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INTRODUCTION OF FREDERICK KUHLMANN

NEIL A. DAYTON

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SPECIAL CARE AND TRAINING

F. KUHLMANN

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## Introduction of the Speaker of the Evening

PRESIDENT FREDERICK KUHLMANN

*By the Presiding Officer*

NEIL A. DAYTON, M.D.

*At the President's Dinner, Friday Evening, May 24, 1940, Sixty-fourth Annual Meeting of the American Association on Mental Deficiency, Haddon Hall, Atlantic City, N. J.*

### FELLOW MEMBERS:

IN NEARLY nineteen years of membership in this Association many pleasant duties have been passed along to me. However, no assignment has given me as much pleasure as that of introducing the Speaker of the Evening and your President, Dr. Frederick Kuhlmann.

For a good many years I have been saying that we have the finest group of people in the United States gathered together in our organization. Here we have earnest, hardworking individuals who are devoting their lives to a portion of the world's unfortunates. I have been proud of you and your accomplishments time and time again. About the only criticism that might be directed toward us, and a very mild one, is that we do not know each other well enough. We meet each year, shake hands, read our papers, discuss matters briefly, and then part for another year. This is not long enough to get acquainted in any satisfactory sense. In this connection it occurred to me to wonder how many of you know your President. You are familiar with his many accomplishments, of course, but how many of you know the real man? In the manner of an old researcher I have been doing a little digging over the past few months and have uncovered a number of very interesting facts about a very interesting man. I am going to pass a few of them along to

you because I know that you, too, will enjoy knowing them. To do justice to this subject would take about nine hours, but I am going to be reasonable and condense it to just nine minutes.

Fred Kuhlmann entered his present life on a farm in Iowa, the youngest child of seven. His father died when he was nine years of age and it was up to the boys of the family to carry on from that point. Early in life, our future President got his hands into the good earth and his experiences with the soil left him a rich inheritance in the form of a rugged physique and the ability to appreciate the meaning of hard work.

When Frederick Kuhlmann first entered the University of Nebraska in 1895, he was undecided between Physics and Chemistry. We very nearly lost him at this point. However, contact with Professor H. K. Wolfe directed him towards his well-known field of Psychology. Nebraska gave him his Bachelor's degree in 1899 and his Master's degree in 1901. Following this, a well earned fellowship took him to Clark University. He had as a classmate another young man who was to do a little work in the field of mental testing. Possibly you have heard of him. His name is—let me see—his name is Terman. What an odd situation! Our two giants in the mental testing field, Kuhlmann and Terman,



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n the same college, in the same classes, during the same year!

When it came time for Frederick Kuhlmann to prepare his Doctor's thesis, the field of Mental Deficiency was recommended as one in which psychologists had done very little. If it seems odd that the psychologists were doing little in the field of mental defect, please remember that this was in 1903 B.B., that is—Before Binet. This choice of thesis meant an introduction to the late Dr. Walter E. Fernald and a life-long friendship ensued. A number of cases were studied at Waverley in the well-known Kuhlmann manner and his thesis "An Experimental Study of Mental Deficiency", gave him his Ph.D. in 1903. Following graduation, there was a year of teaching at Clark where he lectured on Mental Deficiency. There followed a year in Psychology at Wisconsin, another year at Clark and later on, a period of teaching at the University of Illinois where he lectured on Abnormal Psychology, chiefly to medical students.

In 1910 Dr. A. C. Rogers, Superintendent at Faribault, Minnesota, came forward with the offer of a position as Director of Research. This was very much to Dr. Kuhlmann's liking and he came into his life work at that point.

The work at Faribault soon bore fruit and the activities initiated there soon spread to other state institutions, to the courts and to the public schools of Minnesota. A training school for teachers of mental defectives was established and a large part of the teaching was done by the Director of Research. In 1921 Dr. Kuhlmann's Department at Faribault became the Research Bureau of the State Board of Control, in St.

Paul. This division has been renamed twice and is now called the Bureau of Mental Examinations. They conduct between five and six thousand examinations of children each year and the efficiency and usefulness of this unit, developed by Dr. Kuhlmann, has become a byword throughout the country.

In addition to huge daily work assignments, our President has found time for writing. I read through three single space pages of articles, monographs and books and had not reached the end. I wonder if you know that the Kuhlmann-Anderson group tests, originally introduced in 1927, have been increasing steadily in popularity and last year reached a peak with the remarkable production of over three quarters of a million copies? We may influence a few hundred or even a thousand or two of mental defectives, but here is a man who reaches out and touches over 750,000 children each year. And remember too, that this is only one of many tests written by our President. Dr. Kuhlmann, himself, feels that his new book "Tests of Mental Development" published last year is the best job he ever did. And I shall add—the best job he has ever done to date. We know that he has only started. Taking the mental growth curve of the Swiss Psychologist, Heinis, Dr. Kuhlmann conceived the original idea of using it in scale construction and in scoring intelligence. Another thought is presented in his use of the speed factor in scoring the individual tests. He shows that as long as a test is not too easy, speed of performance is, on the whole, as important as is accuracy. This would not apply, of course, to tests in very young children,

He believes that in not counting speed, we throw away half the score, as is usually done in the Binet scales. His book also gives a satisfactory method of scoring intelligence of adults who are above average. In the old scales, intelligence quotients above 100 for adults were more or less makeshift. Under Dr. Kuhlmann's new scheme a P.A. (percentage of average—a phrase replacing the old term I.Q.) of 110 represents the same intelligence at age twenty as at age ten.

