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®

**In Memoriam**  
**Robert Bingham, M.D.**  
Lafayette, Colorado, July 21, 1910  
Desert Hot Springs, California,  
May 1, 1994

*Ashes scattered at sea*

by

Perry A. Chapdelaine, Sr.

The Roger Wyburn-Mason and Jack M. Blount Foundation for the  
Eradication of Rheumatoid Disease  
aka The Arthritis Trust of America®,  
7376 Walker Road, Fairview, Tn 37062

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*Robert Bingham, M.D.*

As one of the founders of The Roger Wyburn-Mason and Jack M. Blount Foundation for the Eradication of Rheumatoid Disease (aka The Rheumatoid Disease Foundation, aka The Arthritis Trust of America) Robert Bingham was an inspired and dedicated contributor. He was a man of vision, a searcher for truth!

Robert Bingham contributed to many causes, among which were two closest to his heart: crippled children and arthritis victims. When polio no longer created vast numbers of pathetically crippled children, Robert Bingham switched to arthritis, and his life-long devotion to the cause of the arthritic victim began.

During travels to England, Dr. Bingham met Professor Roger Wyburn-Mason, M.D., Ph.D., a medical school professor and researcher who, although initially specializing in diseases of the nerves, now claimed to have discovered the source and causation of crippling Rheumatoid Arthritis.

Dr. Bingham wrote about Wyburn-Mason's claim and it was published in *Modern Medicine* (Feb. 15, 1976, pp.38-47) as "Rheu-

matoid Disease: Has One Investigator Found Its Cause and Its Cure?" [and also in *Orthopedic Review*.]

Philadelphia, Mississippi physician, Jack M. Blount, M.D., having been crippled from Rheumatoid Arthritis since early youth, and, still suffering from the disease, read Bingham's article, and tried Roger Wyburn-Mason's treatment, after discovering a chemical related to Wyburn-Mason's Clotrimazole which was unavailable to Dr. Blount; i.e., Metronidazole.

Blount cured himself, many of his patients, and this author, of crippling Rheumatoid Arthritis. Thus, the story that began with a professor in England [who was eventually ostracized from a society that had embraced him for his two discoveries of nerve diseases (named after Wyburn-Mason)] passed through the open-minded eyes and ears of Robert Bingham, M.D., to the long-time arthritic Jack M. Blount, M.D. and on to this writer, and thousands of others who have also been cured.

Dr. Bingham wrote numerous articles describing Roger Wyburn-Mason's treatment, and tried his best to spread truth where he could. In a trip to Sydney, Australia attending the *16th International Congress of Rheumatology*, (19th-25th May 1985) The Rheumatoid Disease Foundation (aka The Arthritis Trust of America) was represented by Robert Bingham, M.D. who contributed a paper on the "Treatment of Rheumatoid Arthritis by the Use of Anti-Malarial and Anti-Protozoal Drugs." He displayed for two days a poster on the same subject and the findings of Dr. Roger Wyburn-Mason. He gave over 400 Rheumatoid Disease Foundation folders to the delegates telling them of the work of the Foundation, and also gave them a card upon which to request further information and literature.

An attempt was made to stop Dr. Bingham from distributing the Rheumatoid Disease Foundation folder on a complaint from an "undisclosed doctor from England." This was the subject of an apology when it appeared that an international incident might develop if the action of the local committee chairman was disclosed to the local press and world news services covering the meeting. Dr. Bingham wrote, "As usual the Congress was dominated by the large multinational drug companies, each anxious to convert the physicians to the use of their own brands of NSAIDS, the non-steroidal, anti-inflammatory drugs, many of which are not as yet available in the United States. However, in the scientific sessions, none was superior to enteric or time-release aspirin in the effect on pain and stiffness of arthritis, except perhaps in their one-a-day or two-a-day convenience of administration.

"Methotrexate seemed to be gaining in usage by the rheumatologists over gold and penicillamine in spite of its known toxic effects and complications.

"Only our presentations on the amoebic etiology of rheumatoid disease offered any 'new' information on the causes of arthritis. . . . The 'medical world' now knows of the existence of the new International Rheumatoid Disease Foundation."

In February of 1983 Dr. Bingham attended the *XI Congreso Mexicano de Reumatologia* in Merida, Yucatan, Mexico, where he presented a paper in the use of Roger Wyburn-Mason's treatment for Rheumatoid Arthritis. On his return home he was saddened to learn that Jack M. Blount, M.D. had been entrapped by Mississippi physicians who had not investigated the new treatment that was bringing patients to Dr. Blount's door by the thousands. Once again Bob Bingham set out to remedy the pains of the world, for he wrote on March 15, 1983 to the Mississippi State Board of Medical Licensure,

"Dear Fellow Physicians:

"On my return from Mexico this week I first learned of the difficulties Dr. Blount is having in regards to his medical license.

