

DR. HAMPAR KELIKIAN

1899 - 1983

MR. DOLE. MR. PRESIDENT, "AS YOU GET OLDER," ERNEST HEMINGWAY ONCE WROTE, "IT IS HARDER TO HAVE HEROES, BUT IT IS SORT OF NECESSARY." NOWHERE IS IT MORE NECESSARY THAN HERE IN WASHINGTON, WHERE IT'S SO EASY TO BECOME PREOCCUPIED WITH LAST WEEK'S PRIORITIES AND THIS WEEK'S HEADLINES. HERE, WE CAN FOCUS ON THE TRANSIENT AND OVERLOOK THE ENDURING. WE SPEAK OF "THE PEOPLE" AND DON'T ALWAYS TAKE THE TIME TO RECOGNIZE THOSE REMARKABLE PERSONS WHO BROADEN OUR OUTLOOK AND DEEPEN OUR SYMPATHIES, WHO PUT FLESH ON THE BARÉ BONES OF INDIVIDUAL CHARACTER.

TODAY, I PAUSE TO RECALL SUCH A MAN, A HEALER OF SHATTERED BODIES NAMED HAMPAR KELIKIAN. DR. KELIKIAN EARNED FAME FOR HIS HISTORIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE OPERATING ROOM. HE EARNED THE GRATITUDE OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WHO, LIKE MYSELF, LIVE A MUCH MORE FULL EXISTENCE BECAUSE OF HIS OPERATIVE SKILLS. HE EARNED THE ADMIRATION OF THOSE WHO KNEW HIM ONLY THROUGH PRESS COVERAGE AS ONE WHO WAS STILL PERFORMING TEN OPERATIONS A WEEK AT THE AGE OF EIGHTY.

NO FEATURE STORY, HOWEVER GENEROUS, COULD FULLY CONVEY THE PERSONAL HEROISM OF HAMPAR KELIKIAN. AS A BOY, HE ESCAPED THE BLOOD-SPATTERED LANDSCAPE OF ARMENIA, WHERE THREE OF HIS SISTERS DIED IN THE SENSELESS VIOLENCE THAT HAS FOR SO LONG MARRED THAT CORNER OF THE GLOBE. HE ARRIVED IN CHICAGO IN 1920, POSSESSING TWO DOLLARS IN HIS POCKET AND A RUG FROM HIS NATIVE LAND. HE WENT TO WORK ON A FARM, WORKING HARD

