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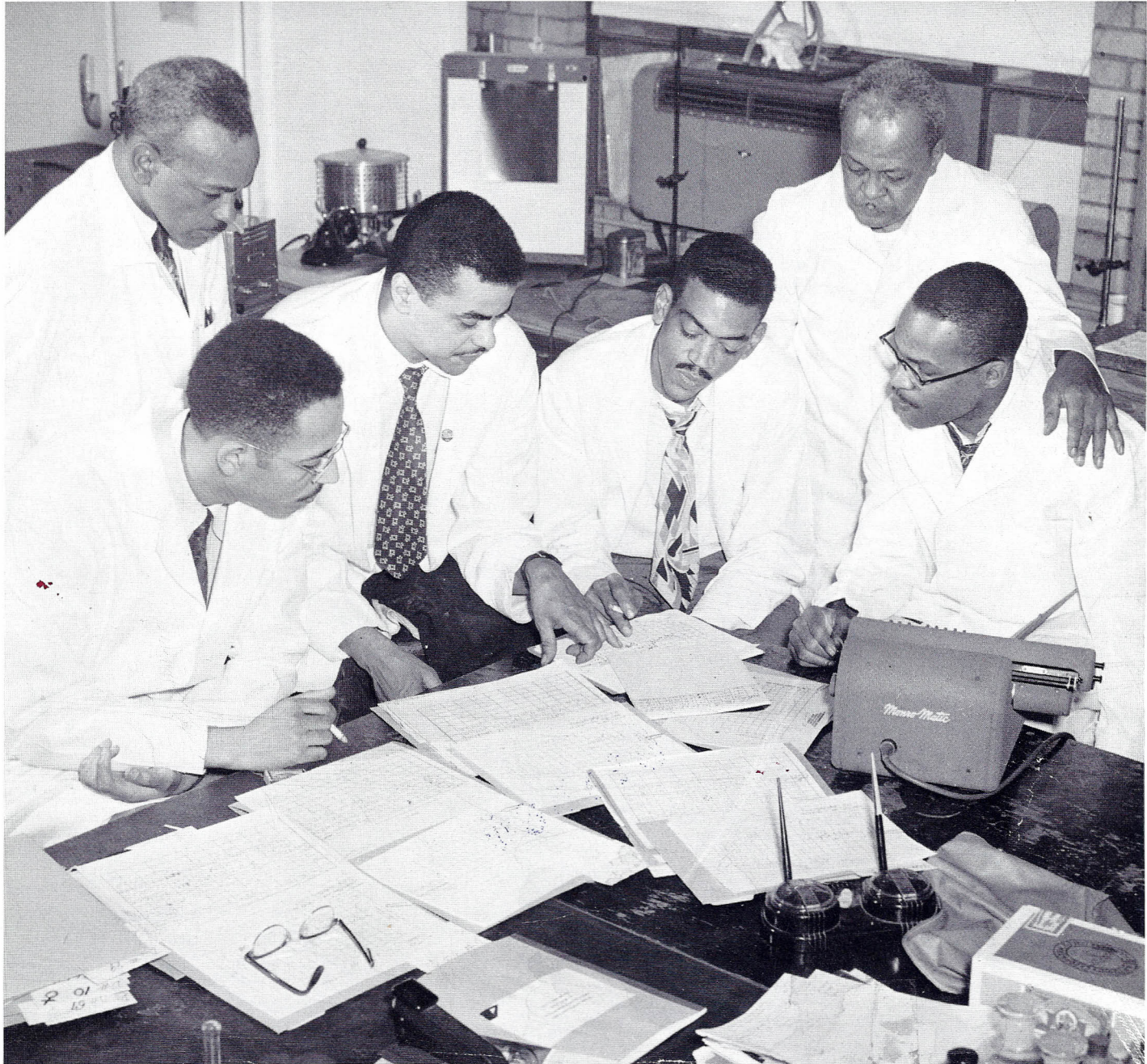
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**THE
INTELLECTUAL
VOYAGES OF
EDWARD W.
HAWTHORNE**

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Dr. Edward Hawthorne (fourth from left) with his original 1952 research team.

By Harriet Jackson Scarupa

The time: the beginning of the academic year.

The place: the gallery of the College of Fine Arts at Howard University.

The occasion: a faculty meeting of Howard's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

The speaker: The dean of the graduate school, i.e. Edward W. Hawthorne (B.S., M.D., Howard University; M.S., Ph.D., University of Illinois.)

His costume: cap and gown.

Costume? Cap and gown? Why on earth wear full academic regalia to a routine faculty meeting? What kind of crazy thing was the dean up to now?

So went the questions that ran through many faculty members' minds that day.

"I'm dressed like this," he told them, "to remind you of a few important things." He told of how this gown had been given to him (when he received his Ph.D. in physiology) by his father, a professor of medicine at this very university, and of how his blue velvet hood had been given to him by Adlai Stevenson during the ceremony marking that occasion.

He spoke of marching at Howard in this gown for the first time when he was "a lowly assistant professor," and of continuing to wear it for 30 years—marching in it with many of the great men and women associated with Howard's history, people like E. Franklin Frazier, Alain Locke, Thurgood Marshall, Merze Tate.

