

In Memoriam – Dr. V. G. Clark-Wismer

1911–1997



One of our friends and colleagues has died. This is a great loss to her family, to the thousands of patients she treated, to the Orthomolecular Profession and to the State of Hawaii. As is common with pioneers in a new paradigm in medicine she was greatly appreciated by all except by the State of Hawaii and the few psychiatrists practising there.

We became friends about 35 years ago when we met Suzie and her husband, Chet, a biochemist. Since then we have been in regular contact in Canada at the *Nutritional Medicine Today* annual conference, in the United States on the mainland and of course in Hawaii. The last time my wife Rose, and I were there a couple of years ago we met frequently. Suzie was a great entertainer but each time we ate together she had with her another doctor, or psychiatrist or student. She was tireless in trying to introduce orthomolecular methods to her colleagues and students. Many years ago with a group of her supporters she tried to interest the Mental Hospital in Hawaii to start a project using

orthomolecular therapy. It was a well designed study but the hospital was not interested. This was due to the strong opposition of the psychiatrists. In Honolulu there was a small psychiatric community in which orthodoxy was too powerful and well-entrenched to permit unusual new ideas. But Suzie steadily continued her work. Every time I received a request from anyone in Hawaii I would give them her name, knowing that she was the only physician there who could and would treat them properly.

A. Hoffer, M.D., Ph.D.

Suzie, as she was affectionately known to her close and longtime friends, was born in the little town of Milan, Missouri. Only later in life did she realize how sickly she had been as a child. The osteopathic physician who treated her inspired her to attend the Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine. The inheritance of her father's

wisdom and her early experience with other's pain carried her through her own pain and gave her the exquisite, unparalleled ability to be compassionate with others.

After graduating in 1935 she came to Hawaii in 1936. Her medical license number was 89 and she practised medicine till the day she died. She outlived her parents, brothers and her beloved husband, Chester.

Her work was not toil. It was her devotion, a labor of love, a love of life and all living things. Suzie respected and appreciated all life, including the plants and animals around her. She had many stories to tell, not only of the myriad events and people in her life, but also of her faithful dog, Rusty, and the plovers who played out the seasons in her front yard. A pioneer in nutrition and preventive medicine, she was tireless in her efforts to heal and aid the sick and needy. She was a seemingly inexhaustible source of solace, cheer and relief from pain. Her eyesight failing in recent years, she was frequently seen struggling with a magnifying glass to read her journals and mail. She never let this stop

her from learning and remained open to new ideas, willing to try anything reasonable, however revolutionary, to help her patients. Even though her body was failing, her mind and spirit remained indomitable to the end.

And in the end, we are left with many memories and insights. If "laughter is the best medicine" we were all given generous doses with each meeting. You went to Suzie, not just for treatment but to laugh and have a good time, while you were being relieved of pain and given gentle guidance. One of her preferred pleasures was to enjoy a modest snack and a joyful toast, in good company. Although she preferred champagne, anything was fine, even an empty glass would do. What was important, was that we celebrate life everyday and in any way.

So let us raise our glasses high in loving memory and appreciation to a true healer, humanitarian and hero, who was many things to us and will always be remembered with a smile.

Jarret H.C. Ko, M.D.