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In Memoriam

William Lyon Lowrie, M.D.

1896-1971

The following tribute was read by Dr. Richmond W. Smith, chairman, Department of Medicine, on behalf of the professional staff of Henry Ford Hospital, at a Memorial Service for Dr. Lowrie held in Buerki Auditorium of the Hospital February 11, 1971. Dr. Lowrie, who had served the Hospital and its patients for 49 years, died unexpectedly January 30. He was a consultant and retired chief of the Metabolism Division and was internationally known for his work in diabetes.

WE SEE his quick, light step, the perceptive glance and fleeting smile, his brief eruptive laugh of modest gaiety. A natural, easy manner and humility marked this gentle man. We perceive the quiet constancy of his life style, whether these cherished memories today take us to his home, to this Hospital, to the tennis court outside or to the theater. We hear his chosen words, few and soft, yet clearer now because we spoke before. High of intellect and in the qualities of upbringing and scholarship, he developed early a firm broad base of social concern. On this redoubt, a philosophic truce was made between his humanism and the intellectual discipline of his professional obligations. Keenly curious and cherishing more the written than the spoken word, he scanned the literature of science, seeking to determine its impact on the quality of life and on our social and political climate. As a learned, deft and kindly physician, he saw with quiet understanding the self-generating influence of science on biology and disease, and the parallel but awkward, blunted impact of technology on man and on the humanism of traditional medicine.

In searching for change, he sought liberation of spirit. When change was needed, he saw as inviolate the principle of individualism,—but only if this held a social conscience. Science and technology were not excused. And in his love of the performing arts, it might be said, he found the quin-



tescence of it all. For here was the liberation of spirit and the individualism with conscience, expressed in a collective endeavor.

Such was his mold, his style, his aspirations, his life as seen by those of us who were his professional colleagues. In Kathleen Jennison he found exemplification and love. For this man and wife there was double reward, through the sharing of a common search and the sharing of a common fulfillment.

In these days of social and political unrest, of corporate misadventure, of clamor and clawing for station and personal gain, and, for many, of cries for survival, thoughtful men and women of quiet voices and humility seem all too few. Surely, they are not the silent majority. They constitute a concerned, a committed and expressive minority, and William Lyon Lowrie was one among them.

For those of us who knew him as a colleague and friend, our lives are richer. We are privileged — and we are grateful.