

Walter Carl Klotz

July 27, 1875 — June 29, 1941

The sudden and unexpected death of Walter C. Klotz came as a shock to his professional colleagues and his many other friends. He passed away on June 29, 1941, at his home in New York at the age of sixty-five. His association with Cornell University Medical College began in 1926 as Director of the Clinic and Assistant Professor of Public Health and Preventive Medicine. With the amalgamation of the Medical College and the New York Hospital in 1932 he was appointed Director of the Out-Patient Service of the latter institution and continued in that position as well as in his professorship until his demise.

Dr. Klotz received his early education in the Friends Seminary in New York City. After attendance at Colgate University he studied medicine at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York, receiving his medical degree in 1898. There followed post-graduate study abroad and seven years of private practice in New York during which period he also served as assistant surgeon in the Roosevelt Hospital. From 1909 to 1926 his work was almost entirely in the field of tuberculosis and was largely of an administrative character. After three years as medical director and superintendent of the Vermont Sanitarium at Pittsford he served, during 1912, as industrial surgeon for the Phelps-Dodge Company at Douglas, Arizona. The years 1913 to 1918 were spent as resident surgeon-in-charge at the Barlow Sanitarium, Los Angeles, California. During this period he also held an instructorship in medicine in the Los Angeles Division of the University of California School of Medicine. In recognition of his extensive experience in the management of tuberculosis he received the appointment of Associate Medical Director of the Committee for Prevention of Tuberculosis in France (Rockefeller Foundation) and served in that country from June 1918 to October 1919. On his return he became Medical Director of the Blue Ridge Sanitarium, Charlottesville, Virginia, (1919-21) and also Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of Virginia. There then followed five years (1921-26) as Medical Officer-in-Charge, Veterans Hospital at Johnson City, Tennessee. On the basis of his now widely recognized ability in hospital management he was appointed in 1926 to the directorship of the Cornell Clinic and also to the staff of the Department of Public Health and Preventive Medicine as Assistant Professor with the purpose of promoting instruction in the preventive opportunities in clinical medicine.

He had a gift for friendship; always a delightful companion, genial, interesting, and well informed. His attitude toward his associates of whatever status was kindly and considerate. He exhibited a strong sense of duty and responsibility in his activities as administrator. Soon after assuming direction of the old Cornell pay clinic, he

organized the work on a more practical basis than had been the case theretofore. He gave constant thought to the clinic problems and discussed them daily with the doctors, social workers, and department heads. None felt any hesitancy in making suggestions and criticisms as these were received with cordiality and often led to thoughtful discussions. On occupancy of the new buildings in 1932, Dr. Klotz was confronted with a difficult problem in reorganizing the out-patient department of the New York Hospital, which was now an amalgamation of the old free clinic of the hospital and the Cornell pay clinic. He worked incessantly to perfect the executive machinery necessary to bring the greatly expanded space and facilities with its associated professional staff of several hundred physicians and nurses, many of whom did not know each other or what was expected of them, into a smoothly running organization. The occasional development of conflicting interests and demands on the part of the several clinical services was inevitable but he always tried to deal with these problems in a fair way and above all to act for the best interests of the whole organization both from the economic and efficiency standpoints. It may be truly said that under his direction the high standards of clinical care which have long characterized this out-patient service of the New York Hospital to the public, and which are widely recognized, have not only been maintained but have been greatly expanded in scope and usefulness: a notable achievement and a lasting memorial.

Dr. Klotz during the course of his career made a number of contributions to medical literature. Some of these articles were concerned with the diagnosis and management of tuberculosis cases; others with clinic organization. He was a member of the New York County and State Medical Societies and a fellow of the American Medical Association. He was also a fellow of the New York Academy of Medicine and of the American Public Health Association. Other memberships were in the American Clinical and Climatological Society, the National Tuberculosis Association, the Harvey Society, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the New York Tuberculosis and Health Association.

He is survived by his wife, the former Gertrude O. Whitehouse, by a brother and a sister, and by two sons and a daughter.