In Memoriam

Remembrances of Maddie

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“Life is mostly froth and bubble; two things stand like stone—Kindness in another’s trouble, Courage in our own.”—Adam Lindsay Gordon

Our perfusion community and AmSECT, in particular, lost a dedicated pioneer in August with the passing of Madeline M. Massengale-Beall. We wish, and often believe, good friends will always be around, but when the reality of their passing occurs, it is a shock and then profound sadness sets in, and we are only left with memories. Such are our feelings now. Herein, we reflect on Maddie’s numerous accomplishments and then recount collected thoughts from many of her contemporaries. All had warm memories for Maddie’s presence in their lives.

First, some facts of Maddie’s career in health care: Maddie, as she was affectionately known by all, was a nurse by training having attended the Johns Hopkins Hospital School of Nursing in the mid-1950s. Upon graduation, her first job was at Vanderbilt University Hospital before returning to Johns Hopkins Hospital where she became head nurse in the surgical unit. She also worked briefly at the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond before moving across the country to San Francisco in 1961. At the University of California San Francisco (UCSF) she held several nursing leadership positions in the intensive care unit specializing in pediatric critical care before being recruited to train on-the-job as a clinical perfusionist. Her mentor was the late Dr. Benson B. Roe, and they collaborated in the laboratory and in conducting clinical research. Maddie coauthored a paper published in 1968 in the Archives of Surgery with Drs. Fishman, Hutchinson, and Roe. A book chapter entitled “Whole-body Perfusion with Heart–lung Machines: Present Status and Future Trends” was another early surgeon/perfusionist collaboration between Dr. Roe and Maddie. Later she coauthored a paper on perfusion education with Robert E. Roush, Arthur C. Beall, Jr., and Julie M. Nathanson that was presented at the Michael DeBakey Surgical Society Meeting in Monaco and subsequently published in the Journal of ExtraCorporeal Technology. Maddie remained at UCSF until 1970 and then briefly worked at Cedars of Lebanon Hospital in southern California before being recruited to St. Anthony’s Hospital in Denver, where she was chief perfusionist until 1983. While in Denver, Maddie returned to school and earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the College of St. Francis. Her last jobs in perfusion were to hold executive positions for three large contract perfusion groups that included PSICOR, Inc. and later Baxter Perfusion Services. She retired in 2000 and enjoyed traveling the world with her husband, the late Dr. Arthur C. Beall, Jr., and many of her nursing alumni from the Johns Hopkins days. Even in retirement, Maddie remained engaged in perfusion as a mentor to the younger generations of perfusionists coming up through the ranks to contribute to our profession.

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Maddie was most active during AmSECT’s formative years in the late 1960s and all of the 1970–1980s when she served as the first perfusionist liaison to the Joint Review Committee for Perfusion Education, a subgroup of the American Medical Association’s (AMA) Committee on Allied Health Education and Accreditation. Maddie was President of AmSECT in 1978–1979 and was the second woman to earn this distinction. During her tenure she recruited several members to volunteer their time for committee work, and, most notably, AmSECT achieved official recognition for perfusion as an allied health profession from the AMA and thoracic surgery societies, largely as a result of her efforts. This was a major accomplishment for our field, and we owe much gratitude to Maddie for what she and other leaders in AmSECT were able to achieve during that era.

Maddie was honored by AmSECT many times, beginning with recognition for Outstanding Service to the Society (1970) followed by Perfusionist of the Year (1974), President’s Award (1976), and Life Membership (1981). She was the 32nd recipient of the prestigious John H. Gibbon, Jr. Award in 2005 for her significant contributions to the field of extracorporeal circulation. She was recognized for her early professional activities in perfusion education by receiving a Certificate of Appreciation from the AMA for her work as perfusionist liaison. Maddie was also a contributor to Perfusion Life, the predecessor to AmSECT Today. She was also honored as one of the Pioneers in Perfusion in 2012, which was the last time she graced our annual meeting.

