

May G. Wilson

July 1, 1891 — June 14, 1971

Dr. May G. Wilson, age 80, professor of clinical pediatrics, emeritus, at Cornell University Medical College and consultant in pediatrics at the New York Hospital, died June 14, 1971, in Falmouth, Massachusetts.

To the thousands who were patients in Dr. Wilson's clinic at the New York Nursery and Child's Hospital and the New York Hospital during the Years 1916 to 1964, and to those interested physicians and students both in the United States and abroad, her name will be forever synonymous with rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease.

She was fortunate in having continued good health until the last few months of her life; her quiet and deep enjoyment of a lovely home and garden in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, was enhanced by affection for and from friends and family.

As a native New Yorker, she was educated at Hunter College and Cornell University Medical College and interned at Syracuse Memorial Hospital. After an initial period of about five years in general pediatrics, Dr. Wilson dedicated her career to the care of children who were afflicted with rheumatic fever or rheumatic heart disease.

She observed that this disease often occurred in more than one child in the same family. With unusual foresight and imagination, she organized a unique clinic for long-term follow-up of these patients and their families. The Commonwealth Fund and the Helen Hay Whitney Foundation enabled her to carry out her long-term projects. During almost half a century of devoted service and investigation, she made the following major contributions:

- A. The importance of heredity in the etiology of rheumatic fever. Recognition of early stage of rheumatic carditis. Initiated the early short-term corticosteroid therapy to prevent or minimize the damage to the heart. Understanding of the natural history of the disease.
- B. Author of two books on rheumatic fever and heart disease, which are being used as reference texts in most major medical centers around the world, and numerous publications on the subjects in various medical journals.
- C. Challenging and dynamic teacher.

She was a member of many distinguished medical societies including the American Academy of Sciences, American Heart Association, American Rheumatism Association, American Pediatric Society, Society for Pediatric Research, and the Harvey Society.

Dr. Wilson's death has deprived the medical profession of a courageous and original investigator and a superb clinician.

W. W. McCrory, M.D.