

Charles S. Apgar

Dr. Charles S. Apgar was a prominent figure of Elizabethtown College during the mid-twentieth century. Charles Apgar was born on 6 August 1902 to Charles Apgar Sr. and Albertine Lippincott in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Apgar was the head of the biology department as well as an advisor for many clubs on campus. Formerly, Dr. Apgar was a faculty member at Cornell University, serving as staff at the medical department.¹ He joined Elizabethtown College in 1945 as an associate professor in Biology and ascended to the rank of a full professor in the year of 1947.² After Apgar's first year with the status of full professor, The Etonian published the annual yearbook where his professional description read as follows: "A man of ingenuity and versatility; brisk, efficient, scientific, patient, kind, and friendly."³ Under the administration of President Roy E. McAuley from 1961 to 1966, Charles Apgar served as the head of the Biology department at Elizabethtown College.⁴ Many people views professor Charles Apgar as a role model for the student body. Charles Apgar shared his place of employment with his wife, Dr. Bessie Apgar, who received her Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania in 1934.⁵ The Apgars were recognized nationally for creating a Biology curriculum that caught the attention of medical schools.⁶ Both professors worked in the biology department, and many students recall both Apgars as very helpful and genuine people.

Dr. Apgar first studied at Westminster College from the years 1922 to 1924. Apgar commenced his higher education as a Biology major with a minor in Chemistry.⁷ Afterwards, he attended the University of Pittsburgh from 1924-1926.⁸ Here, Dr. Apgar changed his major from Biology to Education and changed his minor from Chemistry to Zoology.⁹ Professor Apgar continued his education at the University of Pittsburgh until he earned his Ph.D. in 1930.¹⁰ During his first years as a faculty member of the college, Apgar was known to be very involved with his students and served as an exemplary advisor for many students during his time. He was an advisor for the Science Club, The Men's Honor Society, and took part in various dramatic productions put on by the college.¹¹ Both Charles Apgar and his wife were beloved individuals in Elizabethtown College during this period. In 1950, both husband and wife had received a dedication in The Etonian for their service to the college community, their unbiased teachings, their patience, and their contributions to the field of Biology.¹² In 1952, Professor Apgar collaborated with other teaching staff to plan for a new wing in Gible Science Hall which would include a two new classrooms, office space, a lecture hall and double the laboratory space for the science fields.¹³ In 1953, Charles Apgar had also been featured on WGAL-TV, a Lancaster based television station, and spoke about "Backgrounds of Biology," and "Nature of Life."¹⁴ At the end of their careers, the Apgars were once again honored by the college for their service over a twenty-one-year period. The Conestogan described their careers at the college as "a lifetime of responsible and unselfish service."¹⁵ Specifically in Charles Apgar's case, the biology

¹ Jean-Paul Benowitz and Peter J. DePuydt, Elizabethtown College, (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2014), 74.

² The Etonian, December 2, 1966; Ralph W. Schlosser, History of Elizabethtown College 1899-1970, (Elizabethtown, PA: Elizabethtown College, 1971), 333.

³ The Etonian, (Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania: Elizabethtown College, 1947), 14.

⁴ Schlosser, 241.

⁵ The Etonian, December 2, 1966; Schlosser, 333.

⁶ Benowitz and DePuydt, 74.

⁷ Charles Apgar File. Faculty Vertical Files. Hess Archives, Elizabethtown College. Elizabethtown, PA

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Elizabethtown Chronicle, December 1, 1966.

¹² The Etonian, (Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania: Elizabethtown College, 1950), 4; Schlosser, 334.

¹³ Chet Williamson, Uniting Work and Spirit: A Centennial History of Elizabethtown College, (Elizabethtown, PA: Elizabethtown College Press, 2001), 188.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 191.

¹⁵ Conestogan, (Elizabethtown Pennsylvania: Student Association of Elizabethtown College, 1966), 8.

department was able to have a basis for offering the Pre-Medicine specialty for Biology majors and clubs on campus such as Sigma Kappa Xi were able to consolidate and improve life on campus.

Professor Apgar was a personable member of the faculty that many people at the time got along with. The Apgars were “an eccentric pair;” they owned a large Rolls-Royce of which Charles Apgar would ride in the back while his wife drove.¹⁶ To accompany his personality, he also shared many interests and hobbies that one would relate to. Among these included oil painting, etching, photography, scuba diving, classic cars, boating, archaeology, and anthropology.¹⁷ Accompanied with his files at the Elizabethtown College archives is a story about Asklepos. Asklepos is the Greek God of medicine who was able to give life to the fallen through medicine.¹⁸ This story interestingly resembles the type of lifestyle Apgar lived, especially as a biologist who showed many medical procedures and theory to student over the years at the college. As of the year 1965, Charles Apgar had no recorded children with his wife Bessie Apgar. In 1967, Charles and Bessie Apgar retired from teaching at Elizabethtown College and were honored as professors of the Biology department in The Etownian.¹⁹ The plans for both Apgars was to move to Florida.²⁰ To commemorate their contribution to the college, a special breakfast was held to honor the Apgars on 10 December 1966.²¹ The couple exchanged their residence in Green Acres for life annuity as a “final mark of their esteem for the College.”²² In a letter from President Morley J. Mays, the agreed value of the annuity would be \$50,000.²³ Bessie Apgar would pass away in 1980, and Charles Apgar would remarry to Martha Farver. Charles Apgar changed his name in during his second marriage to Dr. Charles Farver-Apgar.²⁴ Apgar carried out the remainder of his life in private and limited information about him is available in the public domain. Charles Apgar passed away on 30 July 2001 and his body was cremated. His ashes were spread to two different grave sites, one of which is shared with his first wife Bessie²⁵. His gravestone is in Neffsville, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania at the Brethren Home Cemetery.²⁶ At the time of the drafting of this text, the only known living family member is Martha Farver-Apgar who resides at the Masonic Village.

¹⁶ Williamson, 166.

¹⁷ Schlosser, 334.

¹⁸ “Asklepios,” Theoi Greek Mythology, accessed November 27, 2017, <http://www.theoi.com/Ouranios/Asklepios.html>

¹⁹ *The Etownian*, December 2, 1966; Schlosser, 334

²⁰ Schlosser, 334.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Morley J. Mays, letter to Apgar through Elizabethtown College Development Office, February 1, 1967.

²⁴ Williamson, 168.

²⁵ “Charles S Apgar,” Grave Finder, accessed November 27, 2017, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/136276233>

²⁶ *Ibid.*