And he told them that this gown with its precious *blue velvet* represents not only history and tradition but privilege and responsibility. "All of you have this *blue velvet*," he said, and what it means is this: "You are some of the few people in the world who have earned the privilege of being alone without being lonely because you have the ability and the capacity to sit quietly in a place and dream big thoughts and worry about big problems . . . and this you must impart to your students.

"No man in his right mind comes to Howard without making the decision that he wants to participate and help and

enjoy the opportunity to make this a great place," he reminded them. "We do not come here to complain; we come here to develop. We do not come to find excuses; neither do we come here to make bricks without straw because we know that bricks without straw do not have the proper stress profile. We find the straw and make good bricks *regardless* because this is the substance of Howard University."

This is the gist of some of Hawthorne's remarks to the graduate faculty that day. But it doesn't capture his style of delivery, doesn't capture, for instance, the almost caressing way he seemed to linger over the words *blue velvet*. As his remarks came to an end, many of those who originally had been startled or bemused or even irritated by his academic "costume" were moved, inspired, invigorated.

It was a typically Hawthorne way to do things: first get people's attention; then challenge them; then win them over. Time and again people might have thought he was "crazy" (his own favorite description) and then ruefully had to change their minds. Some examples:

"They" thought he was crazy when he put his M.D. on the shelf, with all the potential high-earning power attached to it, to set about becoming a scientific investigator. (He became a nationally recognized pioneer in cardiovascular physiology—the study of how the heart and blood vessels work—and the causes of hypertension.)

"They" thought he was crazy when in 1951 he applied to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for a \$20,000 research grant—when the entire budget for research at Howard amounted to some \$5,000. (He got the money and NIH continued to support his research for 26 years.)

"They" thought he was crazy when he insisted Howard begin offering the Ph.D. in physiology at a time when the university had no doctoral programs at all. (The physiology and chemistry departments became the first at Howard to offer the Ph.D. degree, providing models for the 21

other Ph.D. programs later established at the university.)

"They" thought he was crazy when he left a comfortable niche in the College of Medicine to assume the awesome responsibility of totally revamping graduate education at Howard. (He is credited with being the driving force behind the creation, development and maintenance of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences—an entirely new organizational entity—which serves as the foundation for the university's push for academic excellence.)

"They" thought he was crazy when he continued to perform a prodigious amount of tasks, sometimes working in his office or lab until 11 at night, even after being confined to a wheelchair (1975) by an increasingly debilitating and painful spinal condition. (He has shattered all the stereotypes of what a physically disabled person can and cannot do, serving as a role model not only for the disabled but for many others as well.)

"...depending on what side you happen to see of me, you formulate your views...I don't have a single side."

Citing such juxtapositions could go on and on. For Edward W. Hawthorne seems to have honed a special talent for confounding the skeptics. He also seems to have honed a special talent for playing myriad roles. Not only is there Edward W. Hawthorne, the scholar-administrator and scientific investigator, but there is the Edward W. Hawthorne who estimates he has trained more than half of the Black cardiovascular physiologists in the country and a goodly number of its Black cardiologists; who has held policy-making roles in the American Heart Association and the American Physiological Society, and membership in some of the nation's major scientific organizations, including the prestigious National Academy of Sciences; who is co-host of "Howard Perspectives," a WHMM weekly television

6 program which aims to spread the expertise of the Howard faculty far beyond the borders of the campus [See *New Directions*, October 1981]; who was a delegate to the White House Conference on Handicapped Individuals and serves on the Maryland State Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities and other groups concerned with meeting the needs of the disabled and ensuring their civil rights; who has received awards from such diverse groups at the Howard University Graduate Student Council, the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology. . . .

Anyone who can play so many roles and play them with such intensity is bound to be complex. Indeed, Hawthorne has been called "demanding," "competitive," "outspoken," "opinionated," "abrasive," "impatient," "arrogant," "*impossible*." . . . He has also been called "visionary," "creative," "innovative," "committed," "caring," "generous," "*brilliant*." . . .

Many of those who know him best can treat you to some anecdote that seems to flesh out one or another of these adjectives. Walter Bowie, a veterinarian and physiologist who is now dean of the veterinary school at Tuskegee Institute, remembers the day he and Hawthorne were writing a proposal for a collaborative research project between Howard and Tuskegee and the exchange between the two men got so heated and Hawthorne, in particular, got so wound up, that Bowie finally passed a note to a secretary in the room and asked *her* to give it to Hawthorne. The note read: "We can disagree without being disagreeable."

Bowie, who admits to being "fairly opinionated myself," laughs when he tells the story. Today he considers Hawthorne not only a scientific colleague but a close personal friend. "There's no question about it, the man is brilliant," he says. "He's a guy who generates ideas a hundred a minute. So it's been an intellectual experience for me to be associated with him."

What does Hawthorne himself have to say about the varying opinions people

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hold about him? "People interface with me from different vantage points," he responds. "I've seen some people as a professor, some as a graduate professor, some as chairman of the Faculty Senate, some as the dean, some as just plain Ed. So, I imagine, depending on what side you happen to see of me, you formulate your views. I guess I don't have a single side."

