millions of copies in its nine editions since 1876. (I had the great pleasure of being trade consultant in charge of marketing *Robert's Rules*, 7th ed.) S.F., the publisher of *Perrin's Writers' Guide & Index to English* (1942, 800pp., \$2.00), adopted textbook for thousands and thousands of college freshmen in the 1940s. Scott, Foresman, whose stock was one of the hottest in publishing in the 1960s now up for grabs by **HarperCollins** which obviously would rather publish intimate details about front page characters than the product of literati so carefully nurtured by the house of Harper's **Cass Canfield**.

And there's more. Recent stories in the *New York Times* and *Publishers Weekly* about the "New Lexington Press" bring back memories of my association with the original **Lexington Books**, a subsidiary of **D. C. Heath & Co.** In the mid-seventies, I worked with **Mike McCarroll**, the initial director, particularly when Lexington Books decided to start a medical publishing company: **Collamore Press**, the C coming from the middle name of **Daniel C. Heath**. After we had established a rather unique marketing plan to get Collamore health science books in the libraries, Mike called me one day in 1978 with the news that Heath had sold Collamore to **Houghton-Mifflin** where it would be merged with H-M's new and rapidly growing medical book program. But that second life was short as Houghton sold this project to **Macmillan**. All of this only goes to prove that publishers come and go. **Wiley** is far and away the publisher which has held onto its name for a notable length of time. Only eleven years to go and it will hit two hundred years. I'm going to do my best to hang around to help

my favorite publisher blow out the candles.

Speaking of longevity in our industry, a news release dated November 9 from **Loyola University Family Business Center**, Chicago, announces "Illinois Family Business of the Year Winners" and names **Follett Corporation** as winner of the "large company" category. The Follett family and its enterprises will be featured in the next issue of my column.

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Postscript from Papa Lyman — Some sad news was received at Charleston. First, **Connie Kelley**, Acquisitions Librarian at the **University of Virginia** reported the death of **Mary Alice Kraehe**, who had worked in several positions at Alderman Library until she retired last year. **Mary Alice Eggelston** worked as a student clerk at the Minnesota Bookstore while I was its manager. She is survived by her husband, **Enno Kraehe**, recently retired from a prestigious chair in UVA's History Department, a son Laurence, my godson, and a daughter, **Claudia**, named for **Claudia Muzio**, one of the great opera sopranos of the twenties and thirties until her untimely death at age 37.

Also at Charleston I learned from **John Secor** of the death of **Dwight Myers**, a former sales manager of **Prentice-Hall**. He retired to his hometown in Albuquerque where he and his wife Carol, a former staff member of the **University of New Mexico Press** published, *Book Talk*, for the **New Mexico Book League** of which they were both officers. Dwight was another all around bookman. The last time I saw him, at an ABA convention a few years ago, he was sitting at a Simon and Schuster booth writing Prentice-Hall orders from bookstore buyers whom he had called on over the years ... I must have received one of his last letters — it was to thank me for some history of forgotten Chicago and Milwaukee writers. The letter was dated just a week before he died on September 16, in Kalispell, MT while he and Carol were on a trip celebrating their 45th wedding anniversary. Dwight, in a recent letter gave his age thusly: "I was just two years old when you started in the book business." 🐼