

Dr. Somers Reaches End Of Long Life

H-R Apr 7, 1952

Physician, Athlete,
Good Citizen, is

Buried Here Today

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Dr. P. E. Somers

Dr. P. E. Somers, longtime Grinnell physician, a moving force in community and church work for many years and one of the fabulous figures of Grinnell college athletics, died early Friday morning in a hospital in Tullahoma, Tenn., following a stroke suffered on Monday, March 21. His condition since that time had been critical. Dr. Somers would have passed his 82nd birthday on September 9.

Funeral Services

Funeral services conducted by Rev. Leland W. Mann, were held this morning at the Congregational church with interment in Hazelwood cemetery. Pall bearers were Dr. S. D. Porter, Carl E. Child, Richard Seeland, G. L. Duke, Don Cunningham and A. L. Frisbie.

Dr. Somers' connection with Grinnell began in early youth and continued throughout all his active life. He was born in Green Mountain, the son of John Selkirk Somers and Mary Lockhart Wallace Somers. He graduated from Marshalltown high school in 1889, and immediately entered the Grinnell college academy, graduating there in 1890. Continuing on in college he was granted his A.B. degree in 1894. He graduated from Rush Medical college in 1897, did graduate work there in 1897-98 and then began the practice in Grinnell

which was to continue all through his active life. He was honored with membership in Phi Beta Kappa, national scholastic fraternity, when the Grinnell college chapter was inaugurated.

A Happy Marriage

On Nov. 10, 1900, Dr. Somers was united in marriage with Eleanor Morrison, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. D. S. Morrison and a member of a prominent early Grinnell family. Her father was instrumental in the

of Oak Park, Illinois and Faith, Mrs. Lee Soesbe of Tullahoma, Tenn., and four grandchildren, Sally and Sue Winter and Ann and Eric Soesbe. Sally Winter is a member of the college senior class. He is also survived by a sister, Florence, Mrs. Albert David Brewer of Kalispell, Mont. A brother, H. W. Somers, who served the college for many years in the capacity of business manager, died a few years ago.

College Ties

The relation of the Somers family with the college has been singularly close. Dr. Somers, H. W. Somers and Mrs. Brewer all graduated here. Dr. Somers and his sister married college graduates, all the Somers children graduated here, all of them married in the Grinnell circle and now the grandchildren are coming along.

Athletic Prowess

Dr. Somers was a famous athlete during his college days and after. He was a pitcher of big league calibre, who could have gone on to the big time if he had desired and was a member of the fabulous battery of Somers and King, both members now dead. He played a stalwart end on the football team and was an expert tennis player who participated in tournaments at an age when most players have put their rackets in cold storage.

Community Service

His record in community service is equally impressive. He was largely instrumental in the establishment of the Community hospital here and was a past president of the hospital board of trustees and a staff member. He served as city physician of Grinnell. He was a past trustee of Grinnell college, was chairman for 15 years of the college board of Athletic Control, past vice president of the Iowa State Medical society, past president and past secretary of the Poweshiek County medical society, was a past president and charter member of the Fortnightly club and had belonged to the Elks lodge, the Knights of Pythias and the Country club.

He was active and helpful for years in the Congregational church, serving as clerk of the board and deacon.

During World War I Dr. Somers "kept the home fires burning" and held the fort at home while the other doctors went to war. He was local medical officer for the SATC at the college and during the flu epidemic, which took its toll of so many lives he hardly had his clothes off for days at a time.

During World War II he held an army commission and played his part on the home front.

A friendly man, a lover of outdoor sport, a good physician and a good friend Dr. Somers has left his impress on Grinnell. It has only been within the past two or three years that his vigorous health has failed but for the past few months of steady decline he has been tenderly cared for by his daughters.