

Oscar Menderson Schloss

June 20, 1882 — October 13, 1952

Dr. Oscar Menderson Schloss did not awaken from his sleep on the morning of October 13, 1952. This peaceful death brought to an end 70 years of an active life and 47 years of a notable career in medicine.

Oscar Schloss was born in Cincinnati, Ohio on June 20, 1882 and he graduated from the The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in 1905. After three years of in-resident training at the Kings County Hospital and the New York Nursery and Child's Hospital, he embarked on a three-fold professional career of research worker, medical educator, and practicing pediatrician. It would be difficult to say in which of these fields he contributed most for he was pre-eminent in all.

Except for a span of two years (1922 and 1923) during which time Dr. Schloss occupied the chair of pediatrics at Harvard Medical School, his academic activities were centered in the Cornell University Medical College (1919 to 1952), the New York Nursery and Child's Hospital (up to 1932), and The New York Hospital (1932 to 1952). He served these institutions with distinction as professor and professor emeritus of pediatrics, and as pediatrician-in-chief, attending pediatrician, and consulting pediatrician. From 1919 to 1934 he headed the pediatric service and during these fifteen years there was a resurgence in the Department of Pediatrics at The New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center. This Department continued to gain renown under his wise leadership. When he relinquished the Headship of, but not his interest in, the Department in 1934, it was a simple matter to carry further the plans and policies which had been so successfully formulated under his direction. During the entire 33 years of his academic life, Dr. Schloss gave unsparingly of himself to students and staff alike. His skill as a teacher, his clinical acumen, and his integrity as an investigator aroused in them an admiration, respect and affection which were memorable. His colleagues sought him out for his wisdom and experience and they were always rewarded by his good and generous guidance.

This high regard and esteem were shared by his medical peers. Dr. Schloss was a member of the American Pediatric Society (president, 1932-33), the Society for Pediatric Research, The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Society for Clinical Investigation, the Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine, the American Society for Study of Allergy, the American Society for Serology and Hematology, New York Academy of Medicine, and other scientific societies. In 1925 he gave a Harvey Lecture on "The Intestinal Absorption of Antigenic Protein" and he was elected to honorary membership in that Society. He served as an editor of the American Journal of Diseases

of Children from 1924 to 1950. These honors were accorded to him in recognition of his many fundamental contributions to medicine in the fields of infantile diarrhea and dehydration, eczema, ketosis, and others. His pioneer work on food allergy presented in 1912 initiated the beginning of a new era in this field in the United States.

In his research work, Dr. Schloss revealed the same humility and modesty, integrity and honesty, self-criticism and keen judgment as in his contacts with students and staff. His mastery of the written word is reflected in his publications as was his mastery of the spoken word in his lectures and ward rounds. The conclusions reported in his scientific papers remain as valid today as when they first appeared.

In medical practice, Dr. Schloss was equally revered by his patients. His love of children, his sympathetic understanding of parents, his rapport with referring physicians, together with his great store of basic knowledge and broad experience, were some of the attributes which made him a great practitioner and a superb consultant.

Oscar Schloss is survived by his devoted wife, Rowena Farmer, and one son, Oscar Menderson. His students, friends, colleagues, and patients share with them a great sorrow in his inestimable loss. His gentle yet forceful spirit led with a kindly and just light all who sought his wise counsel and advice.

S. Z. Levine