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CARDIOVASCULAR THORACIC SURGERY

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*Clarence Dennis, M.D.
Department of Surgery
Great University of New York at Stony Brook
Stony Brook, New York 11794*

Dear Clarence:

We are such old friends that I am sure you won't be "bugged" by my bringing up a matter about which I have written and spoken to you. I have as yet not been able to find mention in the literature of your initial operations with the heart-lung machine. If you know of any I would surely appreciate it. You deserve credit for this and I am certain that you are not going to sit down and write a paper to this effect. Hence, I want to see that you have the credit you deserve. I have just been looking through that very excellent history of thoracic surgery which Dick Meade wrote. As you know, he included not only scientific articles but discussions and even indirect information he had acquired. He makes no mention of your having done this.

As I also told you, I have some interesting material to include, among other things long letters from George Humphreys telling about his operating upon a patent ductus in a dog and seeking patients without success and also the concept of producing a pulmonary artery systemic anastomosis prior to the time Blalock did it but again getting no patient.

Now I am in a bit of a bind for I have obligated myself to deliver the David Hume Memorial Lecture and I have to get to work preparing it. I thought that I would talk about this matter.

If you don't have time to answer it fully I think I could get by if you would simply answer two questions. Am I correct in assuming that the first patient you operated upon did not make it because you were not adequately prepared for the enormous return of blood into the heart during the period of cardiopulmonary bypass when the heart was open and that in the second case success was not achieved because of some error in management of the heart-lung machine by one of your technical helpers? The other matter relates to the dates of these operations. If you don't know the exact dates the approximate dates would do. As I say, if you don't have time to tell me in any more detail just the answer to these two questions would permit me to proceed.

Clarence Dennis, M.D.

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Page -2-

I do hope you will have a moment to scribble down a note to me.

It was great seeing you in Europe and Mary and Myrtie and I are looking forward to seeing both of you again soon in San Francisco.

With warm regards, I am

Yours sincerely,



Harris B Shumacker, Jr., M.D.

HBS:cf