

PRESENTATION TO WOOSTER ROTARY CLUB FOR DR. ROBERT ANDERSON  
SEPTEMBER 19, 2005  
PRESENTED BY J. DOUGLAS DRUSHAL

Today we honor another of the senior members of our club, Dr. Robert Anderson. Bob, please stand so that those in the ends of the room can put a face with the name.

Bob was born right here in Wooster, Ohio, on March 30<sup>th</sup>, 1917, which makes him a youthful 88. He lived on North Buckeye Street, and attended Bowman Street School (at the present location of part of the parking lot for Cornerstone Elementary) and, like some of Wooster's most distinguished residents, attended Beall Avenue Elementary School (at the location of the Gault Family Learning Center). He graduated from Wooster High School (at the present location of Cornerstone Elementary) in 1935, and was class president his senior year. He also lettered in football, basketball, and, of course, golf.

Bob's father was a member of the Wooster Country Club from 1923 until the stock market crash in 1929. During the Depression, in order to keep playing golf, Bob worked out his Country Club membership by mowing greens and caddying. And you have to wonder if this wasn't the true beginning of Bob's Rotary service because he believes he caddied for all but three of the founding members of this club.

From Wooster High School, Bob moved on to the College of Wooster, where he not only lettered in golf but also was one of the first players on the College of Wooster golf course. When he was in college, Bob already knew he wanted to go into medicine, so around all the golf he managed to fit in a chemistry major and a biology minor, and he earned his degree in 1939.

Bob then went on to Western Reserve Medical School in Cleveland, and it was here that World War II caught up with him, as it did with every able-bodied member of his generation. Bob joined the Army while he was in medical school. The Army let him finish school, and serve 9 months of an internship at Cincinnati General Hospital, but then they wanted him for basic training. The only problem was that, during his internship in Cincinnati, Bob had met a lovely young nurse named Dorothy. Bob and Dorothy wanted to get married, but the Army wanted Bob in Indianapolis for basic training. So during the middle of basic training, Bob wrangled a 3-day leave to get married. In three days, he traveled from Indianapolis to Wooster to Cincinnati for the wedding, and then back to Indy – all by train. Clearly, this is a guy who knows how to get things done.

So while Dorothy held down the fort in Ohio, Bob went on to California for rifle training and gas-mask training, then was shipped as a Second Lieutenant and Casual Officer to New Caledonia in the South Pacific. From New Caledonia, he was transferred to Guadalcanal, where he ran the dispensary for a MASH unit that was part of the 68<sup>th</sup> Field Hospital.

From Guadalcanal, Bob's MASH unit was sent to Okinawa. They were sent in just a few days after the US had invaded this Japanese-held island. The MASH unit had nine days to get a field hospital set up before the US launched its major offensive to take control of Naha, the capital of Okinawa. Bob's new job was Triage Officer. Little did he know that on the first night their field hospital was open for business, they would take in nearly 1800 casualties. The fighting continued for 6 more weeks, and it wasn't until the bombs were dropped on Nagasaki and Hiroshima, just 200 miles away, that the fighting ended.

Bob, a Captain by this time, was sent to South Korea, where he served as CEO of the Army hospital in Pongu. After 2 years of overseas Army duty, Bob returned to the States to take Dorothy on a long-overdue honeymoon and then to complete a 2-years residency in internal medicine at Christ Hospital in Cincinnati. In 1949, Bob and Dorothy moved to Wooster, where Bob served as the College of Wooster's official physician while he set up his own medical practice.

And what a practice! There are certainly many in this room who at one time or another were poked, prodded, or examined by Dr. Bob – and many more who know someone who was his patient at some point in his 31 years of service. That patient list included my father for many years, who was distressed about

having to find another physician when Bob retired. And there are probably many of you who know that...yes...Doc Anderson actually made house calls. And they didn't have to be pre-approved by ANYone.

Bob retired from his medical practice in 1980, leaving him plenty of time to hone his golf game, and to land three holes in one and several tournament titles at Wooster Country Club. Bob's wife and favorite golfing partner, Dorothy, passed away just three years ago. They were married for 58 years, and have three children and one granddaughter.

You heard from Tony Biggio several weeks ago about Bob's role in the founding of Ida Sue School, motivated by one of their children being mentally retarded. The other two children included a daughter who was a nationally competitive swimmer and was ranked by the Daily Record as one of the top 50 Wayne County athletes of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and a son who attended college on a golf scholarship.

Bob was inducted into Rotary some 55 years ago, sponsored by Andrew Schultz, who I believe was the grandfather of Rotarian Bill Schultz. Back in 1950, Rotary meetings were held on Mondays at noon, but they were in Weitzel Hall on Buckeye Street, where Murr's Printing is currently located. Bob recalls that the teapot ante was only a penny back then, but that the good food and good company haven't changed in the intervening 55 years.

Please join me in recognizing Dr. Robert Anderson.