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In memoriam: Robert C. Horn, Jr., M.D.



1913-1976

THE medical profession and more particularly the specialty of pathology and the Henry Ford Hospital suffered a great loss when Dr. Robert C. Horn, Jr. died on October 4, 1976. This was first apparent in the faces of the laboratory personnel on the sixth floor of Henry Ford Hospital who had come to respect and revere him but it quickly radiated throughout the hospital, Detroit, and the country. The response was not unexpected considering the role Dr. Horn had played in the function of so many medical organizations and particularly those connected with the field of pathology.

His many accomplishments may not be fully appreciated by the younger members of the Henry Ford Hospital medical staff and recent comers to the field of pathology. These are exemplified in his more than 160 scientific publications, his personal dissemination of medical knowledge and

wisdom to 350 or more doctors who pursued pathology as their medical speciality as well as countless physicians who received his guidance as part of their speciality training in other areas of medicine, and his dedicated service to and leadership of many medical organizations. All these were in addition to his everyday function as teacher, scientist, diagnostician, and chairman of the Department of Pathology at the Henry Ford Hospital.

He served as consultant to the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology from 1954 until his death, in a variety of capacities to the American Cancer Society, chairman of the Section of Pathology and Physiology of the AMA in 1962, and as chairman of the board of trustees of the Michigan Cancer Foundation in 1974. During the 15 years prior to his death he served the College of American Pathologists as vice speaker of the Assembly, secretary-treasurer, vice president, president-elect and president. His medical activities were not restricted to his speciality of Pathology. He was a member of the Halsted Society, the Detroit Academy of Medicine, and the Detroit Medical Club.

So often, one's accomplishments are not fully appreciated during a lifetime. This was not so in Dr. Horn's case. He had received the Alpha Omega Alpha Award, the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the Geisinger Memorial Hospital, The Alumni Achievement Award from Muhlenberg College, and was distinguished as pathologist of the year in 1976 by the College of American Pathologists and the American Society of Clinical Pathologists.

Those of us privileged to work closely with him will realize the greatest impact of his death, but even those who knew him for only brief periods of time will be affected, for his friendliness, warmth, honesty, and ability to

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communicate with his colleagues in a most sincere and humble fashion brought respect and reverence in an unbelievably short time.

Dr. Horn was born and raised in Allentown, Pennsylvania, but he came to regard Michigan as his home. His higher education was obtained at a number of schools: Muhlenberg College from which he received his bachelor of science degree and Yale University from which he received his M.D. degree. His medical career was continued at the Geisinger Hospital in Danville, Pennsylvania, where he interned and at Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center in New York where he received specialty training in general pathology with such noted men in the field as Drs. Oberling, von Glahn, Pappenheimer, Richter, and others.

Exposure to Dr. Arthur Purdy Stout during his general pathology training convinced Dr. Horn of the importance of surgical pathology, then in its infancy. This led him to obtain further training with Dr. Stout under whom he developed expertise in soft tissue tumors and diseases of the thyroid gland and gastrointestinal tract; areas to which he has contributed so much. Dr. Horn was instrumental in establishing surgical pathology at the University of Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia in 1943. He remained there for 12 years during which time his position was expanded to include general pathology. In November of 1955, he assumed the chairmanship of the Department of Pathology at

Henry Ford Hospital and actively served in that capacity until his death.

Dr. Horn's accomplishments were not confined to the medical field. This is attested to by the many friends he made outside of the medical profession and by the family which he and his wife, Dorothy, reared and guided to their success. The love and devotion of his family for him was obvious and expression of it could not have been more aptly stated than was done by his oldest son, Robert C. Horn, III. In accepting his father's award as pathologist of the year, he indicated that Dr. Horn had been "father of the year" for as long as he could remember. The strength and character of Dr. Horn are well portrayed in his surviving wife and three children and from them, we are sure, it will be reflected in future generations of the family. His oldest son is professor of political science at California State University — Northridge and his youngest son, Thomas, is a physician who has pursued the field of psychiatry. His daughter, Ethel, resides in Juneau, Alaska, as wife of Kim Smith, M.D., who is practicing family medicine.

Although his family and those of us who have known him personally will suffer the greatest loss by his death, let us not forget how fortunate and privileged we have been to have known and worked with him.

—Gerald Fine and
John W. Rebeck