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"In Merida, Yucatan, I had presented a preliminary report on the treatment he has so successfully used for acute active diseases of rheumatoid arthritis. This is based on work which he and I have been doing independently for the past five or more years. It is a 'break through' and, in the usual ten years it takes for a new treatment to be accepted by the medical profession, it will revolutionize the treatment of this disease and save millions of patients from pain, suffering and disability.

"Dr. Blount heard of this treatment through the first American publication of mine appearing in *Orthopedic Review* and then in *Modern Medicine* in 1975. He was totally crippled and suffering from rheumatoid arthritis at that time and has made a great recovery, enabling him to return to his medical practice and naturally making him very enthusiastic about this form of treatment.

"In his enthusiasm, and probably because he has not seen any serious or dangerous side-effects from the drugs -- quite different from the standard treatments with gold, penicillamine and other arthritis drugs-- he undoubtedly used poor judgment and violated the letter of the law by making this medicine available to other rheumatoid arthritis patients whom he had not personally seen or examined. You are quite right in your authority and responsibility in seeing to it that this practice is not repeated. But I hope you will ask yourself these two questions in deciding your actions, 'Has anyone been injured because of Dr. Blount prescribing?' and second, 'Wasn't he acting in good faith and honest intent?'

"Dr. Blount is a man who should be honored by the medical profession and by the State of Mississippi. Not since the work of Dr. Leslie V. Rush in Meridian, MS, in 1955, in announcing and discovering the use of the Rush Nail for intermedullary pinning of fractures, has so great a medical discovery, on this case a confirmation of a medical discovery by Dr. Wyburn-Mason, come out of the state of Mississippi. He has done more than any doctor in the world to boldly treat thousands of patients with favorable results and through the book by one of his patients, *Rheumatoid Diseases Cured at Last*, the treatment is becoming nationally recognized.

"In this case Dr. Blount has worked against tremendous odds because the company which manufactures the drug [metronidazole] will not spend any money for its scientific proof of efficacy or to gain approval for advertising and sales as a treatment for arthritis from the Food and Drug Administration because the patent has expired and they see no great financial gain to manufacture a drug which can be copied, manufactured and sold by any pharmaceutical company. As a result, in the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis, Flagyl [metronidazole] is an 'orphan drug' and will only come into general use either by public demand, by spreading its knowledge to the medical profession, or by scientific verification by some non-profit organization such as a medical school or non-profit foundation. Even medical schools depend on grants from drug companies, so there is not much possibility there.

"If I may be so bold as to suggest, I would say that censure of Dr. Blount and prescribing a code of conduct for his use of the medicine should be a judicious decision. Any other restriction on his practice might discourage other physicians from using or trying this medicine and thus delay for years, the relief from this terrible disease, for which there is no known cause or cure other than this method.

"Thank you for your consideration of this information."

While Dr. Bingham's letter was not the only plea for Dr. Blount from state entrapment, Bingham's letter as well as the others helped Dr. Blount continue his practice of medicine, and he was not censured for use of Roger Wyburn-Mason's recommendations on rheumatoid disease patients.

In 1975 Dr. Bingham, in responding to a falsehood he felt was being propagated in news media by the Santa Ana, California, Orange County Arthritis Foundation, addressed a letter to the Arthritis Foundation Advisory Committee's Leon B. Katz, M.D., saying, "One of my patients quoted a newspaper article credited to you saying that 'special foods or diets can't help arthritis'. And 'dietary factors as causes of arthritis are said to be a myth.' The article suggested interested persons should write to the Orange County Branch of the Arthritis Foundation for the leaflet. Please send me the leaflet to which the article refers.

"Sigmund Freud, besides his position as an outstanding pioneer in psychiatry, was also a critic of the medical profession. He has stated 'the greatest mistake of medicine is to seek a single cause for a single disease.'

"This is probably true with the various types of arthritis [more so] than almost any other family of related medical conditions. We have been looking so hard for single causes for the various types of arthritis and the single treatments that we have often neglected the patient as a whole, especially his nutritional condition -- which has such a tremendous effect on his body chemistry and metabolism.

