

## Correspondence

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local medical record association failed in its attempt to have another hospital assume responsibility (for reasons related to the great expense associated with organizing and transporting the records), it then considered a recommendation that a newspaper announcement be utilized to inform patients who might have been treated at the closed hospital that if they did not claim their records, the records would be destroyed.

In her response, the director of professional services for the American Medical Record Association indicated that the American Medical Record Association does not have guidelines or policies relating to the medical records of a closed hospital, but indicated that there was an interest in the effort to "save the records."

MEDICOLEGAL NEWS would like to hear from any readers who may have encountered a similar situation or who may know of a state statute or regulation which deals with the subject. Any advice or information received will be communicated to Ms. Kolbmann.

A. Edward Doudera, J.D.

Dear Editor:

I enclose a copy of a note published recently in THE BULLETIN, June 12, 1979, page 124, an Australian weekly magazine. I thought it may be of interest to you in view of the Society's symbol.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret A. Somerville, Au.A., LL.B.,  
D.C.L.  
Professor of Law  
McGill University  
Montreal, Quebec

### A Subtle Slur on Medicine

The suggestion that a recent issue of NEW DOCTOR carried a subtle slur upon the medical and legal professions raised enigmatic smiles from the people who publish this Doctors' Reform Society journal.

They nonetheless confirmed that we were the only readers to spot the mistake, intentional or not, on the cover of a recent issue devoted to medicine and the law.

It showed the scales of justice balanced atop a sword around which were entwined two serpents, meant to represent the staff of Aesculapius, the god of medicine.

The symbol of Aesculapius, however, has only one serpent. Two serpents entwined are without medical

reference, representing the wand of Mercury, the Roman deity identified with the Greek Hermes, credited in the *Oxford Dictionary* with being, among other things, the god of trading and thieving and conductor of departed souls to the Lower World.

Dear Professor Somerville:

Thank you for your note of June 27, 1979, concerning the caduceus utilized in conjunction with the scales of justice in the logo of the American Society of Law & Medicine. While a few other readers have similarly informed us, I assure you that the second snake was added only for balance and in no way indicated our identification with the Greek god, Hermes.

Thank you for your letter and I look forward to meeting you at the upcoming Toronto program.

Sincerely,

A. Edward Doudera, J.D.

## Rattigan Student Essay Contest

The American Society of Law & Medicine is pleased to announce the fifth **John P. Rattigan Memorial Student Essay Competition**. Designed to encourage students to examine and analyze the formidable medicolegal issues and problems confronting health care professionals and consumers today, the Rattigan Student Essay Competition continues to be funded solely by donations from the family, friends, and colleagues of the late Dr. John P. Rattigan, a co-founder of the American Society of Law & Medicine.

The Essay Competition is open to graduate students currently enrolled in U.S. and Canadian schools of law, medicine, hospital administration and other fields of study. The deadline for submitting manuscripts is May 1, 1980. The following cash awards are available:

First Prize	\$300
Second Prize	\$150
Third Prize	\$100

Prize winning and honorable mention essays may be submitted (subject to copy editing) for publication in the *AMERICAN JOURNAL OF LAW & MEDICINE* and *MEDICOLEGAL NEWS*.

For authors' instructions and further information contact:  
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