

Three Techniques, One Great Originator

In Viera et al's wide-ranging review on scar revisions,¹ 3 of the many techniques for camouflaging scars noted (M-plasty, W-plasty, and running W-plasty) and the geometric broken line closure were all described by one individual who was unnamed in the article's body and references. This individual is of great importance to both dermatologic and cosmetic surgery.

I write of Richard Webster, MD, my mentor and my friend,² the first honorary member of the American Society for Dermatologic Surgery. Dr. Webster was one of the founders of the American Society of Cosmetic Surgeons (1972) and the American Association of Cosmetic Surgery (1982), subsequently joining them together to form the American Academy of Cosmetic Surgery (1985). He was also a moving force in the formation of the American Board of Cosmetic Surgery (1985). One can only imagine what a highly respected and forceful gentleman he was to have accomplished all those things. I was there and remember them all.

Dr. Webster was not published in his specialty (plastic surgery) until the

year of his death, for he had the great courage to teach dermatologists like me, along with ear, nose, and throat physicians, his techniques, including short-flap rhytidectomy and his concepts on platysmaplasty. Dr. Webster's ideas flourished and were passed on to all of us via other Webster-trained dermatologic surgeons such as Thomas Alt, MD, (who sponsored a year's fellowship in dermatologic cosmetic surgery) and Blu Stough, MD, who sponsored a fellowship in hair-replacement surgery. I was privileged to be selected as dermatology's first cosmetic surgery board examiner (9 years), and all 3 of us enjoyed participating in the preboard study course for the American Board of Cosmetic Surgeons under Dr. Webster's supervision. We three were also members of the first multispecialty surgical group in China under his auspices and also the American Academy of Facial Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery (1982). One of Dr. Webster's ear, nose, and throat Fellows (1976), Terrence Davidson, MD, was (and continues to be) of great assistance to dermatology by helping Mohs micrographic surgeon Hugh

Greenway, MD, in initially establishing, and now continuing (26 years), the internationally renowned course in superficial anatomy and cutaneous surgery at the University of California, San Diego.

Dr. Webster's life and philosophies were and are intricately interlinked with us. He recognized and proclaimed the fact that cosmetic surgery and plastic surgery are not the same and not equivalent and that all knowledge is meant to be shared with anyone (competent) who is willing to learn. Many join me in recognizing him as the greatest of honorary dermatologic surgeons and the father of cosmetic surgery in the United States.

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REFERENCES

1. Viera MH, Amini S, Huo B, et al. Surgical revision of scars. *Cosmet Dermatol.* 2009; 22:425-434.
2. Field L, Stough B III, Alt T. Richard Webster, MD: our mentor and our friend (1918-1994). *Dermatol Surg.* 1995;21:187. ■