"Unless the Arthritis Foundation is willing to undertake some very basic research into the relation of arthritis to nutrition it is only sticking its head into the sand to make generalized statements such as the one reported in your newspaper article. Almost every practicing physician is aware of arthritis patients who have been greatly improved, and some have completely recovered from the active signs and acute symptoms of their disease, by modifications in diet, vitamin and mineral supplementation and elimination of certain food and food products. What is needed is a more scientific evaluation of these therapeutic effects.

"Meanwhile, those of us who have made a clinical study of the application of nutrition to arthritis and orthopedic problems will continue to be helping people regain their health and strength, not by exclusion of other methods of treatment but by adding nutritional, metabolic and bio-chemical analysis and treatment of their patients to accepted methods of medical and surgical management.

"Meanwhile, it does the Arthritis Foundation no good to tell people that there are no dietary factors which are important in arthritis. So very many of them know that is not true, and it just makes the Arthritis Foundation less credible as an authority in its chosen field of fundraising."

A year later, in 1976, Dr. Bingham had to defend himself of false charges from a variety of sources. He had prior to 1974 practiced for almost twenty-eight years in Riverside, California, being the first qualified and board Certified specialist in orthopedic surgery in that city and in that county. During that time he pioneered in performing almost every type of orthopedic operation in that county and in that county's hospitals for the first time. For fourteen years he gave two mornings a week to the Riverside County General Hospital and, during two poliomyelitis epidemics, devoted from one-third to one-half of his time to the patients in that institution, doing major orthopedic surgery, instructing interns and residents and following patients in the out-patient clinics, all without pay or other compensation. For nine years, and until they had a full time orthopedic staff at the College of Medical Evangelists in Loma Linda he held the first orthopedic clinics at that hospital and medical school, taught medical students and interns and took care of without charge the orthopedic problems and operations on their missionaries, medical and nursing students and charity patients.

For two years, and until they had a full time orthopedic surgeon at March Air Force Base, Dr. Bingham conducted orthopedic clinics and did the orthopedic operations at the March Air Force Base Hospi-

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He helped Sister Elizabeth Kenny establish the Sister Kenny Poliomyelitis Hospital in El Monte, California in 1950 and served there for seven years, five years as Chief of Staff, during which time he built the hospital up from fifty patients to one hundred and fifty patients and had an attending and consulting staff of over fifty doctors including five orthopedic surgeons.

He had no difficulty of any kind from any source until two doctors who had been his assistants and associates opened up offices in Riverside in competition and began an undercover campaign of untrue and unfair criticism, ostensibly to obtain referrals from doctors and hospitals who had been sending patients to Dr. Bingham. Until then, these two doctors had publicly stated that Dr. Bingham had the finest personal and professional reputation of any doctor in Riverside County.

Of course, one criticism led to another, and amid all the false charges and deceptions, Dr. Bingham eventually established his own clinic always with crippled folks in mind.

Because of The Arthritis Foundation, Harold Davis from FDA's the Office of Consumer and Professional Affairs, (Center for Drugs and Biologics, HFN-17, Department of Health & Human Services, Public Health Service, Food and Drug Administration, Rockville, MD 20857) began inaccurate and scandalous attacks against The Roger Wyburn-Mason and Jack M. Blount Foundation for the Eradication of Rheumatoid Disease (aka The Rheumatoid Disease Foundation, aka The Arthritis Trust of America). Robert Bingham wrote a letter to Frederic C. McDuffie, M.D., Senior Vice President of Medical Affairs, at the Arthritis Foundation, saying:

"Isn't it about time that the Arthritis Foundation ceases to criticize physicians, clinics, hospitals and other medical organizations who share views different from the Arthritis Foundation on the cause and treatment of these diseases?"

"When the Arthritis Foundation was formed I urged Mr. Floyd Odlum, who lived in Indio not too far from our clinic in Desert Hot Springs, to fund and support the Arthritis Foundation because I believed it would itself do independent investigations of other treatments for arthritis, than those funded by the drug companies. I know a great deal of money has gone to medical schools for basic research and for many worthwhile investigations. However, the field of 'unproven' and 'unapproved' remedies has not had its investigations funded in spite of the public's interest and need for this type of study. I believe Doctor Dong's diet is one exception, but did not he pay for this himself?"

"Of course you realize that the specialty of rheumatology is narrowest of all medical fields, the fewest disease, the fewest treatments and the fewest facts on which to make clinical and therapeutic decisions. In spite of its certification as a specialty, any physician with an interest, whether it be a general practitioner, internist, orthopedic surgeon or physiatrist, could master the field as well as any Board Certified specialist in a year's study. That is why the majority of cases of arthritis are not, and never will be, treated by rheumatologists.

