70/04/06 Marilyn's Aunt Shocked by News

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Dr. Sam Stayed Close to Us, Says Brother

"Dr. Sam stayed close to us throughout it all. I guess he always looked at us as older brothers and someone he could trust."

That's what Dr. Richard N. Sheppard, eldest of the three Sheppard brothers, said today only hours after learning of the death of his much publicized brother, Dr. Sam Sheppard.

Dr. Richard said he learned of the death through a telephone call about 7 a.m. from Sam's mother-in-law, Mrs. George Strickland, in Columbus.

Sheppard said he was trying to contact the other brother, Dr. Stephen A., who is touring psychiatric hospitals in England. Sheppard's son, (Chip) Sheppard Jr., 22, is vacationing in England.

Dr. Richard said the family kept in close touch with each other, either by phone or letters. The last correspondence from Dr. Sam was an Easter telegram last week when the Richard Shepards returned from a vacation, he said.

Dr. Richard last spoke with his brother around New Year's Day. "Chip was visiting his father in Columbus, and they called to wish us a Happy New Year. It was a pleasant telephone reunion," Dr. Richard said.

"He was in Cleveland after the storm last July 4," Dr. Richard said. "He said he heard we were lost — we were on the lake at the same time, and I guess he tried to call. When he couldn't reach us, he came up from Columbus to see if we were all right."

Dr. Richard said attempts to contact Stephen Sheppard had been unsuccessful. "We know where he's supposed to be, but we haven't been able to reach him yet," he said.

Dr. Stephen left Cleveland two years ago to begin a six-year internship at the Napa State Hospital in Imola, Calif. The Napa Hospital is known for its outstanding rehabilitation work with state prison inmates.

Dr. Richard said efforts would be made to contact Sam Jr. through Dr. Stephen. "We know that Steve and his wife, Betty, had dinner with Chip in London just last week, so we hope he knows where he can contact him," Dr. Richard said.

"Life for Sam," Dr. Richard said, "has been a rough deal."

Dr. Sheppard's Death Revives Interest in Famed Murder Case

The surprising death of Dr. Samuel H. Sheppard today caused Greater Cleveland landowners to think back and try to assess just what there was about the Sheppard case that drew such widespread attention.

Before, during and long after Dr. Sheppard's first trial and conviction for slaying his wife, Marilyn, people could be heard in all sorts of gatherings placing arguments over whether he was guilty or not.

The Sheppard case had all the ingredients to make it one of this century's outstanding murder trial conversations pieces.

He was a young, successful suburbanite — a professional man, an osteopath. He lived with his wife and son in one of Cleveland's more attractive suburbs, the bedroom community of Bay Village.

Adding to the luster of the story, Sheppard was linked with other women rightly or wrongly. There were attempts to link Marilyn Sheppard with other men.

One of their good friends, a frequenter of their home, was Bay Village Mayor Spencer Houck, the village butcher by trade.

The Sheppard case had — all eager-read events that set the stage for the marathon first trial that put Dr. Sheppard in the penitentiary.

That trial attracted such famous newspaper figures as Bob Considine and the late Dorothy Kilgallen. Even the New York Times sent a man — Inn Freeman — to cover the courtroom drama.

A former Scotised Yarder by the name of Fabian showed up to add his expertise to the news coverage.

After it was over, after the guilty verdict was in, Dr. Sheppard continued to attract wide attention from behind bars as he tried futilely to retain a hypnotist to extract from his subconscious the name of the true killer, as he offered himself as a guinea pig for medical experiment, as he fought and fought for a new trial.

And a new wave of interest was aroused as he conducted a pen-pal romance with a German girl, Ariane Tebbenjohns, that resulted in their whirlwind marriage when he was abruptly freed.

The Engineer of Sheppard's release from prison and of his second-trial acquittal was a rising young lawyer who also won widespread publicity because of his success.

This was F. Lee Bailey of Boston — who in recent days has been embroiled with the U.S. Government as behind-the-scenes director of the air traffic controllers' "Strike Out" that has been crippling the nation's air travel.

Sheppard Ex-Prosecutor Expresses His Sympathy

Sympathy for Dr. Sam Sheppard's family was expressed today by Common Pleas Court Judge Thomas J. Parrino, one of the leading prosecutors in the first Sheppard murder trial.

"Unfortunately the Sheppard case was surrounded by much tragedy," Judge Parrino said. "One thing that always impressed me was the complete dedication of his family towards him."

"Upon his death, I extend my deepest sympathy to his family."

Capt. David E. Kerr, head of the Cleveland police Homicide Unit during the Sheppard case, commented:

"This marks the end of an era. This was one of the most interesting cases I have experienced in several decades of homicide work. For many people there was and now always will be doubts. To many others, Sheppard was guilty."

"From my personal connection with the case, I'm still satisfied we had the right man in spite of his later acquittal."

Coroner Samuel Gerber, a key state witness against Dr. Sheppard, said, "I'm sorry to hear of the passing of Dr. Sheppard. From what I've heard it apparently was a sad death. I'm sure that he had every opportunity to make for himself a successful position in the community if he had continued to live."

Marilyn's Aunt Shooked by News

The aunt of Marilyn Sheppard today expressed shock and sorrow over the death of Dr. Sam Sheppard.

But Mrs. Helen Weigle said she still believes he killed her niece.

"I feel very badly," said Mrs. Weigle. "I remember Sam as a member of the family and the nice person he was. But he changed."

"I AM SO SHOCKED," she continued. "I said just a few days ago how strange that we didn't hear anything of Sam. You know he seemed to keep himself in the papers."

She recalled that she had last seen him during his second trial for the murder of her niece.

"He was always friendly to me," she said. "She said during the trial he had introduced her to his second wife, Ariane, and asked court aides to see that Mrs. Weigle got a good seat.

While he was in prison Sheppard wrote to the Weigles family asking that they believe in him and telling them he couldn't have murdered Marilyn.

But throughout the trials the Weigles remained steadfast in their belief that Sam had killed his wife.

"We SAY THROUGH all the trials," said Mrs. Weigle. "And there was no doubt in my mind that he did it in a fit of temper."

Mrs. Weigle, who said she has a heart condition, said if she is able she will attend the funeral.

"I think probably they will bring Sam here to bury him," she said. "His mother and father are at Sunset Memorial."

Mrs. Weigle added, "I remember Sam as a good fellow and a nice young man. What happened along the road, I don't know."