Winchell McKendree Craig was born in Washington Court House, Ohio, April 27, 1892, one of the six children (four brothers and a sister) of Eliza Orelia Pine Craig and Thomas Henry Craig. He died at St. Mary’s Hospital in Rochester, Minnesota, with which he had been associated professionally for 31 years, February 12, 1960. By the same sort of unhappy coincidence so often observed in this and other medical specialties, this distinguished neurosurgeon died of a primary brain tumor, arising from the third ventricle and the hypothalamus and histologically identified as a reticulum-cell sarcoma.

Dr. Craig is survived by his wife, Jean Katherine Fitzgerald Craig, and by four children. His only daughter and third child, Jean Mary Patricia Craig is a graduate nurse with a B.S. degree from the University of Oregon, and is on the staff of nurses at St. Mary’s Hospital in Rochester, Minnesota. His oldest son is Captain Winchell McKendree Craig, Jr., USMC. His son, James Stewart Craig, now lives
and is employed in Rochester. His son, Graham Fitzgerald Craig, is a student at the University of Minnesota. Dr. Craig is also survived by two brothers, Thomas H. and Robert A., who still operate the family’s large department store. The original “Craig tribe,” as Dr. Craig liked to call his family, were a closely knit group, and his intense loyalty to his own wife and children and to his friends was undoubtedly a reflection of his own happy childhood and youth.

Dr. Craig’s early education was received in the public schools of Washington Court House. After a year (1911) at Culver Military Academy, he matriculated at Ohio Wesleyan University, from which he was graduated with a B.A. degree in 1915. Four years later he received the M.D. degree from the Johns Hopkins Medical School. After completing an internship at St. Agnes Hospital in Baltimore, he was appointed a fellow in general surgery at the Mayo Clinic, where he was to remain for all of his active professional life.

In 1924, after he had completed his internship in general surgery, Dr. Craig decided to specialize in neurosurgery, undoubtedly at the urging of Dr. Alfred Adson, the brilliant chief of the service. After the training usual in those days, that is, work in the neurological sciences, chiefly medical neurology, he was assigned as the second permanent staff member of the section of neurological surgery.

In 1927, Dr. Craig was appointed Instructor in Neurological Surgery at the University of Minnesota, in the Mayo Foundation Graduate School. In 1930, he received the M.S. degree. In 1932, he was promoted to Associate Professor and in 1937 to full Professor.

When Dr. Adson retired in 1946, Dr. Craig became Chief of the Section of Neurological Surgery, a position he held until April 1, 1955, when he became Senior Consultant. He retired from active practice July 1, 1957.

Retirement, however, did not fit into Dr. Craig’s philosophy of life. First, he became Director of Civilian Defense for the City of Rochester, bringing to that post a sense of urgency not always felt by those who hold it. Early in 1959, he was appointed field representative of the Council on Medical Education and Hospitals of the American Medical Association. Soon afterward, he was invited to Washington, D. C., where he served on the staff of Dr. Arthur S. Flemming, Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, until his terminal illness began at Christmas, 1959.

Dr. Craig’s professional work at the Mayo Clinic and the University of Minnesota was interrupted by his military service in World War II. It seemed that fate had prepared him for the new assignment. Perhaps his brief experience at Culver Military Academy had aroused his interest in military affairs. At any rate, as soon as he was graduated from Johns Hopkins, he joined the Naval Reserve, in which he was active during the period between the World Wars. He was mobilized for active duty immediately after Pearl Harbor and, within a few short months, he had shed his mantle of “second man” in a famous neurosurgical department to become “top man” in one of the major military services.

He was sent, with his Naval Hospital Unit, to the West Coast, but, because there was very little for specialists to do in those early days of the war, he was assigned to a lecture tour of naval installations, to indoctrinate newly arriving medical officers in the traditions of Naval medicine. One of these trips took him to Washington and to the Bethesda Naval Hospital, and it was a case of love at first sight for the Naval officer and the Naval Hospital.

His first appointment was chief of the surgical service. Soon he became an un-