"You may believe that these attacks on other physicians and clinics, etc., are good for local fund raising for the chapters through the public education department, but it is unprofessional and unethical in furnishing lay people statements such as your memo 83-07 on Dr. Blount and distributed to lay persons and is on very thin legal ice.

"The efforts of the Arthritis Foundation should be directed primarily to the medical profession. When inquiries come in from lay people some statement such as this should be issued:

"The treatment about which you ask information is not one that is accepted and approved by the Arthritis Foundation. However,

since we do not know the causes of any types of arthritis and we do not have any successful cures for them, other methods, such as the unproven remedies of which you inquire, may be useful and of help to some patients.

"Our advice is that you consult your personal physician or have him refer you to a rheumatologist of his choice and rely on him for guidance and treatment of your disease. Our 'professional' information memos serve to keep physicians informed of the newest and best information available in the diagnosis and treatment of rheumatoid arthritis.

"One more point. The American Rheumatism Association would render a much greater public service if it would emphasize it is an educational organization open to all physicians and surgeons who treat arthritis, general practitioners as well as specialists. The Board Certified Rheumatologists can form their own American College of Rheumatology and discuss auto-immune disease to their heart's content. It would sure raise the standards of medical care and professional knowledge and patient treatment of arthritis in this country."

The result of this letter, as well as threat of a suit through The Arthritis Foundation legal department by The Rheumatoid Disease Foundation possibly resulted in cessation of violent and false propaganda against both Dr. Blount and this foundation.

At the founding of The Rheumatoid Disease Foundation/The Arthritis Trust of America, a decision was made to sign-up physicians so that patients would know who would give the treatments recommended by us. There were five physicians founding members: Robert Bingham, M.D., Jack M. Blount, M.D., Gus J. Prosch, M.D., Roger Wyburn-Mason, M.D., Ph.D, Dr. Paul Pybus, and myself.

One of the serious problems faced by the Executive Director/Secretary was that once a physician signed with us to make Roger Wyburn-Mason's treatment available to patients, they would often switch, once the patient appeared, not unlike the traditional bait and switch tactics in used car advertising.

One such incident occurred no further than 16 miles from the foundation headquarters in a small city outside of Nashville, TN called Franklin. A doctor signed with us, and when our first referral drove all night long with high hopes in their heart to see this doctor, their hopes were immediately dashed. The doctor derided the treatment, said it was a fraud, and sold them extremely expensive gold pills, also denying that he had ever signed his name to our forms.

Of course the forms were signed, and available for inspection, but this highlighted one serious end of a gradient spectrum of problems facing the foundation, where physicians would behave in unethical ways.

Robert Bingham, M.D., agreed to act as our special ethics officer, and every case that could not be resolved by the Executive Director/Secretary was immediately referred to him. Dr. Bingham spent many hours without charge investigating a physician's ethics, and in some cases recommended that certain individuals be dropped from our referral lists.

At our *Second Rheumatoid Disease Foundation National Seminar* held in Santa Monica, CA, Dr. Bingham formed the Rheumatoid Disease Medical Association with Board Members Gus J. Prosch, Jr., M.D., President; Seldon Nelson, D.O., Vice -Chairman; Wayne Martin, B.S., Executive Director/Secretary; Robert Bingham, M.D., Medical Journal Editor and Chief Editor/Treasurer. Other Board Members were Warren M. Levin, M.D., Orville Davis, D.O., M.D., W.W. Mittelstadt, D.O., M.D., Archimedes A. Concon, M.D., Harley Robinson, D.O., Albert Jellen, M.E. Additional Research Advisory Board Members were: Harold Buttram, M.D., Laszlo I. Belenyessy,

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This fledgling organization published, through Dr. Bingham's efforts, a series of pamphlet-sized volumes each containing new and novel approaches to the problem of Rheumatoid and related arthritides.

Permission has been granted us to all remaining publishing rights by Dr. Bingham's surviving spouse, Charlotte Bingham.

Robert Bingham, always the communicator, also wrote the book *Fight Back Against Arthritis*. He graciously permitted this Foundation to reprint the book for fundraising purposes, and we have handled the first edition for many years because of his generosity.

He must have been loved and trusted by his staff, for when *The Calgary Herald* on January 22, 1981 printed a particular Dagwood and Blondie cartoon strip, they cut it out and pasted it on their bulletin board for all to see.

Panel by panel, Blondie says to Dagwood, "Started on Dr. Bingham's worry-free diet today." She turns to Dagwood, in the second panel, saying, "You can eat whatever you want without worrying."

Dagwood, Third panel: "Does it make you lose weight?"

