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Alexander Koppel: Pioneer - Physician - Provider

Max Koppel

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ALEXANDER KOPPEL
Pioneer - Physician-Provider

Alexander Koppel was born to immigrant parents on the Lower East Side of New York City in 1905. Early in his life, his mother was forced to return to Austria to her tenant farmer parents with Alexander and his two sisters because of a severe downturn in the American economy. A few years later, his mother brilliantly sensed the upcoming disastrous World War in 1913, and returned with the three children to Wilmington, Delaware where by that time, her husband, Samuel Koppel, had established the Wilmington Window Cleaning Company. Alexander Koppel seized the opportunity for higher education made available to the brilliant 1922 Wilmington High School graduate. He benefitted from:

- The paternalism of the Dupont Family
- The Land Grant, University of Delaware
- The Reserve Officer Training Corps
- Jefferson (then unofficially known) as the Medical School of the State of Delaware

Alexander Koppel left the University of Delaware after two years to enter Jefferson Medical College in 1924-Jefferson’s 100-year Anniversary. Alexander Koppel graduated with Honors from Jefferson Medical College in 1928 and then interned at The Jewish Hospital on Broad Street, Philadelphia (now Albert Einstein Medical Center) 1928-1930. He married in 1931 a student nurse, Sylvia Betty Oram, a second generation American from Scranton, PA. He established his practice on the recently opened highway - US#1 (Roosevelt Boulevard) in Northeast Philadelphia. Sylvia became his nurse until the birth of their son, Max Koppel, born in 1934, who became a Jefferson Medical College graduate in 1957 and continued as a Jefferson Staff Member into the 21st century. Alexander was the “self-appointed” Jefferson Medical College pioneer on Roosevelt Boulevard in the Northeast Philadelphia, establishing a three-story office and clinic, with Sylvia. He provided general medical services and performed minor surgery. He sent hospital and tertiary care patients directly to his mentors and friends at Jefferson, the “Mecca” at Walnut and Sansom Streets, between 10th and 11th, in Philadelphia.

Alexander recognized the opportunity to do the “Greater Northeast”. There were over ½ million working-class families from Northeast Philadelphia through Bucks County, across the Delaware River to adjacent New Jersey. Many were newly moved from South and North Philadelphia. They were not satisfied with the few hospitals and facilities. New Jersey had no medical schools. None of the other Philadelphia medical schools seemed interested. Alexander long carried the Jefferson banner in the region. He retained his wide spread, respected reputation among the families of the region. He loved them and they loved him. His patients looked to him and to Jefferson.