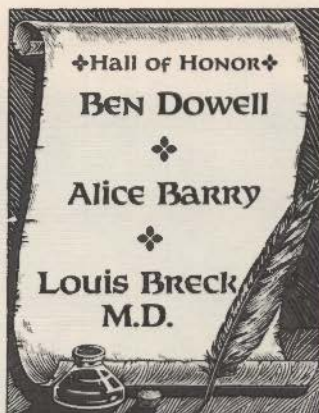


✦ HALL OF HONOR ✦
1992



Tribute to Louis W. Breck, M.D.

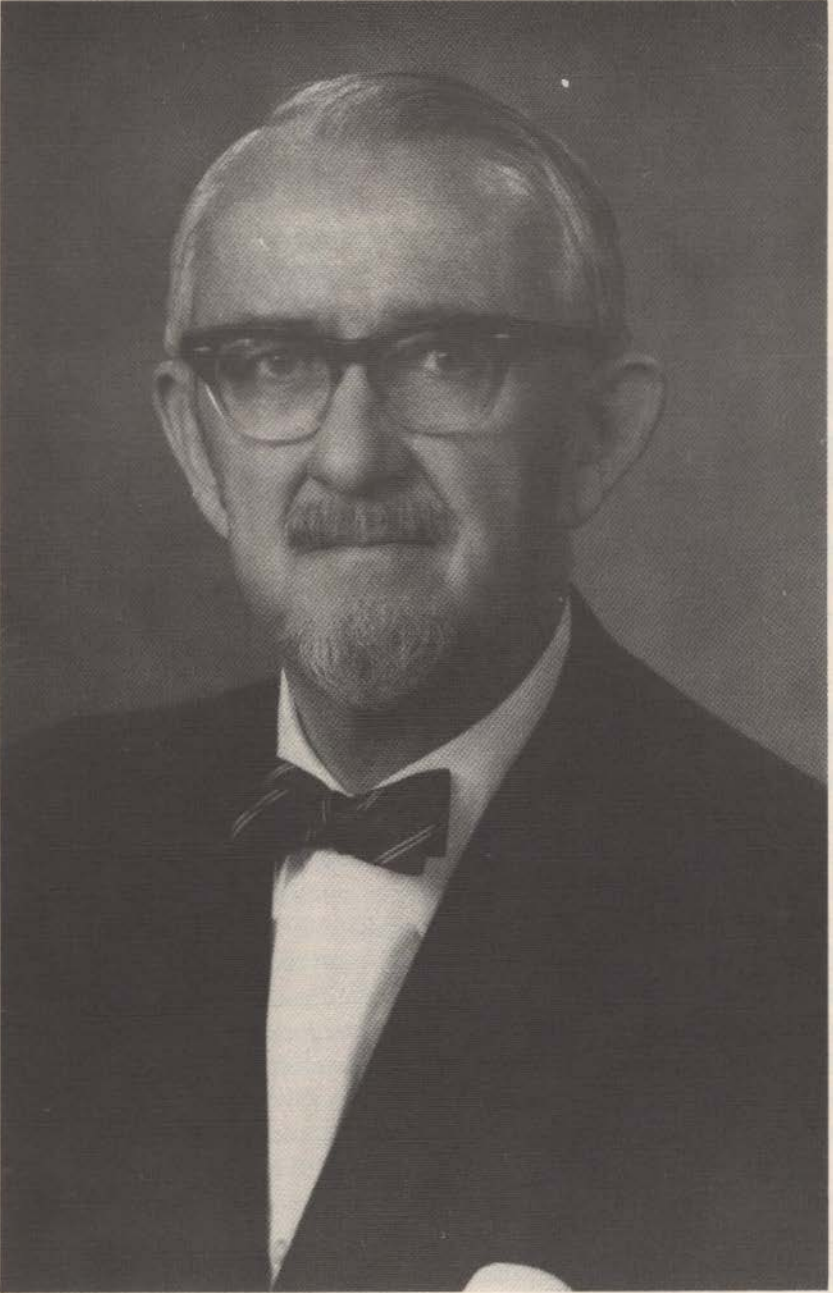
by Laurance N. Nickey, M.D.

Among the outstanding services performed by the El Paso County Historical Society is its annual recognition of two or three El Pasoans who have made significant contributions to the community. One of these people being so honored on this occasion is Louis William Breck, M.D., a true native El Pasoan and a pioneer and innovator in the field of orthopedic surgery.

Louis Breck was born on March 24, 1909, the son of Dr. L. M. Breck, a dentist who had settled in El Paso in 1898. He received his early education in the public schools of El Paso and began his higher education at El Paso Junior College, located on the top floor of the El Paso High School building. In 1927 he entered the Texas College of Mines and Metallurgy. Among his memories of his days at "Mines" is an incident which he ruefully refers to as a "Most Embarrassing Moment."

One Monday morning, while walking to his classes at the little campus on the hill, he spied a lizard lying dormant from the cold. Thinking it would be a good specimen to take to his biology class, he picked it up, put it in his pocket, and made his way to his English class, which preceded the biology class. He took a seat next to one of the college athletes who was suffering the effects of some heavy

LAURANCE N. NICKEY, M.D.



LOUIS W. BRECK, M.D.

weekend celebrating. The room was warm – and the inevitable happened: the young athlete closed his eyes in a grateful doze, and the lizard came to life, leaping from the pocket where it had been placed for safekeeping and landing squarely on the desk of the dozing student, who gave a shriek and bounded for the door. Instantly a wild commotion ensued while the young lizard-collector scurried hither and yon in an attempt to catch the frisky reptile.

As far as is known, Louis Breck's higher education proceeded without any further embarrassing moments. He received the B.S. degree from Northwestern University in 1930 and his M.D. degree in 1933 from Northwestern University Medical School, followed by a two-year internship and a subsequent residency in orthopedic surgery at the Mayo Clinic.

Shortly after receiving his M.D. degree, Dr. Breck married Julia North, also a native of El Paso. The couple had four children – Louis William, Jr., Judy, Susan, and Alan. And in the fullness of time, Louis and Julia Breck became the grandparents of seven boys.

In 1937 Dr. and Mrs. Breck returned to El Paso to live, but their residence in their home town was interrupted by Dr. Breck's military service during World War II. After the war, they came home for good. In 1949 Dr. Breck founded the El Paso Orthopedic Surgery Group in company with Dr. W. Compere Basom and Dr. Morton H. Leonard. The successor of this Group survives today.

In spite of a very busy and demanding practice, Dr. Breck has managed an almost unbelievable number of accomplishments. In 1951 he was the Arnold-Surman lecturer at the University of Texas Medical School in Galveston. He was Chief of Staff of Hotel Dieu Hospital in 1955-56; a consultant at Thomason General Hospital, where he worked and taught almost continuously throughout his many years of medical practice; civilian consultant to the William Beaumont General Hospital Trustee Clinic for Orthopedics and Related Research from 1947 until he retired; associate professor (and later clinical professor) of orthopedic surgery at the Texas Technological University School of Medicine in El Paso; and Consultant to the New Mexico Crippled Children's Hospital.

Additionally, he helped to establish the International Association of Bone and Joint Surgeons, founded its journal, *Clinical Orthopedics*, and served as the journal's associate editor for many years. He is the author of a textbook and more than one hundred articles which have been published in medical journals.