

Obituaries

ELLIOT BURRIS KNOWLTON

Sailor, journalist, civic leader, husband, and father of five beautiful daughters: those were some of the elements that defined Buz Knowlton. Elliot Knowlton was born in West Upton, Massachusetts, on September 30, 1914, to George and Gwendolynn (Burris) Knowlton. His family was well-situated as the owner of the once-successful Knowlton Hat Co. in that town. His parents moved to Bermuda in 1936 while Buz was a student at Harvard College, from which he graduated with the Class of 1938. He was then commissioned an ensign in the United States Naval Reserve. He was an avid sailor of small boats, a skill learned as a child at Salter's Point in South Dartmouth, Massachusetts. In 1939 Buz crewed aboard the Finnish square-rigged, four-masted barque, *Passat*. In that year *Passat* participated in the final 'grain race' from Australia, 14,500 miles nonstop around Cape Horn, to England.

Back ashore, Buz went to work as a reporter at the *Boston Herald* and at the *Providence Journal Bulletin*. World War II caught up with him in May 1941 when the Navy assigned him to mine sweepers, small wooden ships. Buz served in them on the waters of the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, and the Pacific. Had the war not ended when it did, Commander Knowlton would have taken his squadron into Tokyo Bay to sweep for mines. After the war, Buz went to the Norton Company as its first manager of public relations. In 1963 Buz joined Alden Johnson's firm, Barre Publishers, as its vice president. (Johnson was a vice president of AAS and was long involved with the Society's publishing program.) Barre Publishers issued many exceptionally well-made books, in-

cluding an outstanding series over its marque, The Imprint Society.

In July 1968 Buz came to this Society as its first development officer. Buz Knowlton was well suited for the office. He possessed a warm and engaging personality. He was energetic and responsible. He wrote well. Through his many civic activities, he knew everyone in town and was well respected. He had good taste. Early in his tenure the Society instituted its friends group, by resuscitating the eighteenth-century Worcester Association of Mutual Aid in Detecting Thieves. Buz was crucial in getting it reorganized at AAS, planning its meetings, and, especially, recruiting the hosts for its famous parties. A newsletter was established that Buz wrote and edited. Also, during those years, AAS began its series of meetings in cities other than Worcester or Boston. Buz dealt with many details when putting these meetings together. When our exhibition, 'A Society's Chief Joys,' went on the road to New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago, it was Buz who helped carry the load in arranging the venues and organizing the receptions. Of course, his most important responsibilities lay in managing the capital development campaign the Society instituted in 1969 with a gala event at the Plaza in New York City. The campaign was successful in paying for a \$3,000,000 addition to and replacement of utilities in Antiquarian Hall. Another million was added to endowment. Well regarded by the staff and officers, Elliot Knowlton faithfully served the Society until he retired in June of 1976. He was elected a member of AAS at the annual meeting of that year.

Although he retired from AAS, Buz hardly retreated into a quiet life. He had long been involved in many activities in town. For many years a charming house in Holden, called 'Petticoat Hill,' was home to five females and himself, plus a horse or two. Buz was president of the local Holden District Hospital. Committed to the hospital's purpose to serve the community, its demise, by being subsumed into Worcester's Memorial Hospital,

was a bitter pill to him. In addition, he was at one time or another the president of the trustees of Shepard-Knapp School in Boylston, the Harvard Club of Worcester, and the Worcester Orchestral Society. Buz served as senior warden of his church, All Saints Episcopal, Worcester.

Buz Knowlton was particularly gratified by his role in founding and providing early leadership of Preservation Worcester. Preservation Worcester was established in 1968 by a few individuals who were distressed by the lack of city planning and the resultant destruction of significant buildings in town. Buz was elected its first president, serving until 1971. Buz recruited its first executive director, Janet McCorison. After he left office, he remained active until 1995 as editor of its newsletter and as compiler and editor of its survey of Worcester's remaining significant structures—*Worcester's Best* (1984; 2d rev. ed. 1996). *Worcester's Best* is the result of a survey of some five hundred of the city's architectural resources. Preparation of the book included editing survey forms, and arranging photographs—complex jobs that Buz managed with great skill.

But first and last, Buz Knowlton was a sailor and a very good one. He raced or cruised small boats all up and down the east coast of North America, from Newfoundland and Labrador to the West Indies. In Buzzard's Bay off Salter's Point, he taught his family and friends the arts of sailing. His 32-foot Westsail sloop, *Honor Bright*, was a joy of his life. He was a good but demanding skipper. In four transatlantic and eight Bermuda races he was either a watch captain, the navigator, or both.

For Buz, however, the chief joys of his life were his companion afloat and ashore for sixty years, Sallie Coe, whom he married in September 1940, and their daughters, Nina, Carolyn, Gretchen, Sallie Felton, and Dana Bullard. Buz's last years were plagued by emphysema, a disease that finally killed him. He bore his burden with characteristic courage, although at the last he became impatient for the end. His wife and daughters, as well as numerous

grandchildren, survived him at his death that occurred on December 16, 1999.

In his life, as in all things, Buz was conscientious. He was good. He was thoroughly good.

Marcus A. McCorison

J. WORTH ESTES

Dr. J. Worth Estes, who died on October 22, 2000, was a well-respected, wide-ranging scholar who was a member of a vanishing breed: a medical school professor who was also a serious historian of medicine. Worth generously shared what he knew with students and colleagues. And he was always learning more. A frequent visitor to the American Antiquarian Society, the Countway, and numerous other research libraries, he was elected to membership in AAS in 1979, and was an active member during the eighties and nineties.

The reach of Worth's curiosity was impressive, and his bibliography is massive. His work ranges from medical articles on hematology and pharmacology, to important historical papers on purple foxglove and William Withering, medicine in ancient Egypt, naval medicine, Shaker medicine, opium, quantitative observations of fever, and dozens of other subjects. He was the professor of pharmacology and professor of socio-medical sciences at the Boston University School of Medicine (and emeritus professor after his retirement), but he comfortably straddled the divide between the hospital-oriented life of an academic doctor and the archive-oriented life of a historian.

Born in Lexington, Kentucky, on January 1, 1934, Worth was the son of the editor of America's first thoroughbred racing periodical, *The Blood Horse* (later *The Blood Record*). From the time he was a young child, he often said that he wanted to be a doctor. In high school, when he was asked to write a research paper, he

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