

A Toast to Christopher Morley
The Canonical Conclave
Indianapolis, Indiana
April 26, 2025

Ira Brad Matetsky

Good evening. I would like to thank Steve Doyle and the planning committee for arranging today's outstanding Sherlockian event, and for inviting me to give this toast to the founder of the feast, Christopher Morley.

Today is all about scion societies. It has been written that Christopher Morley founded the very first Sherlockian society, with three friends at the age of 12. A veritable scion of four. Indeed, it is said that Morley started his first Sherlockian society even earlier than that, together with his two younger brothers, Felix and Frank.

In his adult life, Christopher Morley is more identified with BSI Central than with the scion societies that arose in its wake. But he always supported the Sherlockian groups that arose to promote friendship among Sherlockians in various parts of the country.

When I think of Christopher Morley, I think of his writings, but also, I think of friendship. I think of the societies and informal groups that he organized, often as pretexts for getting his friends together for lunch or some beverages and a good time. And of course, in particular of his pioneering role in developing a shared interest in the tales of Mr. Sherlock Holmes as a basis for community and camaraderie and scholarship.

It is no accident that Morley edited a collection that he entitled *Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson: A Textbook of Friendship*. Morley and we today celebrate the friendship of Holmes and Watson, but we also celebrate the hundreds of friendships and the thousands of friendly gatherings and good times that Morley's efforts have led to over the ensuing decades – not least through the scion societies we are here for today.

If it were not for Christopher Morley, we would not all have the pleasure of talking today and dining tonight, with the very special group of friends who fill this room, friends old and new.

And that, ladies and gentlemen, would be Morley wrong.