As for rubbing some people the wrong way, he says, "I was trained in the sciences, was trained to question and probe into the possibilities of the truth as a day-to-day fact of life. It has nothing to do with personality. So if I don't think I agree with you, I'll tell you. I'll say, 'Noooo, that doesn't make any sense.' [Here he guffaws.] All I ever said was I reserve the right to make my statement and after that whatever we decide, I'll work with you as far as I can. But don't put a muzzle on me. I can't stand that."

As for being demanding, Hawthorne says, "Yes, I think I'm demanding. But I believe that's required when you're trying to develop something. It's one thing to step into something that's already developed: you find out what the rules are and play the game. Well, that's not my cup of tea. It's another thing to start from scratch with something in your head and make something come out of that. That's my thing. And to do that, in my opinion, you have to be demanding."

In a very real sense, he did start the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences from scratch. He is its first and only dean. Before the school was inaugurated in 1976, the university's graduate programs operated under a dean and a graduate council composed of the chairmen of all the departments which offered graduate degrees. It was not, then, a truly autonomous unit.

Under the new structure, the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences has its own budget (currently at about \$4 million); its own administrative staff; its own approved graduate faculty (currently 326); and, as of last August, its own building (the reno-

vated former nurses' quarters of the old Freedmen's Hospital).

In its present form, too, the school has refined its focus so that it awards only the academic or research degree (the M.S., M.A. and Ph.D.), leaving such professional degrees as the Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.), the Master of Social Work (M.S.W.) and the Master of City Planning (M.C.P.) under the jurisdiction of the individual schools involved (e.g. School of Education, School of Social Work, School of Architecture and Planning).

Today, the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences offers some 50 major programs of study, ranging from African studies to zoology, with the doctorate awarded in 23 fields. It currently serves some 1,400 students who come from 36 states and 40 foreign countries.

"What we have done is develop the concept of a Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, design the structure and programs and put them into operation."

"What we have done is develop the concept of a Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, design the structure and programs and put them into operation," Hawthorne says. That "we," in itself, represents change. "The first day I came to work here I had to spend from eight in the morning until eight at night just talking with students who had problems and needed help," he recalls. "I couldn't do any other work." One of his first steps was to create an office of student relations headed by an associate dean.

He also established the positions of associate deans for administration, for educational affairs, and for research affairs, each with separate staff. "That was unheard of at the time," observes Esther Ottley, the school's associate dean for administration who was formerly an associate professor in the department of mathematics. "Everyone thought it was

such a waste of money. But if you will see the offices now you will see that [having an auxiliary dean or deans] has been enforced in just about every dean's school. It's just not possible to administer a good program without sufficient staff."

Another of Hawthorne's innovations reflects his belief that "belonging to the graduate school should be a special privilege," Ottley says. Therefore, an individual has to demonstrate scholarly productivity in order to be admitted to the graduate school faculty—and to remain a member of that faculty.

What this means in practical terms is that there is no such thing as a tenured professor in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. A person may be a tenured professor in the department of economics within the College of Liberal Arts, for instance, but if he meets the criterion for appointment to the graduate school he would be appointed for only one, two or three years. [He would be both a professor of economics in the College of Liberal Arts and a *graduate* professor of economics in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.] To be reappointed, he would have to prove to other members of the graduate faculty that he is worthy. "Crucial to this peer review process," Hawthorne emphasizes, "is *currency* of creative productivity." This process, though resented by some, is essential, he believes, if the school is to fulfill its responsibility of being "the guardian of quality in the university."

Closely related to this responsibility has been Hawthorne's long campaign to focus on the importance of research. "Research has different meanings to different people," he observed at a campus seminar on grantsmanship. "It is a process by which someone exercises his own interpretive genius to seek out the truth, to resolve some hypothesis. It is a personal vendetta against ignorance. It is a single outward expression of the uniqueness of an institution..."

In his view, only by emphasizing and promoting research will Howard's future as a first-quality academic institution be assured. "The way you enhance re-

8 search," he says, "is by trying to do what we're trying to do now: by making sure you have first quality individuals with the competence and desire to do research; by having the physical facilities to do research — adequate libraries, properly equipped laboratories, support services, efficient business administration. Then we need to have more support from the public and private sector. We need in-kind support that other universities have, especially universities with the kind of ambitions we have. We've only just begun [attracting that kind of support]."

"Right now, we're running a race to see if we can get the state-of-the-art equipment to catch up with the world before the equipment becomes obsolete. . . . We're too well off to be considered a developing minority institution, and too poor off to do all the things our faculty is able to do. That's what our problem is."

His voice rises as he shares a personal observation: "I live out in Clarksville, Md., and every morning I pass by The Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory which is just one part of the physics program at Hopkins. But that one part occupies acres and acres of land and has almost as many buildings as those here on the east campus. . . . We require no less. . . . Our physicists don't think differently just because they're Black."

