

Grinnell Herald Register  
March 31, 1952

**Dr. P.E. Somers Suffers  
Attack in Tullahoma**

Grinnell friends will regret to learn that Dr. P. E. Somers suffered an apparently severe attack on Sunday, March 23, in Tullahoma, Tenn., where he has been staying in the home of his daughter Faith, Mrs. Lee Soesbe. He fell in his room and was found in an unconscious condition.

Mr. and Mrs. Soesbe were away, having started on a trip to Puerto Rico, and Mr. Soesbe's mother was in charge of the home. Dr. Somers' other daughter, Mrs. Ruth Winter, came down from Chicago to be with him.

Dr. Somers was taken to the hospital in Tullahoma and at last-reports had recovered consciousness. The exact nature of the attack is not known.

Grinnell Herald Register  
Monday, April 7, 1952

**Dr. Somers  
Reaches End  
Of Long Life**

**Physician, Athlete,  
Good Citizen, is  
Buried Here Today**

[photo, poor quality on  
microfilm]

Dr. P. E. Somers, longtime Grinnell physician, a moving power in community and church work for many years and one of the fabulous figures figures of Grinnell college athletics, died early Friday morning in a hospital in Tullahoma, Tenn., following a stroke suffered on Monday, March 24. His condition since that time had been critical. Dr. Somers would have passed his 82<sup>nd</sup> 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. Potter, 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 graduated 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 founding of the glove factory here. The marriage was a happy one until Mrs. Somers passed away in 1939. There are two daughters, Mrs. Ruth Winter 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 caliber, 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 impression 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.