MAXWELL MYER WINTROBE

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Dr Maxwell Myer Wintrobe (October 27, 1901-December 9, 1986) was an Austrian-born physician who was a 20th century authority in the medical field of hematology.

Wintrobe was born in Austria .He attended the University of Manitoba from the early age of fifteen, where he graduated in 1921 and obtained his M.D. in 1926. He obtained a PhD at Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1929. His thesis, The Erythrocyte in Man (1930), represented a review of world literature and of his own studies in that field.

He became a hematologist before the discipline of hematology existed. While at Tulane, he developed the now-famous Wintrobe Hematocrit Tube.

He realized that there were no published, reliable, normal blood values to use in clinical practice. He was the first to document statistically normal values in adults and children.In New Orleans, Wintrobe pioneered new ways of measuring the hematocrit, including what are now known as Wintrobe indices: mean cell volume, mean cell hemoglobin, and mean cell hemoglobin concentration, all quantitative measures of the red blood cell population (Wintrobe 1932). Much of this work continued in Hopkins and Utah, where he also worked on pernicious anemia, copper metabolism and Wilson's disease, sickle-cell disease and other anemias.

Wintrobe was the principal editor of Clinical Hematology, which first appeared in 1942 and is in its eleventh edition (Greer et al. as of 2003), still bearing his name. His scientific achievements are recorded in more than 400 publications. His Clinical Hematology, first published in 1942 and currently in its eighth edition, remains a prototype of excellence and for many years stood alone as the premier text in his chosen field.

In 1943 Max Wintrobe became the founding chairman of the Department of Medicine at the University of Utah—a post he filled with great energy and ability until 1967. From that time until his death he continued an active and productive career at Utah as Distinguished Professor.

He was part of the team that pioneered the use of chemotherapy in cancer (Goodman et al. 1946). He was one of the editors of the first edition (1950) of Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine. His twenty-five years of participation in the work of the Research Grants Division of NIH began in 1949 and included four years on the Council of the Institute of Arthritis and Metabolic Diseases, four years on the Allergy and Infectious Disease Council, and service on the Study Sections of Biochemistry and Hematology (including chairmanship of the latter) and on a variety of NIH committees with special charges.

In Salt Lake City he led research in hereditary and metabolic disorders (1945-1973) and cardiovascular research (1969-1973). He retired officially in 1965, but remained in function until 1973 (Valentine 1990). In that year he was elected to the National Academy of Sciences.

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In 1980 he published Blood, pure and eloquent, and in 1985 appeared Hematology, the Blossoming of a Science. Both works are historical overviews of his field.

His many other responsibilities included consultantships to the Army, the Atomic Energy Commission, and the World Health Organization; chairmanship of the Advisory Committee of the Leukemia Society; and nine years in various capacities with the American Medical Association's Council on Drugs.

He died of heart failure in 1986 at the age of 85, ending six decades of outstanding clinical research and teaching.

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