The neurosurgical world was saddened by the death of Dr. Louise Eisenhardt on January 22, 1967. Thus ended an epoch of devoted service to neurosurgery, neuropathology, and the editorial art. Hers was indeed a lifetime of uncompromising excellence, patterned after her beloved chief, Harvey Cushing.

Louise Eisenhardt was born in Ramsey, New Jersey, daughter of the late Albert and Ella Knoll Eisenhardt. In 1915, at a remarkably early age, this talented young woman entered Dr. Cushing’s office as an editorial assistant and soon began to work on the material for Cushing’s book, Tumors of the Nervus Acusticus. Dr. Cushing left for military duty in France in May, 1917, and the young editor finished the job. The following acknowledgment appears in the preface:

To my secretary, Miss Louise Eisenhardt, whose assistance has been invaluable during the preparation of this monograph, I must leave the task of preparing the index and seeing the book through the press.

After the war, Cushing’s interest in intracranial tumors became more intense, and a kindred enthusiasm developed in his office co-worker. She decided at this time to gain a
medical education. She entered Tufts Medical School and accomplished the almost unbelievable task of studying medicine while continuing part of her previous editorial responsibilities. In 1922 she began to keep a cumulative log of operative results on various types of intracranial tumors. She was graduated in 1925 with the highest record ever attained at Tufts Medical School.

Dr. Eisenhardt had planned to take her internship at the New Haven Hospital, but, at Dr. Cushing's request, she changed to the Boston Hospital for Women and Children. Soon editorial and statistical duties were interspersed between Obstetrics, Pediatrics, and other clinical responsibilities. The statistics of Cushing's rapidly expanding series of intracranial tumors were kept in a little black book which few saw and none but Dr. Eisenhardt touched. This book became an item of great mystery around the Brigham and was referred to by Dr. Cushing in his 70th birthday address before the Harvey Cushing Society:

"Since I have never been good at tables and graphs and calculations of percentages, the task would have been impossible had it not been for a mysterious little black book in which day by day and year by year Louise had neatly and methodically entered every tumor as soon as it was histologically classified. While you were discussing head injuries this afternoon, I secretly removed it from her desk and shall pass it around as Exhibit A, so that you can see for yourselves how she knew when the 2000th tumor mark was reached, and much else beside. As I have never ventured to handle the object before myself, I trust you will treat it tenderly . . . ."

Shortly after her internship, she was asked to accept a new responsibility. Dr. Percival Bailey, who had developed the section of Neuropathology at the Brigham, accepted the chair of Neurology and Neurosurgery at the new Medical School of the University of Chicago. What was more natural than for Louise to succeed him as neuropathologist to Dr. Cushing? This she did, and with such effectiveness that she became the outstanding authority in the world on the subject of intracranial tumors. During the interval 1928-30, she was co-author with Cushing of three papers concerning neuropathology. One described the use of supravital staining of fresh tissue in the diagnosis of intracranial tumors. Cushing placed great importance upon the immediate results obtained by this technique, and used to hold his operating room staff in a state of high expectancy until Louise quietly opened the door and announced the verdict. No doubt this method will be rediscovered in another generation. Another paper, in 1929, on operative mortality in a series of intracranial tumors, indicated that she was still keeping the little black book for Harvey Cushing. Somehow she was able to find time to give the course on neuropathology at Tufts, a custom she continued for many years after she was transplanted from Harvard to Yale with H. C.

The retirement of Dr. Cushing from the Brigham Hospital in 1932 marked the end of one era and the beginning of another, the organization of the Harvey Cushing Society. The former brought to a sudden halt an inexhaustible stream of patients from all over the world. The latter began inauspiciously in the operating room of the Brigham Hospital on the morning of May 6, 1932, where 21 future members gathered together, most of them being rather unsure of what was going to happen next, but all feeling more secure because of the presence of Louise. I wonder if her intuition whispered to her how closely she would be identified with the budding Society through the years to come, as secretary-treasurer, 1934-38; president, 1938-39; secretary-treasurer, 1939-52; historian since 1952.

Dr. Cushing moved to New Haven in the fall of 1933, accepting the chair of Sterling Professor of Neurology at Yale. Louise stayed on in Boston, supervising the assembly of the future Brain Tumor Registry, amounting to about 3000 intracranial tumors and 50,000 photographed sheets of clinical records. As noted in John Fulton's biography of Harvey Cushing: Louise Eisenhardt arrived in New Haven with the Brain Tumor Registry specimens in September, 1934. The registry became a new responsibility for Louise, who pursued a never-ending follow-up study of Dr. Cushing's patients. She introduced the registry to the Harvey Cushing Society at the 1935 meeting in New Haven, and presented some of the results that same year to a meeting of the Association for Research in Nervous and Mental Diseases, in a paper on long-term postoperative survival.