

Obituary

British Heart Journal, 1974, 36, 608.

Paul Dudley White

Dr. Paul Dudley White, American physician and cardiac specialist, died on 31 October 1973.

Dr. Paul Dudley White lived intensively as a cardiologist, closing a meteoric career at the age of 87. Working from 1911 to 1913 with a Sheldon travelling fellowship, he studied in University College Hospital medical school, London, and in that period he worked with Sir Thomas Lewis and Sir James Mackenzie. From 1914 to 1916 he served in the British Expeditionary Force in France and later in 1917 with the American Force in Macedonia. On his return to the Massachusetts General Hospital in 1919, Dr. White continued his practice in cardiology and at intervals travelled widely. His work in consulting cardiological practice and his output of clinical research were of phenomenal energy. In 1931 his well-known book *Heart Disease* was published. Revised and reissued during the following 20 years, this gained worldwide acceptance. Some of his publications were in collaboration with a number of British cardiologists and were published in the *British Heart Journal* in 1939, 1940, and 1943. Travelling far afield, and becoming equally well-known as a writer on cardiological themes, Paul White became Chairman of the American Mission to Czechoslovakia and later also of a mission to Greece and Italy. There were also visits to India and Pakistan as well as to the U.S.S.R. in addition to other centres, and there can be few countries he had not visited. In 1948 he became president of the International Society of Cardiology and was naturally acclaimed among Western cardiologists when he presided at the first World Congress of Cardiology in Paris in 1950. Recognizing the vital development of cardiological science, he took

part in the International Foundation of Cardiology in 1954. Subsequently he visited many countries, helping to found institutes of cardiology and to lecture or foster development in very widespread activities. No appraisal of the memorable work achieved by Dr. White is complete without mentioning the occasion when he was confronted by the sudden cardiac illness of President Eisenhower. This occurred in December 1955. To the press and the politicians in Washington he first gave an abstracted impression and a professional demeanour; he had the apparent inability to posture in the spotlight and he plainly showed utter ignorance of political duplicity. As Paul White emerged as a public figure before the press he gave honest answers to questioners outraged by honesty because such reporters might often only expect half-truths at best.

Pursuing his active life, White seemed never to relax, maintaining his travelling, and even in his later age he was welcomed as a guest of the Chinese Medical Association and made a 12-day visit. No important activities in the long life of Dr. White should fail to recall his insistence upon the essential principles of health. Demonstrating that physical exercise was important, he once walked 7 miles from the headquarters of the American Heart Association in New York to La Guardia airport. His slender frame and light weight indicated his very frequent cycling exercise. He practised the important principles of 'walk more, eat less, sleep more'. Lastly may be quoted the advice he often gave to Americans: he warned them that most people take a holiday from exercise between the age of 18 and 30. Said he, 'They pay for it for the rest of their lives.'

K. Shirley Smith



Paul Dudley White.

K S Smith

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