Memories of Maddie include her near encyclopedic memory of important events, large and small, in the history of our society. In fact, for many years Maddie was the historian of AmSECT. She contributed important details to the booklet “History and Heritage of Cardiovascular Surgery, Perfusion, and the American Society of Extracorporeal Technology” for the Pioneers in Perfusion gala in 2012. She was a skilled editor when collaborating with others as key events were being recounted. For those who lived through some of those early tumultuous years and the inevitable politics, she provided a seasoned perspective in distinguishing major accomplishments from irrelevant minutiae. She was a lovely presence at the annual AmSECT conference when engaging new perfusionists and old friends alike or when interacting with surgeons at surgical meetings on behalf of the perfusion profession.

Personally, for me (Jeff Riley), Maddie was my professional caring friend, confidante, and mentor. Maddie could read me like an open book and did not let me get away with much. We connected at distance without calling each other. Maddie told me always that she knew we were thinking about each other although we did not talk live. Maddie treated my family like they were her family—she genuinely grew to know every detail of our lives and how I was handling my challenges. When I did not know what to do or to say or had professional challenges or troubles, Maddie was my go-to confidante. She would listen and then would draw a logical conclusion out of me when I did not know it was in me.

Maddie knew everyone. She knew every thoracic surgery resident program director; she knew every perfusion education program director. She knew everyone in the Perfusion Program Directors Council, the Accreditation Committee for Perfusion Education, and the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Professions. Maddie was a sophisticated and elegant girl-Friday to every AmSECT president—Maddie was political, she knew protocol—she seemed to always know the right thing to do. Maddie was the penultimate meeting organizer.

Maddie could often be seen in the early days at AmSECT with Emily Taylor, a good friend and long-serving editor of the Journal of ExtraCorporeal Technology, and later at Dr. Arthur C. Beall, Jr.’s side, whom she married in 1983. Emily remembers Maddie as a facilitator, one who maintained a large volume of correspondence on behalf of the society, and as one who befriended Mrs. John H. Gibbon, Jr. (Maly), who came to several early AmSECT meetings to present the Gibbon Award.

Michael Dunaway wrote this: “I first met Maddie in San Francisco in the late 1960s. Maddie introduced me to all the leaders, and she seemed to know everyone. I didn’t know then that Maddie would be in my life for the next 40 years. Maddie helped me build PSICOR first as a friend and fellow perfusionist and later in the 1990s as a PSICOR Vice President. Maddie guided me through the Presidency of AmSECT; I could not have done it without her. Maddie was our bridge to the history of AmSECT and brilliant in understanding the thoracic surgeons and their societies. Maddie took my letters and turned them into gems of clarity and purpose. Maddie was a giant on whose shoulders we all stood, and without her we will be consigned to repeat our mistakes.”

Bill Horgan wrote: “I have been lucky enough to have known Maddie since 1972 when I showed up in Denver to be the perfusionist for a new heart program. Over the years Maddie mentored me in the importance of professional leadership. Once I told her that I believed in going to the AmSECT meetings but would never see myself working for the profession. Those of you who know me know how well that turned out. Maddie would call and ask if I could help her with some project, and before long I was serving on a committee. That charm and grace would win out every time. And Maddie just being Maddie would have everyone she knew helping on an AmSECT project. AmSECT’s most important award, the Gibbon Award, was one of Maddie’s projects. There is no area of our perfusion profession Maddie didn’t have an impact. She was on the committee to create a certification body. She
was on the committee that helped get our profession recognized by the AMA as a profession. Maddie never served on the American Board of Cardiovascular Perfusion but she was on the committee that set the 40 case rule, and she was on the committee that awarded points for meetings. This is only a very small part of Maddie’s professional legacy. The countless people who were lucky enough to have Maddie come into their lives and change their lives is her true legacy. For me, Maddie is first my friend. I miss her and will miss those silly St. Patrick’s Day cards and her Christmas ‘news’ letters. I know that when we meet again she will be asking me if I can help her with a little project.”

LeRoy Ferries had this to say about Maddie: “First off, she was a champion for AmSECT and perfusion. There was a time when I believe she ate, slept, and drank AmSECT. In fact, at times, she was fondly called ‘rattlin’ Madeline’ because she couldn’t stop talking about AmSECT and things to be done. Maddie was also a champion and pioneer for perfusion education. But most of all, Maddie was a true friend and will be sadly missed.”

Diane Clark remembers Maddie as a gracious lady to whom our field owes a great deal. She was kind and welcoming after the two of them lost contact for 20 years but then became reacquainted professionally.