Blondie, last panel: "No, but it sure makes you a big fan of Dr. Bingham."

Together with Roger Wyburn-Mason, M.D., Ph.D. who first recommended the use of Clotrimazole, Ornidazole, Tinidazole, Rifampicin or Rifampin, Allopurinol, and Furazolidone for Rheumatoid Disease, Jack M. Blount, M.D. who first introduced the use of Metronidazole [Flagyl], and Seldon Nelson, D.O. who first introduced the use of coated copper ions on small resins, Robert Bingham, M.D. introduced the use of diiodohydroxyquinon [Yodoxin] for the treatment of Rheumatoid Arthritis.

There are many who must in good conscience be grateful to Robert Bingham, M.D. But, I am personally and profoundly grateful for the many good deeds that Robert Bingham, M.D. has performed for this foundation since 1982, for his continuous defense in the cause of justice and good ethics, and for his learned advice and assistance when needed.

I'm particularly grateful for his foresight in bringing to the attention of others, such as Jack M. Blount, M.D., Dr. Paul K. Pybus and Gus J. Prosch, Jr., M.D., Roger Wyburn-Mason's hypothesis and successful treatment. Without it, I'm convinced, I'd be crippled and probably dead, rather than actively at the age of 69 doing swing dancing (jitterbug) with every young lady who'll have me four times a week for several hours each night.

Bob Bingham suffered cruel and unabiding pain from cancer of the spine, according to one of his friends.

Bob wrote a farewell letter "To my patients, colleagues, friends and family," saying:

"This is to announce that as of today, February 1, 1994, I am retiring from the active practice of medicine and orthopedic surgery after 55 years.

"I will continue to be available for consultation by physicians at the clinics on a volunteer basis and to support our arthritis programs by research and writing.

"Like the 'one hoss shay,' that 'fell apart in one day', and since 83 years of good health have been mine, it must be 'my turn'. (For those of you who are medically interested, a combination of a type of spinal bone cancer -- multiple myeloma, anemia, and disc degeneration with sciatica limits my strength and endurance and will require

blood transfusions.)

"My dear wife and I, after 57 years of marriage, have been fortunate to live and work in Riverside and Orange counties -- and for 33 years part time and 5 years full time in this very healthful city of Desert Hot Springs. Our three children and six grandchildren have had these advantages also.

"To all of you who have supported me with your good wishes and prayers I give my heartfelt thanks and appreciation. It is for you that I have wished to serve for better life and health.

"May God bless you all, sincerely,

"Robert Bingham, M.D."

Thanks Bob! Thank you very, very much!

#### **Robert Bingham, M.D.**

**Graduated:** University of Redlands, CA, A.B., 1932; School of Medicine, University of Colorado, M.D., 1938.

**Experience:** Internship, Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, 1940. Orthopaedic Residencies, New York Orthopaedic Hospital and Dispensary, and Columbia-Presbyterian Hospital, 1942. Medical Corps, Army of the U.S., 1942-1946. South Pacific. Private practice of Orthopaedic Surgery: Riverside, CA, 1946-1974; Orange County, CA 1975-1985; Desert Hot Springs, CA, 1994.

Assistant Clinical Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery, College of Medical Evangelists, Loma Linda, CA 1946-1955.

Orthopaedic Consultant, March Air Force Base, 1949-1951. Chief of Staff, Sister Kenny Poliomyelitis Hospital, 1950-1957.

Attending Orthopaedic Surgeon, variously: Riverside Community Hospital, Riverside General Hospital, Parkview Community Hospital, Esperanza Inter-Community Hospital, Good Samaritan Hospital (now Midwood Community Hospital, Stanton, CA 90680).

Founder and Medical Doctor, variously: Angel View Crippled Childrens Foundation, Desert Crippled Childrens Clinic (changed to Desert Arthritis Medical Clinic, Desert Hot Springs, CA 92250.)

**Organizations:** Certified by the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery, Fellow of the American College of Surgeons, Fellow of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgery, Fellow of the International College of Applied Nutrition, Member of the American Medical Association, California Medical Association, Orange County Medical Association and the Pan-Pacific Surgical Association.

Founding Member and Chairman of the Medical and Scientific Advisory Board of The Roger Wyburn-Mason and Jack M. Blount Foundation for the Eradication of Rheumatoid Disease (aka The Rheumatoid Disease Foundation, aka The Arthritis Trust of America).

Editor of *Arthritis and Health News*; editor and publisher of *Fight Back Against Arthritis*.

(See <http://www.arthritis-trust.org> for many of the included references.)