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David McCahan—A CLU® Champion
A Lifetime and Legacy of Service and Dedication
by Virginia Webb

DR. DAVID MCCAHAN, WHO truly believed that “education was the source of greatness in society,” began his career as one of Dr. Solomon Huebner’s students at the Wharton School. Dr. Huebner recognized his promise and invited him to be an Instructor in their Insurance Department. He received his BS degree in Economics in 1920, and his MA in 1922 from George Washington University. After a short stint working for the Insurance Department of the United States Chamber of Commerce, McCahan returned and earned his Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania in 1928. Dr. McCahan was proud to have been a World War I veteran having served as a Commissioned Ensign (Naval Aviator) in the US Naval Flying Corps. He received his CLU® from The American College in 1929. The College was in its formative years. Dr. Huebner called upon McCahan to help grade examinations of the first CLU® class and McCahan became a guiding force in the development of the CLU® curriculum. He was instrumental in creating all of the CLU® examinations until 1937. His first position at the College was as Secretary, with Dr. Huebner serving as Dean. He was appointed Assistant Dean in 1929, later serving as Dean (1934), Executive Vice-President (1951) and The College’s fourth President (1952). In addition, he was a faculty member at Wharton.

In 1939, McCahan helped to create the SS Huebner Foundation to further “insurance teacher education and honor Dr. Huebner’s accomplishments.”

Tasked with promoting the CLU® designation in the national press, McCahan’s articles were featured in many major industry publications including: Journal of Risk and Insurance; Life Insurance Selling; Trusts and Estates and Journal of American...
Insurance. He made sure, too, that each CLU® graduate’s local newspaper received a notice about the CLU® conferment. While tending to the daily operational details and functioning of The College, he also helped to organize early CLU chapters and establish the CLU Institute Program and the Journal of the American Society of CLU & ChFC (known today as the Journal of Financial Service Professionals, published by the Society of Financial Service Professionals).

In 1939, McCahan helped to create the SS Huebner Foundation to further “insurance teacher education and honor Dr. Huebner’s accomplishments.” He served as the first Executive Director and personally selected a number of the candidates, many of whom went on to be pillars of our industry.

Dr. McCahan was elected President of The American College when Dr. Huebner retired in 1952, ensuring that The College’s leadership transition would be “smooth and without interruption.” Sadly, his tenure was prematurely cut short due to heart complications in 1954 at age 56.

Formed in 1955 to honor his exceptional service to The College and industry contributions, the McCahan Foundation had as its primary purpose: “strengthening and encouraging research on the nature, problems and issues pertaining to economic security.” Foundation activities included publication of materials and sponsorship of seminars and lectures with an eye on improving communication between the academic, government and business and establishment, and creation of a body of literature in private and social insurance and related fields.

The first McCahan Foundation lecture was in 1957. Invited guests from more than 50 countries were in attendance. It was decided that the lecture would be held annually, and that the focus would be on “the American family and life insurance.”

In the 1960s, the McCahan Foundation, newly christened the McCahan Foundation for Basic Research in Risk, Security and Insurance, compiled a “comprehensive survey of worldwide insurance education,” and produced annotated bibliographies and books by noted industry experts.

Dr. McCahan’s widow Rebekah graciously accepted The College’s highest honor on her late husband’s behalf. In 1977, he was posthumously awarded the Huebner Gold Medal.

Dr. McCahan’s legacy lives on today in his family. His son David enjoyed a successful career with Northwestern Mutual, and received both his CLU® and ChFC® designations from The College. Grandson Timothy is currently a Financial Advisor at Northwestern Mutual in Providence, Rhode Island. He also has his CLU® and ChFC® from The College. Granddaughter Rebekah is currently an Assistant Vice-President and Investment Strategist for PNC Wealth Management located in Philadelphia.

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