Kathleen (Kaye) Music, an early member of AmSECT, had this to say: “Maddie was my teacher, mentor and friend for nearly 40 years. I am thankful for Maddie’s willingness to personally advance my education in 1975. I was her only official perfusion student but many others received the benefit of her wisdom. Maddie transformed my life by expanding my world-view and introducing me to an exciting career in perfusion. She was a caring friend who was always ready with sound advice and a good story. We shared many happy and challenging times during our friendship that gave us joy and always a good laugh. If there is an opportunity to bring elegance and vision to heaven, Maddie will be the one to do it!”

Aaron Hill noted that Maddie loved a good time and was considered the ombuds(wo)man for AmSECT. She had her own ideas and a strong sense of principles, yet she was an inclusive and loyal person who tried to keep issues on a higher plane when politics were often passionately expressed. She was incredibly organized as an administrator and wanted perfusionists to be professional in their activities.

Richard Chan noted her strong support for Region 1 and its meetings in the New York City area during the early years, and they shared many personal and poignant conversations when their travels brought them together. He went on to write, “She used the pure positive meaning of politics, which is to use it for the good of the majority of her peers while avoiding inappropriateness and damage to anyone’s feelings. She truly believed in consensus and almost never let her own personal feelings get in the way. Maddie always saw the forest but not the tree for our profession. Her graciousness and friendly ways were a cover up for a very strong and stoic person who had overcome severe personal tragic events that would have been an incredible burden for anyone to bear. She managed to keep these things private and was much more complex than what she was willing to display for the rest of the world.”

Frank Delgado wrote, “When Maddie Massengale, as I knew her, came to live and work in Denver it was not long before she introduced herself to all the other perfusionists in the community. Prior to her arrival in Denver, most of us knew very little or nothing about one another. We seldom, if ever, talked. It seems that, except for a few, each of us was isolated and very secretive about our perfusion practices. Not long after she got to know us, she started bringing us together, forming a real community feeling. This is how I shall always remember Maddie, Rest in Peace.”

Guy Prater expressed these eloquent sentiments: “The perfusion world has lost a ‘presence.’ How can one define a presence? Brilliant, irritating, thoughtful, brave, kind...and most of all—a loving friend...Madeline ‘Maddie’ Massengale-Beall was all of these, and more. AmSECT would be far, far less than it is today without the guiding force that was our Maddie. I met Maddie at the second AmSECT meeting in Los Angeles in the 1970s. She generated a force for perfusion along with a few amazing others—all of whom combined to make the Society what it is today. We have lost a few others but still have some very strong men and women to guide our Society. Greatness comes in many forms, and I have been privileged to know many of those who molded AmSECT into the Society it is today. Maddie's phenomenal memory helped the decision-making process at meetings, guiding the Executive Committee and other brilliant people into world recognition among national and international professional societies. Membership growth moved from on-the-job training of perfusionists eventually to college degrees (including doctorates) that have made AmSECT distinctive among world health organizations. We salute and thank you, Maddie, for your tireless efforts on our behalf, and bless you for the friendship you offered along with guidance to those just starting this fabulous and amazing journey into life professions. God bless and keep you, my dear friend. My heart is a little heavier tonight but also proud...so VERY proud to have you call me friend also, which you did on many occasions. You are dearly loved.”

Nancy Achorn sent these thoughts to us: “I wanted to offer condolences for Maddie’s passing. I know she was a close friend, mentor, and co-worker for decades. She meant a lot to me as well—it was really she, more than Jim Dearing, who pushed me into a position in AmSECT. I can think of so many times when she braved the groans of the officers at the annual membership meeting to raise
issues and review the historical facts about what we were doing. She exemplified the care and dedication that brought AmSECT and the profession into the mature and useful organization it is today. That great store of caring and information was unique and essential for AmSECT. I think the level of professionalism the Society has achieved (remembering what we were like in the 70s!) would not have happened without the dedication and constant prodding of Maddie and a handful of others. Yet, she was ever cheerful and gracious. We will miss her.”

