

Highlights in the History of the Capital Section, AACC, 1951–1976¹

In 1951, Washington, D. C. was *not* a center for clinical chemists. There were separate clinical chemistry laboratories in Georgetown University Hospital, Walter Reed Army Hospital, the U. S. Naval Hospital, and D. C. General Hospital (municipal), and the medical schools of the three universities: Georgetown, George Washington, and Howard. D. C. General Hospital instituted a clinical chemistry laboratory under the direction of a clinical chemist in 1951; at all the other laboratories, clinical chemistry was under the direction of pathologists.

Col. Monroe Freeman of Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, Martin Rubin of Georgetown University Hospital, and Miriam Reiner of D. C. General Hospital (all members of the AACC) decided that the time had come to start a local section in the Washington area. Since the number of clinical chemists in Washington was limited, they decided to poll Maryland and Virginia for potential members. This resulted in the eventual establishment of the Washington–Baltimore–Richmond Section.

Dr. Nelson Young of the Medical College of Virginia at Richmond brought in members of his staff. Henry Wishinsky, then clinical chemist at Sinai Hospital, and Marie Andersch, who headed the chemistry laboratory at the University of Maryland Hospital, were the nucleus of the Baltimore group. They were later joined by Florence White, who was in charge of the laboratory at The Johns Hopkins Hospital. At least one meeting a year was held in Baltimore. When the National Institutes of Health opened its hospital in 1953, with Elizabeth Frame as head of the Clinical Chemistry Division, she and members of her staff joined the group. The membership of the section became far-flung and included Charlottesville, Virginia; the Veterans Hospital at Martinsburg, West Virginia; Cumberland in the western mountains; and the Eastern Shore in Maryland. Attendance often depended upon the weather.

This sixth AACC section started with a small but enthusiastic group of 10. Members appreciated meeting with congenial colleagues who shared the same problems and interests. Information and specimens were exchanged to help evaluate old and new methods, and lectures were presented on pertinent topics. Four of the original members are still active in the group: Bernard

Armbrecht, Tomas Jefferis, Miriam Reiner, and Martin Rubin.

The first meeting at WRAIR (Walter Reed) was eminently successful. The topic was “Flame Photometry,” then a new and revolutionary technique. The meeting was attended by about 50 people, who included chemists, pathologists, physicians, and technicians.

The new section was welcomed by the academic community, and meetings were held at American, Georgetown, and George Washington universities, and at Walter Reed, Navy Medical Center, and the National Institutes of Health. It has become a tradition to hold an annual banquet at the last meeting of the year, when spouses and friends are invited, new officers are installed, and the Capital Section Annual Award is presented. Usually, in the Spring, the Richmond group plans an interesting meeting, including luncheon.

In the beginning we were fortunate to have two eminent professors of biochemistry take an interest in our group. Dr. Michael X. Sullivan, of Georgetown University, who received the Ames Award in 1955, contributed his interest and hospitality in the early years. Dr. Joseph H. Roe, of George Washington University, until his death in 1967, was one of our most enthusiastic members and guided us wisely and well.

In 1961, the name was changed to the AACC Capital Section as this did not limit the boundaries or suggest that the group was restricted to the three cities.

The group is fortunate in having many eminent speakers available from universities and government institutions in the area, as well as the many visiting scientists whose business brings them to Washington from all over the country and overseas. This is an added incentive for the Section members and interested scientists to attend the meetings.

The membership of the Section started with 10 in 1951, progressed to 40 in 1953, 55 in 1954, and then stayed around 60 until 1966. In the late 1960s it progressed to 70 members, then jumped to over 100 in 1968. Since then there has been a steady increase: 1971—126 members; 1972—133; 1974—177; and 1975—224. The latest count shows about 270 members.

In 1964, Mr. L. Freeman of the American Instrument Co., through arrangements with Dr. Julius Sendroy, Jr., Mr. L. Heiss, and Dr. Joseph H. Roe (chairman of the Section), sponsored an annual award to be given to an outstanding member for significant contributions to the field of clinical chemistry. The award is presented at the annual banquet at the last meeting of the year. The

¹ Presented in part at the 25th Anniversary Meeting, Washington, D. C., June 26, 1976. Dr. Reiner is an Emeritus Member. Submitted at the request of the Committee on History, AACC.



Some Capital Section members of long standing. The above pictures were taken in June 1976, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary meeting of the Section.

Top (left to right): Marlon Webster, Pearl Anderson (since deceased), Miriam Reiner, Joseph V. Princiotta.

Below: Martin Rubin (presenting the keynote address); Tomas C. Jefferis, Hiroshi H. Nishi, Bernard H. Armbricht. All but Jefferis and Nishi are charter members.

untimely death of Dr. Roe occurred after his selection by the local Awards Committee in 1967, but before the presentation was made. In appreciation of Dr. Roe's contributions to the Section and to clinical chemistry in general, it was voted to change the name to the Joseph H. Roe Award. Recipients of the Award are as follows:

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| 1964—Tomas Jefferis | 1970—F. Lee Rodkey |
| 1965—Miriam Reiner | 1971—Norman C. Law |
| 1966—Martin Rubin | 1972—Robert S. Melville |
| 1967—Joseph H. Roe | 1973—Donald S. Young |
| 1968—Marjorie Knowlton | 1974—Edward Knoblock |
| 1969—Ernest Cotlove | 1975—William Campbell |
| | 1976—Jocelyn M. Hicks |

The second award of the Capital Section is named for Dr. Ernest Cotlove, a member from 1953 until his death in 1970. Dr. Cotlove was chairman of the Section in 1966-7 and served on many local and national committees, including the organizational committee for the national meeting in Washington in 1968. This award is for the best individually authored paper by a member of the local section who is under 36 years old. Abstracts of papers are submitted to the local Award Committee, the best four are selected for presentation, and the winner is announced at the next meeting. The initial recipient, in 1976, was Ulysses Smalls of the Veterans Hospital, Baltimore, Maryland.