Our President has been long in the service of the Association on Mental Deficiency. Elected to membership in 1911, nearly 30 years ago, he was acting Secretary-Treasurer for several years during the illness of Dr. Rogers. In 1916 he succeeded Dr. Rogers as Secretary-Treasurer. He has read many significant papers before our Association and served on a number of committees throughout the years. At one time he was Chairman of the clinical section of the American Psychological Association and at present is Chairman of the clinical section of the American Association on Applied Psychology. Some years ago he was the first President of the Minnesota Society for Applied Psychology.

If one wishes to learn all about a man, one of the best methods is to talk to the people who work for him. Failing to get anything from the modest Dr. Kuhlmann, except the bare outline of his life, I resorted to a little skull duggery. By devious means, I got in touch with some of the people who have been working with him and then the flood gates opened! All of it would make a book, and an interesting one too. I found that all of Dr. Kuhlmann's

assistants have an intense loyalty for him to the extent that one's life is in danger at the asking of a single uncritical question. Associates who have gone on to other fields regard him as a life-long friend on whom they may rely. They keep in touch with him constantly and frequently write back for advice and guidance. A Minnesota professor once said to a psychologist about to begin work under him "You are about to enter the band of loyal Kuhlmann followers and I can tell you now, you will never leave it". One assistant said that it was impossible to discuss *any* sort of a problem with Dr. Kuhlmann without learning something new. I could go on indefinitely with these personal references but will not embarrass Dr. Kuhlmann further.

The man is not the scientist twenty-four hours a day but pursues his hobbies with the same enthusiasm that marks his daily endeavors. Are you interested in baseball or football? Talk them over with Fred and you will find that he knows all of the prominent players and the teams likely to lead in their respective sections. In tennis he was a near State champion in Minnesota some years ago. Are you fond of hunting or fishing? Sit down with Fred. He will match every one of your stories with a tall tale that will leave you gasping. I am not implying that our President is one of those fishermen prevaricators. However, he is able to hold his own with any of you and, knowing some of you as I do, that is a statement, indeed.

All of these facts came from others than our President. When I asked him to supplement my knowledge of his life, he wrote me a two-page letter. It is characteristic of him that a half page

was devoted to himself and a page and a half to his wife and his son. The obviously devoted husband said that the most important event in his life occurred in 1913 when Ruth Jennings and Fred Kuhlmann were married. All unknowing, Fred had entered the family of the great Commoner, William Jennings Bryan. He hastens to add, however, that his wife has always voted the straight Republican ticket. He went on to tell me of the good cheer and sympathetic understanding of Ruth Jennings Kuhlmann and how she had furnished most of the drive for whatever he may have accomplished. He told me too, of their boy, Frederick, Jr., and what his coming had meant to both of them. Others told me of the companionship built up over the years between father and son, of their mutual hobbies and of the steadfast affection of Fred, Jr. for his father. Right there Fred Kuhlmann passed the greatest test of his long and interesting career. His own son marks him for all time with the words, "Dad, you're O.K."

And so, my friends, you can understand my real pleasure in presenting to you this hardy son of the good American soil, whose great heart and iron courage have carried him over all obstacles to a deserved place of leadership in the world of science today. Fellow Members—the President of the American Association on Mental Deficiency—**DR. FREDERICK KUHLMANN!**

#### BIOGRAPHY

Born at Davenport, Iowa, March 20, 1876. Son of William Kuhlmann and Minnie (Herring) Kuhlmann.

Married Ruth Jennings of St. Paul, Minnesota, July 17, 1913.

Frederick Jennings Kuhlmann, son, born April 28, 1923.

A.B., University of Nebraska, 1899; M.A., 1901.

Ph.D., Clark University, 1903. Fellow, University of Nebraska, 1899-1901. Fellow, Clark University, 1901-1903.

Taught psychology at Clark University, University of Wisconsin, University of Illinois, and University of Minnesota.

Director, Research Bureau, Minnesota School for Feeble-Minded, 1910-1921; Director, Division of Research, Minnesota State Board of Control, 1921-1939; Head, Bureau of Mental Examinations, Division of Social Welfare, 1939-

Member American Association on Mental Deficiency, 1911-, Secretary-Treasurer, 1916-1917; Vice-President, 1938-1939; President, 1939-1940; Member American Psychological Association, 1903-, Chairman of Clinical Section 1932-1933; Member American Association on Applied Psychology, 1938-, Vice-president and Chairman of the Clinical Section, 1939-1940; Fellow, American Association for Advancement of Science, 1920-; Member Minnesota Society on Applied Psychology, 1936-, President, 1936-1937.

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