Mary Hartley wrote, “Maddie Massengale-Beall was well known as our Society’s historian due to her superb mental ability to remember the past. What many of us will also remember Maddie for was her charm, dedication to enriching our field, and helping to elevate us from ‘pump techs’ to a profession. Maddie was one of several individuals who worked diligently and passionately to gain recognition by the cardiac surgeons for our profession. She and her husband, Dr. Arthur C. Beall, Jr., helped to guide us successfully over many political obstacles in those early days. Life well done, Maddie!”

Calvin Scott, who was a longtime friend of Maddie, wrote this: “AmSECT has lost one of its most prolific members with the death of Madeline M. Massengale-Beall. To the very end of her life she was truly dedicated and generous with her services to the organization. Jeffrey Riley in his President’s message appearing the July-August 2014 issue of AmSECT Today, reminded all of us associated with perfusion—past, present, and future—to reflect on how perfusion became a legitimately recognized health profession. He acknowledged the AmSECT leaders of the 1970s who networked, caucused, and tirelessly fought to create the perfusion profession. This was being done between the guidelines of the Department of Education and the American Medical Association’s Committee on Allied Health Education and Accreditation. The AmSECT leaders in the early 1970s working with cardiac surgeons gave birth to perfusion. The accolades go on and on for AmSECT. I mention the above to enumerate a few of the activities Madeline was involved with in those early years. She was at the forefront at some of these beginnings, if not all of these beginnings, and because of her tireless efforts she might well be referred to as an archivist. I met Madeline in the late 1960s, and I am proud to state we developed a friendship that remained until her demise.”

From Larry Cavanaugh, these remembrances with love: “My dear Maddie. The first time I met Maddie was in a William Harvey Corp. hospitality suite in 1975 at the Portland AmSECT meeting. During the next couple of years Maddie became a mentor in my journey through AmSECT and the perfusion politics. My early involvement in the organization was as the Region 3 Representative to the Board of Directors. That was short-lived when I was elected to National Secretary during LeRoy Ferries’ administration; Maddie had held that position so she helped. I served three AmSECT Presidents as their Secretary, and Maddie was one of those administrations. Maddie had an incredible memory and would often keep us on track with her knowledge of perfusion and cardiothoracic surgery history. I think that during Maddie’s Presidency we truly formed a bond and became very close. I can remember always seeing her in those pants suits with a pencil in her hair. In 1980, when I was elected President of AmSECT, Maddie became a very close advisor. Those were critical times for all of us in our growth process. We had just been recognized by the AMA. The Joint Review Committee for Perfusion Education was established and Maddie was an important part of this new process. Maddie always was there when the perfusion community needed her. Maddie was at St. Anthony’s in Denver, and I was in Florida so we had many late night conversations. When I was elected to the American Board of Cardiovascular Perfusion in the 1980s I could always count on Maddie to give me insight and guidance. Sometimes it was not requested, but she was always honest, and I could count on her when I needed something. Maddie was very supportive when I was President of the ABCP, too. In the 1990s, when Maddie was working for PSICOR and I was with CPI (aka, Medcorp International) we become allies in the perfusion contracting business. Then Baxter acquired both PSICOR and Medcorp and we were working on the same team. Maddie also was the Keynote Speaker at my son Jeff’s perfusion graduation from Episcopal School of Perfusion in Philadelphia. Maddie was always one of the boys, and when we would get together with Jerry Richmond and Bob Pfefferkorn she could drink her Cutty. I had forgotten what a special time in my life those days were. Over the years we always stayed in touch. I would call her or she would call me. We attended the Pioneers’ Dinner in Orlando a couple years ago, and it seemed like old times again. Two years ago Kaye Music and I went to Houston in September to celebrate her birthday. We had a wonderful weekend, laughing and talking about old times. Maddie was an important part of my perfusion career and for that I will be ever grateful. We were friends for almost 40 years, and I will miss her dearly but I’m sure we will meet again in that big pump room. Rest my friend because you have been a true Pioneer in Perfusion.”

So, in closing, these have been memories of Maddie from many of her contemporaries. It should be clear to all that she cast a big shadow on our field, and for those who came to know her, she shall remain in our memory for the rest of our lifetimes. May the remembrances also serve to remind today’s perfusionists of the evolution of our young discipline from those early days and that progress is realized when individuals share their vision and participate. To echo what many have stated, we miss our dear Maddie as we quietly reflect on her life in our own ways.