

AA Grapevine, December 1971

It is vital that we understand the full implications of anonymity for ourselves and for our Fellowship. The Grapevine presents here a nine-page section continuing the discussion of this most important subject

ANONYMITY

*A message from Bill,
delivered by Lois at the New York Intergroup
Dinner in celebration of his 36th anniversary*

MY DEAR FRIENDS:

Recently, an AA member sent me an unusual greeting which I would like to extend to you. He told me it was an ancient Arabian salutation. Perhaps we have no Arabian groups, but it still seems a fitting expression of how I feel for each of you. It says, "I salute you and thank you for your life."

My thoughts are much occupied these days with gratitude to our

Fellowship and for the myriad blessings bestowed upon us by God's Grace.

If I were asked which of these blessings I felt was most responsible for our growth as a fellowship and most vital to our continuity, I would say, "The concept of anonymity."

Anonymity has two attributes essential to our individual and collective survival: the spiritual and the practical.

On the spiritual level, anonymity demands the greatest discipline of which we are capable; on the practical level, anonymity has brought protection for the newcomer, respect and support of the world out-

side, and security from those of us who would use AA for sick and selfish purposes.

AA must and will continue to change with the passing years. We cannot, nor should we, turn back the clock. However, I deeply believe that the principle of anonymity must remain our primary and enduring safeguard. As long as we accept our sobriety in our traditional spirit of anonymity, we will continue to receive God's Grace.

And so — once more I salute you in that spirit, and again I thank you *for your lives.*

May God bless us all now, and forever.