

WILLIAM F. HAMILTON

William Ferguson Hamilton was born in Tombstone, Arizona, March 8, 1893, and died in Augusta, Georgia, December 18, 1964. He graduated from Pomona College in 1917 and, after two years of army service, received his Ph.D. in zoology at the University of California in 1921. His academic affiliations included one year as zoology Instructor at Texas, two as Instructor in physiology at Yale, nine years at Louisville (Assistant Professor to Professor) and two years at George Washington before coming to The Medical College of Georgia in 1934 as Professor and Chairman of physiology (and, until 1942, pharmacology). In 1960 he became Emeritus Professor.

His early research dealt with animal behavior, and while at Louisville he made significant contributions to sensory physiology, particularly vision. Later from Louisville appeared the first of the "Studies on the Circulation" which continued under various titles to the present (one still in press). As a student of hemodynamics, his name is universally associated with leading methods for measurement of both pressure and flow; the Hamilton metal membrane manometer and the Stewart-Hamilton indicator dilution technique. With H. G. Barbour he also contributed the falling drop method for specific gravity of body fluids. But methods were never an end in themselves - only their use to increase the understanding of physiological functions and regulations.

As a class teacher he was at his best with small groups of students, and his insistence on achievable goals led to the production of the "Text-book of Human Physiology", an early "short" text. As a research teacher, his stimulation has led to a series of collaborative research papers covering some forty years.

Among many honors he listed the Connor lectureship of the American Heart Association in 1953 and its Gold Heart Award in 1958; the Silver Heart of the Georgia Heart Association; the Gairdner Foundation Award in 1960; and the Modern Medicine Award in 1960. He served terms on several review boards, including the N.I.H. Physiology Study Section and that of the Life Insurance Medical Research Fund. In the American Heart Association he was a founder and first chairman of its Basic Science Council.

Dr. Hamilton's scientific life was very closely bound to the American Physiological Society, which he joined in 1924 and whose meetings he attended faithfully for forty years. He served the Society in various official capacities. He was a member of the long term council of the war years, 1942-49 and became President-Elect in 1954. His chief love was the publications, for which he served on the journal Editorial Boards from 1940 to 1958 and on the Board of Publications Trustees from 1951 to 1954 and 1957 to 1959. He was a leader in the successful deal for the purchase of what is now Beaumont House (Headquarters of the Federation), and in the unsuccessful effort to maintain the trusteeship control of publication matters. As Section Editor of the Circulation Section of the Handbook of Physiology, he gave every chapter of the three volumes his close editorial attention, from author invitation to

completed text, and had finished this conscientious labor only days before his death.

Other services to the Society have included the organization of the second Fall Meeting, 1949, an active recent role in the Visiting Scientist Program, and collaboration with Dr. Dill in the search for opportunities for senior physiologists.

But it is in the scientific sessions of the Society that his absence will be most keenly felt. Through his forty years of membership his attendance regularly spanned the entire meeting and included more complete sessions of ten-minute papers than most of the rest of us cared for. At the 1964 Spring Meeting he was still a very lively contributor to the discussions, with congratulation and encouragement where it was deserved, criticism of unworthy efforts, and frequent suggestions for extension of reported work.

The Circulation Section of the Society will feel the bereavement most intimately. Dr. Hamilton was one of the original ten who arranged for the formation of the group and was a member of the Steering Committee which kept interest alive during the meetingless war years. He was a formal participant in many meetings and was ever a staunch supporter of the group's basic principle of free and fair discussion of issues. He will be missed sorely indeed and could ask no greater memorial than the perpetuation of these things for which he stood.

Philip Dow

