The chronicle of Carrel and Guthrie has been compared to the stories of other great medical pioneers such as Curie, Cushing, Lister, Pasteur, and Salk. In this case, the story is particularly interesting because the two men were so different in temperament and character: Carrel, a controversial Frenchman, actively sought the limelight, while Guthrie, from a Missouri farm family, was shy and reclusive. The letters presented in this volume were shared with the authors by Guthrie’s sister and occasional collaborator, Fannie V. Guthrie (d. 1983), and are now owned by Yale University (Guthrie) and the Missouri State Historical Society (Carrel). Although several of the Guthrie letters have previously appeared in print, this is the first time that Carrel’s side of the correspondence (from the Guthrie collection) has been published. The letters generally speak for themselves, but the authors have provided a running narrative, along with plenty of illustrations and references. They hope that this book will help redress the “failure of accreditation” that kept Guthrie from receiving due recognition for his contributions to vascular surgery.

The set’s other volume, The Evolution of Modern Vascular Surgery, is longer and more varied, but probably of less interest to nonmembers of the Midwestern Vascular Surgical Society. This book presents a history of the Society; the constitution and bylaws; lists of officers, annual meetings, and awardees; an essay (“In Defense of the Art of Medicine”), originally published in 1965 by the group’s founding president, D. Emerick Szilagyi; a summary of the Midwest’s contributions to vascular surgery, by John J. Bergan; and a brief biography of Charles C. Guthrie. The bulk of the book consists of a biography and photograph of each president, as well as 22 presidential addresses, which cover a wide range of topics pertaining to vas-
cular surgery. A few examples include “Biomedical Science and Peripheral Vascular Surgery” by James C. Stanley (1980); “The Vascular Surgeon: Not a Tradesman” by Donald Silver (1985); “Looking Back to the Future” by William D. Turnipseed (1998); and “Challenge to Our Specialty—the Vascular Surgeon in the Year 2010” by Gregorio A. Sicard (1999). Despite their diversity, these addresses are remarkably well written. They are generally historical and philosophical rather than clinical or technical. (The few clinically oriented addresses—for instance, one dated 1983 concerning the results of stroke treatment—are now only of historical interest.) If the addresses have one central theme, it is professionalism, including not only the wisdom to uphold tradition but also the wisdom to embrace change.

Both of the volumes in this set are bound in red leather with gold lettering, and they fit inside a matching box. Despite light usage, my copy of the Guthrie/Carrel volume is in bad condition: the bound
pages have pulled away from the leather spine and remain connected to the boards only by the end pages. I trust that this is just an unfortunate fluke and that the books are normally more durable. Otherwise, I can find little to critique about these beautifully produced volumes, and I congratulate the authors and the Society on undertaking such an ambitious project. Although the audience for the second volume may be limited, the Guthrie/Carrel correspondence should be of interest to all medical historians, biographers, and vascular surgeons.

The 2-volume set may be obtained from the historian of the Midwestern Vascular Surgery Society: John R. Pfeifer, MD, 222 Orange Lake Drive, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302-1161; telephone, 248/816-6300; e-mail, pfeiferjj@bigplanet.com.

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