As he continues in this vein, something else about Hawthorne becomes clear. The policies he has instituted in shaping graduate education at Howard have been important, true. His individual achievements as dean have been important, true. The amount of research support for the graduate school has increased from \$11,225,621 in 1976-77 to \$15,546,551 in 1980-81, for instance, and he notes with pride that "more than half of all students who have graduated from Howard with Ph.D. degrees have graduated since I've been involved." But his major achievement as dean may well be something else — that is, his ability to conceptualize and articulate a *vision*. A vision of quality education for Black people and the special

responsibility of Howard University to foster that education.

Consider some of his views:

On why a person should go to graduate school: *You don't go to graduate school to get a job. You go to graduate school to enhance your mental capacity to deal with what you're interested in.*

On why Black people, especially, should pursue advanced degrees: *We have to have the requisite knowledge about problem-solving in order to lead us into the bright sunshine of being full, free American citizens. So what we're talking about is maximizing the academic and personal potential for problem-solving so that our race can have the leaders it needs in quantities to move out into the American scene and in the world. Furthermore, we have to develop these same individuals to provide basic needs for our international brothers.*

On his own plans as he looks to the school's future: *I want to finish what I'm doing now, that is to get a really first quality critical mass of scholars and assist them in every way possible to be creative, to develop research, to write books, to create a sociocultural environment in which we can produce first quality Ph.D. students.*

These days, as Hawthorne scoots around the school's new quarters, he is like a proud papa. The new headquarters, in a sense, serves as a symbol both of how far the school has come and of its future promise. "Our faculty is spread over several schools and colleges," he points out. "So communication is extremely important. Now we begin to have a central place where we can have the sort of dialogue that is essential."

Why essential?

"All of the new things come about as a result of dialogue between professors in different disciplines," he responds. "You need to sit down and talk with someone in philosophy or in history or in English or in engineering, and they need to talk with you about what you're doing in your lab and suddenly you discover new ideas and concepts you can apply to your own

problem. Because the fundamentals are all the same."

It was, in fact, Hawthorne's own work in the laboratory that set the stage for his current work as dean. He traces the evolution this way: "We tried to have a first rate cardiovascular research laboratory. In order to have first quality research, you need first quality students. In order to have first quality students, you need a graduate school to put them in. And once you have a graduate school to put them in, you've got to worry about the role the faculty should play. . . . So you get caught up in these things. You don't have any choice."

"There is no way that you can go back and look at anything in the literature about the dimensions of the ventricle and not see reference to Dr. Hawthorne."

While Hawthorne is best known on the Howard campus for his role in academic administration, it is his role as a scientist that has brought him the greatest recognition outside the university. What spurred him into scientific research was in another sense one of those "no choice" situations that he seems to have found himself caught in again and again in his life.

As a young resident at Freedmen's Hospital in the late '40s he was struck by the number of patients with high blood pressure, a disease that had [and continues to have] a disproportionate impact on Black people. He decided he had to find out more about the disease. That decision led him to the University of Illinois, where he worked for several years under George Wakerlin, a leading investigator in the field of hypertension, and earned the M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in the process. When he returned to Howard in 1951 to teach in the department of physiology, he naturally continued that research.

"Historically, Dr. Hawthorne's quest has been to understand what hypertension does to the heart and circulation," ob-

serves Eleanor Franklin, a Howard professor of physiology who currently directs Hawthorne's research lab. "Because of hypertension's devastation to the heart, he has focused on the heart and specifically on the left side of the heart since that is the pump that does the hardest work."

Originally, though, Hawthorne focused his research on the role the kidney plays in hypertension. "Your kidney expands and contracts all day long as blood goes into it, and one of the theories about high blood pressure development was that somehow the kidney didn't do this properly and that's what caused this hormone to come out that gives you high blood pressure," he explains.

In the course of his kidney research, he designed what he calls "a little electronic caliber device" to measure the movement or change in the volume of the kidney. But the device wasn't sensitive enough to measure such small changes. "So," recalls Hawthorne, "one afternoon we [he and his Howard laboratory associates] said, 'Well, rather than throw this thing away, why not find something that moves enough to see if it works.' So I said, 'Let's put it on the heart [of an alive awake dog], that moves more than anything else.'"

When he did, he discovered this: "The stuff that was in the textbooks about how the heart works mechanically was not at all what we were seeing. We had to go back and redefine the mechanics of the contraction of the heart. So I've spent a good deal of my life describing how the heart does what it does — which is, how does it contract, how does it pump the blood mechanically, what kind of size and shape does it have, how do you estimate its volume. We discovered a lot of stuff, ultimately saying [in 1961] that the heart inside probably looks like an egg and therefore one can calculate the volume using a geometric model."

The findings made by Hawthorne and his associates provided fresh insights into the workings of this vital organ, and paved the way for some important practical inventions. As Hawthorne tells it, "People said, 'Well, if Ed says the heart looks like

an egg then we ought to be able to take X-rays of the heart and calculate the volume from those cells. So the whole field broke wide open. Today, it's culminated in techniques like 2-D echo where you can go to a hospital and have them put a probe on your chest and see what your heart looks like."