In 1970 a Newsletter was included with the notice of the monthly meetings. This was enlarged in 1973 to

CHEMLINES, with notices of future meetings, personal notes, and items of interest from the national office.

The Capital Section has cooperated with other societies and events through the years. One event of long standing started in 1954 with a symposium and instrument exhibit at the National Institutes of Health. This is sponsored by NIH, various instrument companies, and a committee formed by representatives of local scientific societies, who select the topics and speakers for the symposia that are arranged at the same time. NIH no longer has the space for the instrument show, but has continued the symposia and demonstrations of apparatus pertinent to the seminars.

The Capital Section held a symposium on *Inborn Errors of Metabolism* at the AAAS meeting in 1966 with Stanbury and DeGroot, Seegmiller, and Brady as speakers. Martin Rubin served as moderator. Meetings have been held at various times with the local chapters of the Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine, the Instrument Society of America, and the American Chemical Society.

Some of the more recent symposia and seminars are as follows: *The Clinical Biochemistry of the Neonate*, December 5-7, 1974. This conference has been published by Wiley under the direction of editors Donald S. Young and Jocelyn M. Hicks. On April 26, 1975, there was a workshop on *New Statistical Tools for the Clinical Chemist*, chaired by David E. Uddin. Three symposia were held in 1976: *Porphyria Measurements, Laboratory and Clinical Aspects*, January 22, with

Jocelyn M Hicks and Ruth S. Sonoff as chairmen [published in *Clinical Chemistry* 23, 251-274 (1977)]; a day-long seminar on *Thyroid Function*, May 8, in which both physicians and chemists participated; and a day-long seminar on *Blood Gases*, November 3, with both technical and scientific presentations.

The most notable event in our 25 years, and the one which took the concerted effort of all members, was in 1968 at the 20th national AACC meeting, held jointly with the 13th meeting of the Canadian Society of Clinical Chemists in Washington, D. C. In those days the AACC sections were "do-it-yourselfers" and had no outside help to cope with exhibitors, hotel arrangements, and scheduling of sessions and other functions. The meeting was held at the Washington-Hilton Hotel and was declared a great success by the 3000 national and international men, women, and children who attended.

Listed below are individuals who have served as chairmen of the Capital Section.

1951-53	Monroe	1965-66	Robert S. Freeman
1953-54	Miriam Reiner	1966-67	Ernest Cotlove
1954-55	Martin Rubin	1967-68	Edward Knoblock
1955-56	Bernard Armbrrecht	1968-69	Donald S. Young
1956-57	Elizabeth Frame	1969-70	F. Lee Rodkey
1957-58	Ralph Peterson	1970-71	Matthew J. Rehak
1958-59	Joseph Princiotto	1971 (6 mo.)	Nathan Gochman
1959-60	Joseph McLaughlin	1972-73 (½ yr.)	Norman Law
1960-61	Henry Wishinsky	1974	Jocelyn M. Hicks
1961-62	Tomas Jefferis	1975	Edward Knoblock
1962-63	Julius Sendroy, Jr.	1976	David Uddin
1963-64	Joseph H. Roe	1977	Maurice Green
1964-65	Joseph Stabile		

Many members of the Capital Section have been active in local, national, and international clinical chemistry affairs. Four national AACC presidents have come

from the group: Monroe Freeman, 1954-5; Miriam Reiner, 1962-3; Julius Sendroy, Jr., 1964-5; and Robert S. Melville, 1969-70. The president-elect for 1977, Nathan Gochman, was a section member before he moved to San Diego Veterans Hospital.

National Awards to members of the Capital Section are as follows:

Ames (formerly Bischoff) Award: M. X. Sullivan, 1955; Joseph H. Roe, 1956; Julius Sendroy, Jr., 1968; Donald S. Young, 1977.

Fisher Award: Miriam Reiner, 1971; Robert S. Melville, 1976.

Smith Kline Award: Martin Rubin, 1972.

Warner-Lambert Lectureship: Martin Rubin, 1977.

Monroe Freeman was president of the clinical chemistry group of IUPAC from 1959-63. Martin Rubin has just completed a six-year term as president of the International Federation of Clinical Chemistry. The number of countries participating during his presidency increased from 17 to 37. Some of the members who have served on the IUPAC committee are: Robert Melville as national AACC representative; Robert Schaffer on the Expert Panel on Bilirubin; Donald Young on the Committee on Theory of Reference Values; and Bernard Armbrrecht on the Standardization of Quantities and Units. Donald S. Young is currently chairman of both the Committee on Publications and the Board of Editors of *Clinical Chemistry*.

The Capital Section is proud of its growth, not only in numbers but in its breadth as well. The members have been active in local, national, and international clinical chemistry affairs. Topics of lectures and seminars have been kept current. The spirit of coöperation among the members has been great, whether in Washington, Virginia, or Maryland. The first 25 years have been fruitful and enjoyable, and we are sure that it will continue into the future.

Acknowledgement. I acknowledge the assistance of many members of the Capital Section who helped jog my memory.

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