AN APPRECIATION OF
MARION HERBERT BARKER

August 20, 1899—August 14, 1947

Death is rarely a welcome caller at any door, and there are occasions when the visit is, in every sense, untimely. Death came in this unseasonable way to Dr. Barker on August 14th at the age of forty seven, just as he had concluded his ward rounds for the day—with other days and years of clinical work and teaching prospectively awaiting his sympathetic attention. Life ended while many studies were still unfinished, to the prosecution of which he would have brought insight and zeal.

In the death of Dr. Barker, the faculty of Northwestern University Medical School has lost a stimulating teacher of unusual ability, an enthusiastic and productive worker in the field of clinical research. His death is a loss to medical science, and brings to his friends a sincere and deep feeling of personal loss.

Marion Herbert Barker was born August 20, 1899, at Vilisca, Iowa. Following his undergraduate work at the University of Minnesota, he entered Rush Medical College of the University of Chicago where he graduated in 1926 and began a two-year internship at Wesley Memorial Hospital. From Chicago he went to Boston for a two-year residency at the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital and the Children’s Hospital. He then returned to Northwestern University for two more years of graduate study. He received his Master of Science degree in Physiology in 1930, and began his teaching career at the University as a Clinical Assistant in Medicine, continuing through the various ranks to that of Associate Professor.

During World War I, he enlisted in the United States Marines. At the onset of World War II, he offered his services at once, was commissioned a Lieutenant Colonel in the Medical Corps and assigned to the Northwestern University Unit. He was sent overseas in December, 1942, and was later promoted to Colonel and made consultant for the Allied Forces in the Mediterranean Theatre. In 1945, he was awarded the Legion of Merit, the citation reading “for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services in the investigation of infectious hepatitis.”

At the time of his death he was Associate Professor of Medicine at Northwestern, Attending Physician at Passavant Memorial Hospital, member of the American Medical Association and a certified licentiate in Internal Medicine and Cardiology. He was a member of the Chicago Society of Internal Medicine, of the Chicago Institute of Medicine, of the Central Clinical Research Club, the Chicago Society of Medical History, the American Heart Association, and Chairman of the Peripheral Vascular Section of the latter Society. He was a founding member of the American Society for the Study of Atherosclerosis, Fellow of the College of Physicians, member of the Advisory Board of the Illinois State Pneumonia Commission, regional consultant of the Surgeon General of the Army, Chairman of the Committee for Nomenclature of Renal Vascular Diseases, Chairman of the Board for the Study of Hepatitis for the Surgeon General, and a member of the Blood Pressure Committee of the American Heart Association and the Cardiac Society of Great Britain.

The interruption of this busy and useful career so early in its course, with years of service still ahead, recalls the bronze memorial which Daniel Chester French designed as a tribute to Martin Milmore, likewise called by death from what was already a distinguished career. This figure represents death staying the hand of the young sculptor, even as death has reached out to stay the mind and hand of this distinguished young physician.

N. C. Gilbert