

George Morris Lewis

June 11, 1899 — February 27, 1966

Dr. George Lewis died in The New York Hospital, February 27, 1966, at the age of sixty-seven.

He was born in Elkhorn, Manitoba, Canada, on June 11, 1899. His father John Lewis who was a Baptist minister and his mother Ada Elizabeth (Yarwood) Lewis were born in Wales and migrated to rural Western Canada just before the turn of the twentieth century.

George attended the local country schools. At the age of 15 he contracted poliomyelitis. When the acute symptoms subsided he continued his education and received an M.D. degree from the University of Alberta in 1925. In 1965 the Medical Alumni Association of the University of Alberta conferred upon George Lewis the outstanding Achievement Award for 1965 in recognition of distinguished service to medicine.

Dr. Lewis became a naturalized United States citizen in 1931.

After graduation from medical school, George Lewis came to New York City and served his internship at the Skin and Cancer Hospital from 1925 to 1926. He then joined the dermatology staff at the New York Post Graduate Medical School and Hospital to continue his dermatological studies. At the same time he was associated in office practice with Dr. George Miller MacKee. Dr. Lewis remained with the Skin and Cancer Unit until 1940. It was at this institution that he carried on extensive clinical and laboratory research in dermatological mycology.

In 1932 he joined the Cornell Clinic Medical Staff. However his major teaching, research, and clinical activities were at the Skin and Cancer Unit until 1940 when he was offered and accepted the Directorship of the Department of Dermatology at The New York Hospital and Cornell University Medical College. By successive promotions he became Clinical Professor of Medicine (Dermatology) at Cornell University Medical College and Attending Physician (Dermatology) at the New York Hospital. He retired in 1962, and he was appointed Emeritus Clinical Professor of Medicine and Consultant Physician at the Hospital.

Dr. Lewis completely reorganized the department of Dermatology at The New York Hospital. With the help of Miss Mary Hopper, a mycological laboratory and clinic second to none were established as well as a dermatopathology department and a clinical photographic unit. A dermatological library was put together, and the physical therapy and surgical units were modernized. A dermatology residency program was instituted, and the teaching of dermatology updated.

Dr. Lewis was Consultant Dermatologist to the Memorial and Polyclinic Hospitals in New York City and to Vassar Brothers Hospital in Poughkeepsie. Considering his busy schedule and his many activities and interests, one could say that Dr. Lewis was a prolific writer. He wrote and published over one hundred articles which appeared in various medical journals, and two books, each of which went into several editions. In addition, he was a member of the editorial board of the *Archives of Dermatology and Syphilology* for about 10 years, *The Journal for Investigative Dermatology* and the *New York State Journal of Medicine*.

Early in his dermatological career Dr. Lewis saw the need to develop and expand the field of mycology amongst dermatologists. With the collaboration of Miss Mary Hopper, Dr. Lewis developed an excellent mycology laboratory where extensive clinical research was carried out and where fungous diseases were diagnosed and treated more successfully than ever before. They were the first to recognize the characteristic clinical lesions caused by *T. rubrum* infection. The accumulation of clinical and laboratory material pertaining to fungous infections was published in their first practical monograph for dermatologists on fungous diseases. *Introduction to Medical Mycology* was first published in 1939. There were four editions altogether published in 1939, 1943, 1948, and 1958 with various collaborators.

During many years of teaching elementary dermatology to third and fourth year medical students at Cornell Medical College, Dr. Lewis became aware of the fact that a special type of textbook was required to augment the lectures, the clinical discussions, and the bedside teaching. He wrote a simple practical textbook on dermatology especially useful to medical students and general practitioners. *Practical Dermatology* was first published in 1952 and a second edition in 1959. The third edition will soon be published with Dr. Clayton E. Wheeler as co-author.

Dr. Lewis was extremely active in local, regional, national, and international dermatological societies. He was a member of both the New York and the Manhattan Dermatological Societies and served both of these as Secretary and President. Later he was elected to honorary membership to both societies. He was a fellow of the New York Academy of Medicine and became chairman of the Membership Committee. He was also Secretary and Chairman of its section on Dermatology. He was a member of the New York State Medical Society, the Mycological Society of America, the Society for Investigative Dermatology, and the American Medical Association. He was elected to the American Dermatological Association in 1937 and was elected President in 1962. He was a member, secretary-treasurer, and president of the American Board of Dermatology. He served as secretary-treasurer for eight years during which time the Board had the responsibility of examining more candidates and setting up more training centers than in any other eight year period. It was a colossal task, and Dr. Lewis handled all of the assignments

with great efficiency and tact. He became a Fellow of the American Academy of Dermatology in 1938 when it first started. Each year he served as a teacher, lecturer, panelist, exhibitor, group leader, and in 1956 he was elected President. He was a member of the Atlantic Dermatological Conference and attended the International Dermatological Society meeting in Washington in 1963. He was an honorary member of the British, Canadian, and Venezuelan Dermatological Societies and a corresponding member of the Swedish Dermatological Society.

George Lewis had other interests besides dermatology. He read the Bible extensively and was an expert on Abraham Lincoln, who was his great hero. He never missed an opportunity to visit and contemplate at the great Lincoln Memorial in Washington. He loved birds and took pains to provide housing and food for them throughout the year. He followed the stock market and devised elaborate charts of his own. He had a modest collection of jade, and he always carried a piece of jade in his pocket. He knew a good deal of the history of American dermatology.

When George died, there passed from our midst a fine Christian gentleman who was all man and who displayed great courage in overcoming physical and environmental handicaps to become one of the truly great American Dermatologists of our era. He was a good doctor with great patience and compassion and Possessed superior intellectual curiosity and attainments. He was a seeker of the truth who unselfishly shared his knowledge with his students and colleagues. He was an inspiring teacher and a forthright thinker with very definite ideas of his own. He took nothing for granted and walked a straight line all his life. His unremitting candor and his firm stand for ethical principles and for what he believed to be the truth, gained for him the respect and admiration of his contemporaries. George was a simple, reasonable, humble, and charitable man who loved his work. He gave unstintingly of his time and energy to improve the status of dermatology and to guide young men who chose medicine as a profession.

Dermatology has lost a fine and devoted physician, and his family lost a fine and, a good husband and father. Those of us who knew George feel a great personal loss. He leaves behind a great heritage and monument in the body of his great scientific and spiritual contributions.

Anthony C. Cipollaro