

## Obituary

# FRANK N. ALLAN

1899-1977

*David P. Boyd, M.D., Boston*

Dr. Frank N. Allan, internationally known physician in the field of diabetes, died at his home in West Newton on Tuesday, July 12, 1977. Dr. Allan was born in Proton, Ontario, December 26, 1899. He was graduated in Medicine from the University of Toronto in 1922 and received the degree of M.D., Cum Laude, in 1928. His thesis was on carbohydrate metabolism and diabetes and won the Starr Silver Medal. Dr. Allan was a senior medical student when 14-year-old Leonard Thompson was admitted to his ward. Leonard was the first patient ever to receive insulin for diabetes. Thus began a lifelong dedication to the study and treatment of this disease.

Following three years of graduate work in physiology and medicine at the University of Toronto and at the Mayo Clinic, Dr. Allan was appointed to the permanent staff of the Mayo Clinic and to the Faculty of the University of Minnesota. He was soon made head of the diabetes service. With Russell M. Wilder, Dr. Allan reported the first clinical case of hyperinsulinism due to islet cell tumor of the pancreas. That Frank should himself succumb to cancer of the pancreas recalls Osler's dictum that physicians are prone to become victims of diseases in which they are interested.

After seven years in Rochester, Dr. Allan came to the Lahey Clinic in 1932 to help organize its Medical Department. During World War II, he initiated intensive three-month courses in Internal Medicine for groups of medical officers assigned in rotation to the Lahey Clinic. At the time of his retirement from the Lahey Clinic, in 1965, he was Chairman of the Medical Department. During his active practice years, Dr. Allan was on the staffs of the New England Baptist Hospital, the New England Deaconess Hospital, and Boston City Hospital. Subsequently, he was on the honorary staffs of these hospitals and was Associate Clinical Professor of Medicine at Boston University. Frank Allan's publications had reached almost 100 at the time he left practice. He was the founding editor



Dr. Allan

of DIABETES and, in recent years, Advisory Editor. He planned and edited the *Diabetes Guidebook for Physicians*. One of Dr. Allan's favorite assignments was the Editorial Board of the *New England Journal of Medicine*. He was appointed in 1952 and remained until 1965, when he became Deputy Editor of this famed journal.

Honors and awards came early and late: Alpha Omega Alpha; Sigma Xi; honorary membership in the Canadian Diabetes Association; the National Academy of Medicine of Argentina; Joslin Medal and Presidency of the New England Diabetes Association

(1952); Presidency (1952) of the American Diabetes Association and the Banting Medal (1953); Chairman, Executive Committee, Greater Boston Diabetes Society (1961); membership in many learned and scientific societies. These included American College of Physicians, American Society for Clinical Investigation, the Endocrine Society, American Society for Experimental Pathology, and numerous others.

Of special interest is how Dr. Allan handled his "retirement." In 1966, he was appointed a special consultant to the Food and Drug Administration, requiring his presence in Washington much of the time. He commuted to Boston for long weekends. At this time, he joined the teaching faculty of Georgetown University Medical School.

Long an international figure, Frank's scope and influence widened even more as he made repeated trips abroad. It is fitting that he should be one of the relatively few physicians listed in *Who's Who in the World*. He came to believe that the good physician could be the ideal ambassador and bring fellowship where diplomats and politicians had failed. Dr. Allan was invited by the Agency for International Development to organize a symposium that had been requested by CENTO (The Central Treaty Organization). He visited Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey to study usage patterns of antimicrobial drugs. From this investigation, a CENTO seminar was prepared and took place in

Ismir, Turkey, in 1975. A valuable publication resulted. In addition to organizing and guiding the conference, Dr. Allan spoke, as he had repeatedly, on the serious problem of multiple names for drugs and the compelling need for a uniform world-wide nomenclature. Many other publications came from his work in Washington. The ethics implied in the use of new drugs concerned him constantly. His background was a lifetime spent in medical practice oriented toward the individual, and his early publications included papers on religion and philosophy in healing.

In 1934, Frank married Lillian Christie, of Brantford, Ontario, and their life together was a joyful one. They were blessed with one daughter—Margaret Christie, now Mrs. W. Stephen Piper, of Washington, D.C. Frank's private life was as pure and purposeful as his English prose and diction. He was always impeccably dressed, even when skating, which he loved. Much of his time at home was given to Boston's Old South Church. An impressive man, he made you want to stretch to your full length, as Emerson said of Margaret Fuller.

Few people have a greater claim on our enduring remembrance than Frank N. Allan. In addition to his greatness and his extraordinary capacity for effective action, he was above all the gentlest of gentlemen. He leaves behind, I am sure, in Landor's words, "the love of friends and not a single foe."

## BOOK REVIEW

*ARGON LASER PHOTOCOAGULATION*, by *H. Christian Zweng and Hunter J. Little, M.D.*, in collaboration with *Arthur Vassiliades, Ph.D.* 319 pages, 401 illustrations; graphs and drawings, \$42.50. St. Louis, C. V. Mosby Company, 1977.

In this well-written book, the authors have fulfilled their intent—to share an extensive experience with argon-laser photocoagulation, from May, 1969, to February, 1976. The early chapters include a clear explanation of terminology used in describing light energy and lasers, a comparison of commercially available laser photocoagulators, and a summary of the histology of laser-produced chorioretinal lesions.

An excellent chapter follows on the preparation of the patient for therapy, stressing the value of having a well-informed patient.

Next is a chapter on how the authors document the ocular findings and their laser treatment, followed by individual chapters on treatment techniques for each of a variety of retinal disorders.

Chapter 14 is devoted to diabetic retinopathy and chapter 21 to complications, most of which have been encountered in the treatment of diabetic retinopathy. In these two chapters, the authors meticulously describe their treatment techniques, precisely illustrated by both drawings and fundus photographs. This book is not intended to critically compare results of argon-laser and xenon-arc photocoagulation, but rather to allow the reader to share a large body of clinical experience with argon-laser photocoagulation through a slit-lamp delivery system. Anyone interested in performing argon-laser photocoagulation will benefit from these authors' experiences. EDWARD OKUN, M.D.