His approach to cardiovascular research also helped to change the way research in physiology was conducted and the very look of the physiology laboratory. When he first started his investigations, the typical physiology lab "was full of bottles and blood and dead dogs," he says, while physiologists were known as the "blood and guts people; they'd take an animal and chop it up and open it up to study it."

But Hawthorne and Robert Rushmer, a prominent Seattle-based physiologist, began to develop electronic techniques for studying intact animals [animals that were alive and awake], treating them just like a patient. "As a matter of fact," Hawthorne says, "for a long time my wife used to be my nurse and we would do open heart surgery on dogs — and that was at least five years before that kind of surgery was really popular in hospitals. Actually, it's the result of the kind of studies we were doing that led to open heart surgery." [Most of Hawthorne's research has been on dogs but he has also studied the hearts of horses, chimpanzees, orangutans and brown squirrels.]

"There is no way that you can go back and look at anything in the literature about the dimensions of the ventricle [chamber of the heart] and not see reference to Dr. Hawthorne," remarks Joyce Hunter, a Ph.D. student in cardiovascular physiology currently studying under Hawthorne. "All the big people — Rushmer, [Harold] Sandler — quote his work and even use some of his data. Some of the work he did back in the '50s is still being referred to because nobody else has come along to show anything different or anything better. He is a pioneer and to be a *Black man* at that time and to be accepted into the sci-

entific community says a lot for the intelligence of the person."

Through the years, Hawthorne has authored or co-authored about 50 articles describing his research findings in such publications as the *American Journal of Physiology*, the *American Journal of Cardiology*, the *Journal of the National Medical Association*, *Circulation Research* and *Federation Proceedings*; has delivered scientific lectures both in the U.S. and abroad; and has participated actively in many scientific organizations. As a member of the space science board of the National Academy of Sciences, for instance, he reported on the kind of cardiovascular problems man might experience in space.

His scientific work continues, even though his lab (as of this writing) has no outside funding. He and five other Howard researchers (Franklin and Bernell Coleman, both Ph.D.s in physiology; La Val Cothran, a Ph.D. in physiology and a veterinarian; and graduate students Hunter and George Spence) are currently investigating the causes of hypertrophy. "When you expose your heart to high blood pressure, it gets bigger, thicker and weighs more," Hawthorne explains. "That's called hypertrophy. And as its gets bigger that compromises it sooner or later and then you go into heart failure."

The inclusion of the two graduate students in the research team points out another of Hawthorne's contributions. "Ed has played a central role in training Black physiologists," remarks Walter Bowie, who worked with him on a joint Tuskegee-Howard study of the dynamics of horses' hearts. "I was just at Meharry [Medical College] and ran across Joe Hinds [now chief of cardiology at Meharry's Hubbard Hospital] who was one of his students. And the thought that came to me was of some of the key individuals who have come under Ed's tutelage who have ended up doing key things." (For instance, Dr. Charles Curry, director of cardiology at Howard University Hospital, and Dr. Stanley Sinkford, a pediatric cardiologist who is chief of pediatrics at D.C.

General Hospital, both worked with Hawthorne.)

Hunter is but the latest to come under the Hawthorne aegis. He serves as her faculty adviser, overseeing her research on one aspect of hypertrophy.

She first met him in the spring of 1977 at a Minority Biomedical Science program at Dillard University where she was a student. And her first impression is still vivid: "It was very *interesting* to me to see this man sitting there in a wheelchair and puffing all those cigarettes while he was telling people about health and everything," she says, smiling at the irony of the scene. "But when he began to speak, I pushed all that aside. He gave a really dynamic speech on the hypertensive process and the thickening of the wall [of the heart]. It was the kind of speech where you could comprehend what was going on even if you didn't have the kind of background and training he had."

By the fall of 1977, she was at Howard, studying under Hawthorne. "People always say, 'How can you work with him?'" she remarks. "Sometimes I ask myself that too. He'll tell me someday, 'Well, I want this ready tomorrow morning' and it's already five o'clock and that means I've got to spend all night in the library and I'm already tired as it is. And sometimes I'll feel, 'This man's crazy!' But later I'll think, even though I didn't want to do it, it's good for me. A lot of times, though, I have to put the whole picture together in order to keep going."

"I guess my point is," she goes on, "I really appreciate his brilliance and I truly feel that the training I will get under him will prepare me for any and everything that I have to do. I feel that I will be able to think and stand on my feet and defend any kind of material I have to present. And that's something that you need in order to be a scientist."

Not only has Hawthorne played a role in training Black physiologists — but in re-training them. Eleanor Franklin is a case in point. She had been teaching physiology at Tuskegee's veterinary school and was

planning to leave to do postdoctoral research in endocrine physiology at Sloan Kettering Institute in New York City. She met Hawthorne on one of his visits to Tuskegee in 1961 or 1962 and he convinced her to come to Howard. A key line of his reasoning, as she recalls it, was this: "If you go to Sloan Kettering you can publish a hundred papers and nobody will ever know you're Black. But if you come to Howard they'll assume you're Black until they find out differently."

