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DR. EUGENE SHEDDEN FARLEY

# NEW COUNTRY, NEW LIFE

ONE OF WILKES' FIRST INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS  
WENT ON TO DISTINGUISHED MEDICAL CAREER

By Kim Bower-Spence

Upon stepping off an airplane in Wilkes-Barre in September 1951, a 17-year-old Greek boy was greeted warmly by a tall, distinguished-looking stranger with graying hair. “Welcome to Wilkes. We are very glad you are here,” Wilkes President

Eugene Farley told the young man, who had received a full scholarship to Wilkes as part of a Greek-American organization’s effort to help promising graduates of war-ravaged Greek high schools study abroad. Moments later, Farley would turn to his young scholar and ask, “By the way, how do you say your name?”

“Constantinos Arvanitogeorgos!” proudly replied the dark-haired boy who had left his island home in Corfu, Greece, several days earlier with a goal of becoming a physician. “Well, enough of that,” Farley said kindly. “Not only will we have difficulty pronouncing it, there aren’t enough spaces on our official forms to fit it in. From now on your name will be Dean Arvan.”

And so Dean Arvan ’55 became one of the first – if not *the* first – international students at Wilkes. He hadn’t chosen Wilkes. “This was where I was placed. I was simply sent there,” he notes.

Though his limited knowledge of English hampered his studies of humanities and English literature a bit, Arvan excelled in the sciences and mathematics. He credits classmates, roommates, coworkers in the college dining room and fellow members of the soccer team with accepting him and immersing him in American culture.

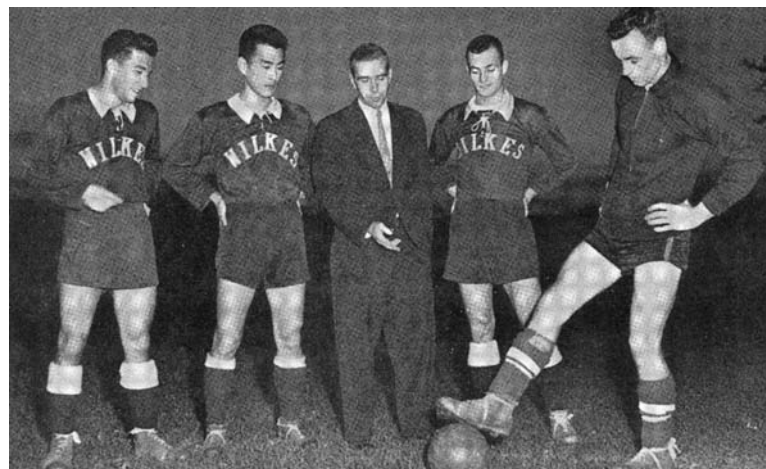
“For me, Ashley Hall was like being in a palace,” notes Arvan, who spent his teen years in a partially walled city during World War II and a bloody civil war. Roommates would drag him along to local taverns to watch Friday night fights on television.

On the academic side, he says, Charles Reif and George Ralston provided ongoing encouragement and mentoring. Al Groh gets a special thank-you. “I suspect he made special allowances for my tendency to

torture the English language and to utter linguistic ‘faux pas’ at regular intervals.” And President Farley and his family, as well as John Chwalek, provided personal support.

Arvan was expected to work to cover his other expenses. So he became a soda jerk for the family of Clayton Karambelas ’49, among other summer jobs. The Karambelases’ Greek origins helped ease Arvan’s transition. “It provided some degree of continuity for Greek customs.”

“If I had to give my FULL NAME every time I was introduced, it would have been a DIFFICULT THING.”



Dean Arvan, left, was photographed for the yearbook with Younsu Koo '56 of South Korea, Coach Bob Partridge, Ahmed Kazimi '58 of Trans-Jordan, and assistant coach “Flip” Jones. PHOTO FROM WILKES ARCHIVES

He recalls the name change as a welcome relief. “If I had to give my full name every time I was introduced, it would have been a difficult thing.”

A part-time job as a laboratory technician while at Hahnemann Medical College, Philadelphia, steered him to pathology. Arvan completed his residency in the specialty at University of Pennsylvania in 1964 and became an associate professor there in 1969. He joined the faculty at University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry in 1977, eventually serving as senior associate dean for academic affairs and associate chair and interim chair of the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine.

He is board-certified in both anatomic pathology and laboratory medicine. His extensive research included assessing diagnostic tests. He counts among his numerous achievements an early initiative that led to a comprehensive interdisciplinary program for prenatal diagnosis of neural tube defects and other fetal anomalies.

Arvan served as U.S. editor in chief of *Clinica Chimica Acta*, an international scientific journal for clinical biochemistry. He has led several professional organizations, including serving as president of the Academy of Clinical Laboratory Physicians and Scientists.

He and wife Joan live in Fairport, N.Y., and are the parents of three sons: Stephen, David and Ted.

#### Dean Arvan, Fairport, N.Y.

**B.S., Biology 1955**

**Career:** Pathologist and administrator at University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry.

**Notable:** One of first international students at Wilkes, edited an international scientific journal for clinical biochemistry and diagnostic procedures.

**Favorite Wilkes memory:** During Arvan’s junior year, professor Charles Reif took him to a suit sale. Reif bought one for himself and, for one dollar more, one for Arvan. “My first suit! He probably knew that I would need one for my upcoming medical school interviews.”

Opposite page: Arvan retired as professor and interim chair of pathology, laboratory medicine and pediatrics at University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry in 2004. PHOTO BY STEVE BOERNER

