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THE QUIET MAN FROM 211D

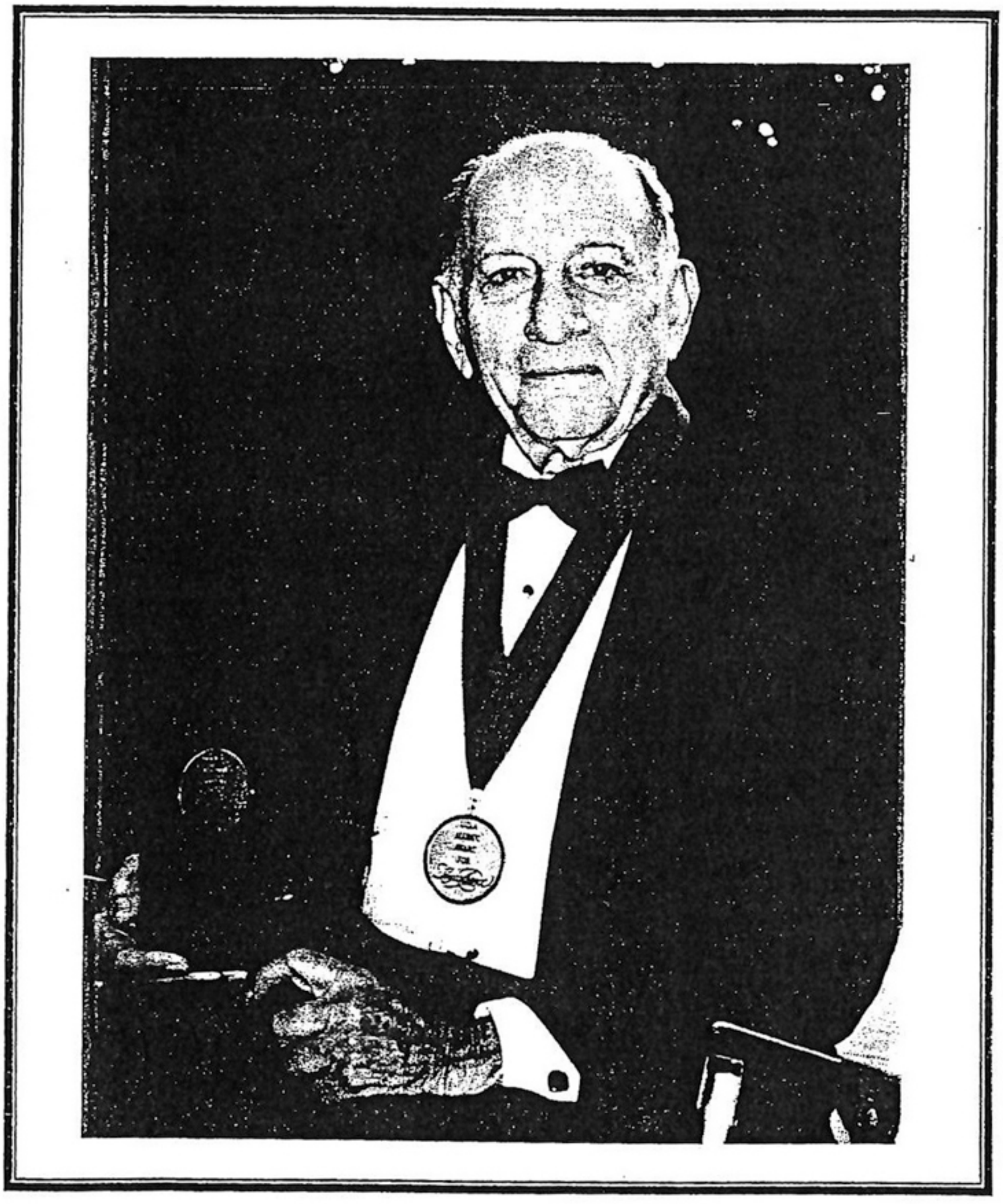
You see him coming and going from his apartment and in the dining room. You have read his informative articles about food supplements in the Phoenix. But who is this quiet, modest man? Where did he come from and what did he do before retiring to The Forum?

The fall 2001 issue of the University of San Francisco Magazine featured an article about Arthur Furst. It answers our questions, but also paints an inspiring picture of Art Furst as a quite untypical retiree, a man who has led a long and distinguished career in cancer research, and who is still teaching, lecturing, publishing and dancing his way through retirement.

To begin at the beginning, Art was orphaned at 4-years of age when his parents died, victims of the 1918 flu epidemic, and was raised in the home of an aunt and uncle in Los Angeles. After graduating from the L.A. public schools, he enrolled in Los Angeles City College where he found chemistry to be his favorite subject. To make ends meet, he sold newspapers and worked as a car park attendant. After transferring to UCLA, he earned his B.S. degree in chemistry with minors in math, physics and education. Continuing at UCLA, he received his teaching credentials and an M.S. degree in chemistry. His first job was at San Francisco City College, where he taught for seven years, and then in 1947 he accepted a full-time assistant professorship at the University of San Francisco.

At USF Art began work in the field of cancer research. At that time the only therapy for cancer was either radiation or surgery. Art learned of U.S. government research in the late 1940s that had found a poison gas that seemed to stop cell growth. Similar results had been obtained by German scientists during the War. He foresaw the possibility that such compounds might have anti-cancer qualities. With a few other professors and students, he synthesized various compounds and tested them on mice in his lab. He also tested some on himself to see how dangerous they

might be to humans. The experiments were continued at the U. of California San Francisco school of medicine, mixing the compound with food for oral chemotherapy, and in 1951 a scientific paper demonstrating the use of these compounds in fighting cancer was published jointly by Art and the UCSF doctors. This form of cancer treatment provided an alternative to radiation or surgery for some cancers.



One result of this work for Art was a deluge of job offers from drug companies and medical schools. He accepted a position as associate professor of pharmacology at Stanford Medical School while retaining his lectureship at USF. At Stanford, he established the Cancer Chemotherapy Laboratory and published many scientific papers. He also learned that he would never be accepted by the medical doctors because he was not an M.D. So he returned to USF, where he established the Institute of Chemical Biology, which produced innovative research for the American Cancer Society, including the effects of cigarette smoke on mice, and attracted millions of dollars in funding.

Back at USF Art shifted his focus from chemotherapy to cancer-causing metals. He found that workers in mines and refineries of various metals had higher than normal rates of cancer. Today, we take it for granted that environmental factors can cause cancer, but at that time it was a new concept that Art introduced. He called this new field of research, toxicology.

In 1970 Art was chosen as the U.S. member of an international committee on cancer research. In 1978 he helped revise the Mine Safety Health Act for the U.S. Secretary of Labor. In 1987 he became a consultant to the Environmental Protection Agency on the Clean Water Act. In 1992 he received the UCLA Alumni Award for Excellence in Professional Achievement. In 1994 the California State Senate designated Art's birthday, December 25th, "Arthur Furst, PhD day." He endowed a faculty research award at USF, and an undergraduate science scholarship has been established in his name by GNLD International, a food supplement company for whom he consulted. This year Stanford Medical School established the annual "Arthur Furst Lecture Series on Nutrition and Disease."

Art continued his work with students at USF long after his retirement in 1980. The research projects of his students have resulted in several papers published jointly with his students in a variety of scientific journals.

There is another side of Art Furst that few of us know about. Art is an avid folk dancer. His forté is Greek dancing, which he does at least once a week. He took a two-week "dancing" cruise through the Greek islands last summer. Art says he has no trouble dancing with the young people.

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