At Howard, she has worked in Hawthorne's research lab off-and-on since 1963 while holding a variety of positions, including that of associate dean in the College of Medicine. Through his influence she has shifted her area of expertise from endocrine physiology to cardiovascular physiology. Along the way, she adds jokingly, she's also "earned a Ph.D. in Hawthorne." One of her findings: "In the laboratory he is an entirely different human being. He is at one time enormously disciplined and a great gambler. Now those two characteristics don't fit. But in Dr. Hawthorne they do."

"If I'm going to do this research and teaching I'm either going to do it first class or get out."

Some who have seen Hawthorne in his lab and know of his work think he made a mistake by going into academic administration instead of full-time research. But others aren't so sure. "I think he would have been happier had he stayed in his research laboratory," Franklin believes. "But we also wouldn't have the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences we now have."

As for Hawthorne, himself, he says, "I've already done my thing as far as my record as a cardiac physiologist. I did it to the point where I'm a member of the National Academy of Sciences. On the other hand, I believe that I owe it to my university if the challenge comes along to develop graduate education to take my skills and help provide the way for younger people."

"Providing the way for younger people" is in a sense his family legacy. To better understand Edward W. Hawthorne, academic administrator and scientific investigator, it helps to know something of where he came from. His roots. And that takes us back, first of all, to Port Gibson, Miss.

Edward William Hawthorne was born on November 30, 1921 on the campus of Alcorn College, a small state-supported college located about 30 miles from Port Gibson in the southern part of Mississippi. His mother, Charlotte Killian Thomas, was a schoolteacher; his father, Edward Hawthorne, a Baptist minister. His parents divorced when he was about three so it is the influence of his mother and his mother's family that was strongest in his early development.

His maternal grandfather was a master baker who was in charge of food services at Alcorn while his grandmother was a nurse who also "assumed the responsibility of taking care of a lot of the problems that other Blacks had," Hawthorne says. His grandparents lived on campus and Hawthorne's mother and her sisters attended Alcorn. His grandparents also owned land in Port Gibson, a fact that earned them the special respect of other Black families in the area.

His mother taught at Port Gibson High School, also serving as assistant principal, and incorporated into her classroom many ideas she had acquired after additional study at Howard. Hawthorne lived with his mother and grandparents in "a great big house" that was almost always full of people: "In the fall and winter kids from the outlying countryside would come in with their parents in wagons—bringing a hog, potatoes, syrup, corn, whatever—and they would stay with my family to go to school. Then in the spring when the planting season would come they would have to go back home to help with the crops. So we always had a houseful of young people who were going to school [living] with our family."

It was a segregated world, of course. But it was not myopic: "We were being



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prepared to take our place in the world. So I guess, in hindsight, those old people [his grandparents] were really the mainstay of what was to come later in terms of the Black Renaissance."

Between the ages of seven and eight, he became "very, very sick." Only later was it discovered that that sickness had been polio and that it was to gradually affect his mobility through the years.

An extremely bright student, Hawthorne was skipped in school — and skipped. By the time he was 13, "going on 14," he was already starting his freshman year at Fisk University. By that time his home was Washington, D.C. [His mother had remarried and his stepfather, Dr. Riley F. Thomas, was a professor of medicine at Howard.] Thus Hawthorne became, in his words, "one of those faculty brats who were out there throwing rocks at the windows of the old administration building that stood where the present library is."

He decided to go to Fisk instead of Howard because he wanted the experience of going to school away from home. He majored in chemistry and soon "had all these deals going," he recalls, chuckling over the memory. "I think I talked John Hope Franklin — he was a senior at the time — into helping me write my social science papers. Wade McCree — he later became solicitor general — had come down to Fisk from Boston Latin School and he would sit down and teach all the languages. In return, I would do the sciences. So we had this specialty thing going."

After a few years, he transferred to Howard: "It was cheaper. I wouldn't have to pay tuition and I wanted to see what Howard was like anyway." To understand what Howard was like, you have to understand this, he points out: "At the time all of the bright young Black minds were either at Howard, Fisk or Atlanta because there was nowhere else to go. So you had to produce to survive. There was so much competition between kids that you had to do your work just to stay. Then at Howard you had this tremendous social overtone — fraternity and sorority life and all that.

12 And I was into everything. I was vice president of my frat, Alpha; was involved in student government; in raising hell. . . .”

Hawthorne expresses no reservations whatsoever about the quality of the education he received at Howard: “I thought it was very good. It had to be. I got my zoology from [Ernest] Just. I got my philosophy from [Alain] Locke. I got my social sciences from [E. Franklin] Frazier. I was in that last line of kids who got trained by all these great Black men. So how *could* I feel about my Howard education?”

He majored in zoology, continued his love affair with chemistry, and then went on to medical school—at Howard. “I went to medical school because my [step] father said, ‘You will go to medical school,’” Hawthorne recalls with a laugh. “I told him I wanted to be a chemist. He said, ‘You’ve lost your mind. What are you going to do with a Ph.D. in chemistry as a Black man here in the 1940s? How are you going to make a living?’ Then he said, ‘I tell you what. You go to medical school and when you get out you can do whatever you want to do.’”

