

## Ralph Moore Tovell

1901-1967



DR. RALPH MOORE TOVELL died at Hartford Hospital on January 7, 1967, after a long illness. With his passing, one of the great pioneers of anesthesiology was laid to rest; and laid to rest, surely, with the certain satisfaction of knowing that the efforts of an entire professional lifetime had contributed pricelessly toward the development of a burgeoning young specialty into an established medical discipline.

Ralph Tovell was born in Sydenham, Ontario, in 1901, the son of a physician. He was educated at Queens University in Kingston, Ontario, where he received his A.B. and

M.D. degrees. He served an internship at the Kingston General Hospital, and went on to further training in obstetrics at the Lying-In Hospital, New York City. Then, in 1929, he entered the largely unknown specialty of anesthesia as one of the first residents in this country, accepting a post as Fellow in the Section of Anesthesia at the Mayo Foundation. He received the degree of M.S. (Anesthesia) from the Graduate School of the University of Minnesota, and remained at the Mayo Clinic as an Associate in the Section of Anesthesia under his teacher and lifelong friend, Dr. John Lundy, until 1936, when he was called to

Hartford Hospital to be Director of, and develop, the Department of Anesthesia. How well he succeeded is attested to by the fact that his Department became internationally famous and has trained well over two hundred anesthesiologists.

Progress depends, among other things, upon the chance that the right man is available at the right time and in the right place to accomplish what it is necessary to accomplish. Ralph Tovell was such a man. He helped to nourish and mature the American Society of Anesthesiologists, and became its President in 1941. He was a founder, for many years a Director, and later President, of the American Board of Anesthesiology. He was one of the founders, for many years an Associate Editor, and then Editor, of ANESTHESIOLOGY. He was a leading light in the Academy of Anesthesiology, and served as its President in 1955. He was one of the indefatigable workers who helped to create the Section of Anesthesiology of the American Medical Association, and was Chairman of the Section in 1948.

He became a naturalized citizen of the United States in December of 1940, and in 1942, he entered the United States Army and served as Senior Consultant in Anesthesiology in the European Theater throughout World War II, being discharged with the rank of Colonel in 1945. His proven abilities during military service led to his appointment after the War as Consultant in Anesthesiology for the Veterans Administration Central Office; as Chairman of its Board of Chief Consultants; and as Consultant in Anesthesiology to the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

His work during the War, and his services to his specialty throughout his career, earned him many justified honors, including the Bronze Star, the Medaille de la Reconnaissance Francaise, the Legion of Merit, Frederic

Hewitt Lecturer at the Royal College of Surgeons in London, Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine (London) and Distinguished Service Award of the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Honorary Fellow of the Association of Anaesthetists of Great Britain and Ireland, Fellow of the Faculty of Anesthesia of the Royal College of Surgeons, and the Merit Award of the Horace Wells Club of Connecticut.

For those of us who had the privilege of studying under and working with Ralph, the most vivid memories will be the boundless energy of his mind, the cheerfulness and honor of his friendships, and his unostentatious love of his family.

He had the imagination to envision, the daring to act, and the ability to accomplish. And what a very great deal he did accomplish! He leaves as a heritage—among many other things—a Department of 26 trained anesthesiologists, some 150 medical writings, and a totally-equipped medical specialty which he was instrumental in founding and developing.

He leaves a legion of friends, here and abroad. They came to Hartford to visit him from South Africa and Rochester, Minnesota, and Australia, and Wheeling, West Virginia, and Sweden and Kingston, Ontario, and Washington, D. C.; and they were always introduced with the approbation, "This is my friend, ———." And they were. They were all his friends. They will miss him sorely.

And he also leaves the family from which he derived such pleasure and of which he was so quietly proud: his wife, Bally; his son, Arnold; and his daughter, Mary. To them, ANESTHESIOLOGY extends its deepest sympathies.

DAVID M. LITTLE, JR., M.D.