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The American Journal of
PATHOLOGY

January 1971 • Volume 62, Number 1

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The death on April 8, 1970 of Howard T. Karsner at the age of 91 marks the passing of one of the last of a small and distinguished group of pathologists who deserve to be characterized as giants of their time.

Born in Philadelphia in 1879, he was graduated from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine in 1903. He served as resident physician at the Philadelphia General Hospital between 1903 and 1905, as resident physician in the Philadelphia Municipal Hospital for Contagious Disease between 1905 and 1907, as extern in pathology in hospitals in Vienna and Berlin during 1907–1908, and as a demonstrator in pathology at the University of Pennsylvania between 1907 and 1911.

Dr. Karsner became a pathologist at a time when most of his contemporaries were morbid anatomists. This was a time when the autopsy room was virtually the only place in which, and the scalpel and microscope virtually the only instruments by which, the pathologist conducted his research. It is apparent from his bibliography that Dr. Karsner was one of the few of his contemporaries in the first decade of this century who appreciated sufficiently the limitations of the autopsy room to turn to animal experimentation whereby, under controlled conditions, he could study the relationship between disturbed structure and disturbed function.

His earliest publications, beginning in 1907, included reports of experimental studies of such diverse phenomena as anaphylactic shock, embolism, thrombosis, infarction, hepatic necrosis and toxic nephrosis. The importance of these studies lies in part in the new knowledge disclosed and in part in the interest generated among pathologists in the employment of a relatively new research methodology.

It was because of his interest in research, and competence as an experimentalist that Professor Councilman in 1911 invited Karsner to join his department at Harvard. It was there that he introduced, with others, a course in experimental pathology in the undergraduate curriculum. In the spring of 1912 Karsner gave the following description of this innovation in the teaching of pathology:

> The course included 80 experiments employing physiological, bacteriological, gross and minute anatomical, chemical and surgical procedures to clarify the causes, course, outcome and tissue changes occurring in the disease conditions studied in the regular course. The experiments were performed by groups of from three to five in a well-equipped laboratory of experimental pathology and then, in a side room, demonstrated to the entire class in groups of ten. The course was closely correlated with the lectures and demonstrations in pathological histology and gross morbid anatomy and continually emphasized the clinical applications of the laboratory studies of diseased function and tissue.

In addition to his influence on research in pathology, as an early exponent of the experimental method, there was the influence he wielded as an officer of various national societies of pathologists in the formulation of their scientific programs. For thirty years as secretary of the American Association of Pathologists and Bacteriologists, he influenced the content of the scientific programs of that organization more than any other one person. Any participant whose observations were inadequately controlled or whose interpretations were not justified by the data presented could count on having the matter brought to his attention.

He played a similar, although less extended, role in the American Society for Experimental Pathology. He also found time to serve as Chairman of the Section on Pathology and Physiology of the American Medical Association, as Chairman of the Committee on Pathology and Chairman of the Division of Medical Sciences of the National Research Council, as President of the American Section of the International Society for Geographic Pathology, as Chairman of the Scientific Advisory Board of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, and as Research Advisor to the Surgeon General of the United States Navy. It is interesting to note that he served in his last capacity between ages 70 and 80.

For fifty years, Dr. Karsner was consistently and effectively concerned with the improvement in undergraduate and graduate medical education, particularly as it concerned the discipline of pathology.

It was his identification with the dynamic reorientation of teaching pathology at Harvard Medical School that led to an invitation in 1914 to come to Western Reserve in Cleveland as Chairman of the Depart-

ment of Pathology. It was there during the decade after World War I that his success in developing an outstanding department caused the Rockefeller Foundation to underwrite the construction at that Medical School of the Institute of Pathology which was, and still is, a monument to his vision as a teacher and investigator.

Students who graduated from Western Reserve between 1914 and 1950, and the house officers who trained under him during this period, remember Dr. Karsner as one of the most effective and memorable of all of their teachers.

He was a hard taskmaster who demanded much and gave much. One of his outstanding attributes as a teacher was his insistence that the student learn how to collect information in a complete, accurate and orderly manner, that he be able to transmit it lucidly and precisely to others, and that he not confuse facts observed with opinions derived from them.

Between 1925 and 1950 the education of many thousands of medical students throughout the English-speaking world was enhanced by their use of his textbook *Human Pathology*, which went through eight editions during this period. As one of the early and long-time members of the National Board of Medical Examiners and one of the founders and long-time members of the American Board of Pathology, he contributed importantly to the evaluation of educational programs in both undergraduate and graduate pathology.

As might be expected, he was the recipient of many honors during his lifetime, including the William Wood Gerhard Medal of the Philadelphia Pathological Society, the Centenniel Award of Northwestern University, the Gold-Headed Cane of the American Association of Pathologists and Bacteriologists, and the Captain Robert Dexter Conrad Award of the United States Navy.

Here was a man whose promise of accomplishment brought him to national notice at age 32, who soon thereafter achieved national and, subsequently, international preeminence as a teacher and a scientist, and who continued in that role until his retirement at age 80. He is assured of that special immortality with which all great teachers are endowed—he will live on indefinitely in his students and succeeding generations of their students, all of whom will be better teachers and scientists by reason of this heritage.

Alan R. Moritz, MD

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