It was in medical school that he became attracted to physiology. “I was just interested in trying to find out how the body works and it was fun to play around in the lab,” he says of the reason for that initial interest. “There were all sorts of equipment, instruments, and you could do experiments. It was just fascinating.”

His first physiology teacher was Dr. Joseph Johnson who earned his own Ph.D. and M.D. from the University of Chicago in 1936. A courtly, methodical man of 88, Johnson, remembers Hawthorne, the student, well. “He was a very inquiring young man and he always wanted to be doing something in the laboratory,” Johnson recalls. “So I gave him a little corner in the laboratory and access to all the frogs that he wanted so that he could work on his own.” Hawthorne was indebted to Johnson in more ways than one. He wryly notes another attraction of working in that lab: “You could look out

one of the windows and see baseball games [at Griffith Stadium] for free.”

But illness — this time hyperthyroidism — forced Hawthorne to interrupt his medical education for several years. “He was so seriously ill,” recalls Johnson, “that the faculty raised the question of the feasibility of his being permitted to return to medical school. It was my feeling that he should be permitted to return and I pressed, as an active member of the faculty and as department chairman, for him to be permitted to return.” Johnson’s persuasion proved successful. After Hawthorne resumed his studies, Johnson says, “he was still very inquiring and studious and did very good work.”

Hawthorne did his internship and residency at Freedmen’s Hospital, fully intending to open his own medical practice. That he didn’t he attributes to the encouragement and support of a young nurse named Eula Roberts. When he talks about what happened to change the course of his life, it’s obvious that he’s told the story many times before, but he seems to relish telling it anew:

“She came down here from Bellevue Hospital [in New York City] and was working over at Freedmen’s in Ward Five and we’d sit there at night and talk — I got carried away with this girl—and one night we had this conversation. I said, ‘All you Negro women (I’m sure I said “Negro” at the time) are only interested in doctors who go out and make money. Well, that’s not what I really want to do. What I’d like to do is go off somewhere and learn some more about what causes high blood pressure and how to treat it.’ She said, ‘Well, why don’t you?’ And I said, ‘Well, because it’s not the proper thing to do with an M.D. degree. Most people expect you to make money and have big cars and all that stuff.’ She said, ‘Well, you never asked *me* what I thought.’”

What she thought was that he should follow his intellectual yearnings. To make a long story short: He went to Wakerlin’s laboratory in Chicago to do research on hypertension, *and* married that nurse

whom he had gotten so “carried away with” and who had so encouraged him to follow his dream. They have been married 33 years now and are the parents of four grown daughters (a theatrical producer, aspiring actress, executive secretary and physician) and a 15-year-old son.

But that’s getting ahead of the narrative. When Hawthorne and his bride set out for Chicago, his stepfather took them to the station. As the couple was about to go to the coach section, his stepfather reached into his pocket and handed him a ticket—for a compartment. “I don’t want to ever catch you not going first class,” he told Hawthorne. That experience seems to have spurred Hawthorne to make a resolution later of his own: “If I’m going to do this research and teaching I’m either going to do it first class or get out.”

As Hawthorne was completing his Ph.D. and making plans to go to Harvard for additional study in cardiology, Johnson, then dean of the College of Medicine, visited him in Chicago and asked Hawthorne to come back to Howard — this time as a faculty member in the department of physiology. “I said I was not the least bit interested,” Hawthorne recalls of the conversation. “He said, ‘But your family’s been around Howard all these years and we need some help.’ So I said, ‘O.k., I’ll come until you find someone else.’ That was in 1951. Chortling now, Hawthorne says, “I’m sort of like the man who came to dinner.”

“I couldn’t imagine that first year going up on stage at commencement. . . . but President Cheek said, ‘You’re the dean, You do it.’”

Through the years, Hawthorne rose through the ranks of the College of Medicine (among his titles: chairman of the physiology department, assistant dean, associate dean, research professor). And he made his mark. Franklin quickly gives some examples of how: “He designed and introduced the concept of



14 interdisciplinary teaching and research; created a formal animal section for procuring, holding and maintaining research animals; promoted research and funding for research and clearly identified research spaces for faculty in the college's planned new building; initiated the modernization of audio-visual aids used in instruction; established the first academic reinforcement program instituted in the university; urged and facilitated the installation of electron microscopy and its use in the pathology services of the hospital...."

He was also involved in several major university-wide endeavors. He served as chairman of the Faculty Senate, as chairman of the committee overseeing the introduction of computer technology into the university and as chairman of the committee charged with examining the future of graduate education at Howard, a committee which drew up the broad outlines of the current Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

When Carroll Miller, dean of the graduate school, decided to retire in 1974, a search committee drew up a list of candidates to replace him and presented the list to Howard President James E. Cheek. That President Cheek picked Hawthorne to assume the deanship and to set about revamping the structure of the graduate school surprised few on the Howard campus. As university professor emeritus Arthur P. Davis wrote in an unpublished biographical sketch, "Edward Hawthorne possesses to an unusually high degree the ability to see the essential core of organizational problems and to devise imaginative yet practical ways to straighten out such problems."

If this is true—and Davis is certainly not alone in this belief—Hawthorne credits Howard with helping him to develop such skills. "Howard has allowed me to go as far and do as much as my mind would help me do," he says. "I doubt very seriously that any school could provide a young man—which I was when I came here—with any better opportunity to do



his thing. As far as I could see, no one ever really stood in my way. Howard is a peculiar place. If you want to do something, you can do it. But nobody's going to make you do it."

The most recent chapter in Hawthorne's Howard career is the most remarkable to many because he has spent almost his entire time as dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences in a wheelchair. With the professional detachment of the M.D. he is, Hawthorne describes his condition this way: "I had polio when I was a boy and as I've gotten older my spine curved and it pressed upon my nerves. It's something that has gotten gradually worse a little bit at a time. So that's what it is. I have trouble with the top front muscles in my legs. So I've got to sit down to keep the thing from getting even worse."

When it comes to talking about the impact his condition has had on his life, Hawthorne loses some of that professional objectivity. "It's a tremendous thing to go through," he acknowledges. "You're playing golf one day and the next day you can't walk too well without some help. It took a long time to deal with it."

"For instance, I couldn't imagine that first year going up on stage at commencement time. I said, 'Somebody else can do that.' But President Cheek said, 'No, you're the dean. You do it.' [Hawthorne laughs.] Or you go across the campus and you figure everybody's looking at you and you finally say to yourself. 'Well, what's wrong with that?' So it's a whole adjustment period you go through. But what I found out was that people are much kinder than you would normally think. Mostly what makes you able to make it is that they aren't unreasonable."

In addition to the psychological problems a super-active man had to face in adjusting to life in a wheelchair, have been some very practical difficulties. "Remember we disabled people had no access to anything when I first came," he points out. "You couldn't get into any buildings. There was always a set of steps in front of you. And if I was here as dean and

couldn't make it [up those steps] what about poor students who couldn't? Now it's a whole lot better."

With the installation of ramps, doors that open automatically with the press of a button, curb cuts built into the sidewalks, enlarged bathroom stalls and the like, Howard is well on its way to providing a completely barrier-free environment for the "handicapped." The quotes are there because "handicapped" is a term many activists in the disability rights movement heartily dislike. Hawthorne understands why. "The word 'handicapped' puts a bad taste in my mouth," he says. "It's like the word nigger. You need a word which does not put a stigma on people. And besides there are all kinds of different disabilities."

"In all probability," suggests Davis in that biographical sketch, "Hawthorne's impressive native acuity has been honed and heightened by his recent physical restrictions." Ottley, who works with Hawthorne on a day-to-day basis, concurs. "Since his disability he has had to practice intellectual skills that he never knew he had," she observes. "For example, he's not able with great facility to make reference to his notes or to carry around a pad or a briefcase. And so whereas we might jot down notes or write down a speech, he thinks out all of it and organizes it within his own brain. He doesn't write it down. He will dictate six or ten pages to you in chronological and structural order because that is the way he has thought about it and stored it. It's almost as if he has a computer part of his memory." "He was always adept," she adds. "But I think he has sharpened his mental skills by use, by planned use."

Hawthorne's mental skills — and his many endeavors — are set against a backdrop of pain. "I think very few people realize how difficult it is for him; he is in constant pain," says James Featherstone, Hawthorne's full-time physical aide, the man who drives him places, helps him to exercise his limbs, repeatedly fills his mug with coffee and calls him "the chief."

Then Featherstone adds a telling footnote about his boss: "All the activity helps

him forget his pain. You know yourself when you have a headache if you get something else on your mind, you'll forget all about the headache." In his view, Hawthorne does what he does simply because he must: "This — this graduate school, his research — is his life."

So what drives Edward W. Hawthorne? There are theories aplenty: that, as a disabled person, he is obsessed with proving to the world that he is not "handicapped;" that, as an only child, he is obsessed with fulfilling the expectations of a demanding mother and of carrying out a proud family legacy; that, as a product of a segregated Mississippi town, he is obsessed with proving to the white man that a Black man is not only his equal but his better But the one explanation Hawthorne-watchers cite again and again has nothing to do with such idle psychological (or pseudo-psychological) musings. And that is, Edward W. Hawthorne's relentless drive for excellence.

Remarks Johnson of his old student, "he's a perfectionist. He strives for excellence himself and he expects that in his students and the people who are working with him." Hunter, who is separated from Johnson by a distance of 62 years, uses almost the same words when she speaks about her teacher: "Dr. Hawthorne wants excellence in everything. That's what his drive is: to achieve excellence. He does *nothing* half way."

When Hawthorne could no longer play golf, he took up painting as a hobby. Several of his brightly-hued canvases, with their bold geometric shapes, hang on the walls of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences' new headquarters. One of them shows a cluster of colored balloons soaring, soaring, soaring upward. The painting seems to symbolize something about the artist: while his body is confined, his mind soars free, voyaging through the realms of the intellect.

The intellectual voyages of Edward W. Hawthorne have been many and varied — and he always travels first class. □