

# RES MEDICA

Journal of the Royal Medical Society



## In Memoriam

### Derrick Melville Dunlop

LLD, MD, FRCP, FRCPEd, DSc, FACP

FRCSEd(Hon), FDS, RCS(Hon).

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#### Abstract

Sir Derrick Dunlop, Emeritus Professor of Therapeutics and Clinical Medicine at the University of Edinburgh and Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh died in Edinburgh on 19 June, 1980.

To say of a man that he became a legend in his lifetime is to risk censure for inappropriate journalistic hyperbole, but when applied to Sir Derrick Dunlop this cliché acquires the dignity of simple truth. In the eyes of a generation of Edinburgh medical graduates he was indeed a legendary figure whose unique qualities as a teacher and as a clinician entitle him to an honoured place among the great names in the history of the Edinburgh Medical School.

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ISSN: 2051-7580 (Online) ISSN: 0482-3206 (Print)

Res Medica is published by the Royal Medical Society, 5/5 Bristo Square, Edinburgh, EH8 9AL

Res Medica, 1981: 50-51

doi:[10.2218/resmedica.v0i0.942](https://doi.org/10.2218/resmedica.v0i0.942)

## In Memoriam

### **DERRICK MELVILLE DUNLOP LLD, MD, FRCP, FRCPEd, DSc, FACP FRCSEd(Hon), FDS, RCS(Hon).**

Sir Derrick Dunlop, Emeritus Professor of Therapeutics and Clinical Medicine at the University of Edinburgh and Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh died in Edinburgh on 19 June, 1980.

To say of a man that he became a legend in his lifetime is to risk censure for inappropriate journalistic hyperbole, but when applied to Sir Derrick Dunlop this cliché acquires the dignity of simple truth. In the eyes of a generation of Edinburgh medical graduates he was indeed a legendary figure whose unique qualities as a teacher and as a clinician entitle him to an honoured place among the great names in the history of the Edinburgh Medical School.

Derrick Melville Dunlop was born in Edinburgh on 3 April, 1902, the son of a distinguished physician, Dr. Harry Melville Dunlop — one of Edinburgh's earliest specialists in Child Health and one of the original physicians to the Royal Hospital for Sick Children.

Sir Derrick was educated at the Edinburgh Academy, Brasenose College (Oxford), and at Edinburgh University where he graduated MB ChB in 1925. In the following year he became a Member, and later a Fellow, of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh. After holding resident appointments in the Royal Infirmary he went to London where he spent a short time in private practice but in 1929 he returned to Edinburgh to work for the man who was to have the strongest influence on his early career, Sir Robert Philip. His relationship with this world-famous physician and medical statesman was a very happy one, and it was as lecturer in the Departments of Tuberculosis and Therapeutics that his remarkable flair for teaching first became apparent. At the same time he was making a reputation for himself as a clinician and investigator which was recognised by his appointment in 1936 to the Christison Chair of Therapeutics and Clinical Medicine in

Edinburgh University. This meant that he also became Consultant Physician to the Royal Infirmary where he assumed charge of medical wards at the unusually early age of 34.

His tenure of the Professorial Chair coincided with a period of spectacular advances in medical treatment and he was ideally equipped by intellect, temperament and training to meet the challenge of these exciting new developments. He attracted a group of able and dynamic clinical investigators to the Department of Therapeutics, many of whom went on to achieve high distinctions in academic medicine. With these devoted colleagues he made important scientific contributions in many fields — most notably in endocrinology, diabetes, nutrition and renal disease. The famous "Textbook of Medical Treatment" which he edited with Stanley Davidson and J.W. McNee, first appeared in 1939 and gained him an international reputation. It ran to nine editions under his editorship and was notable for its clarity and for its practical, commonsense approach to therapeutics. However, all these substantial achievements were overshadowed by his celebrity as a teacher. It is currently fashionable to denigrate the value of didactic teaching in Medicine and the formal lecture is widely held to be a particularly unsatisfactory method of instruction. No one who passed through Edinburgh Medical School in the Dunlop era would subscribe to this view. Sir Derrick's lectures illuminated and clarified their subject matter and any one of them was worth hours of solitary study in the library. He brought lecturing to the level of an art-form and the principles which he expounded were so spiced with sophisticated humour and no student ever willingly missed one of his lectures.

His eminence as a teacher was recognised in 1951 when he was appointed Sims Travelling Professor and his service as Chairman of the

British Pharmacopoeia Commission from 1954 to 1958 was one of many similar testimonies to his stature as a clinical scientist. In 1960 he was knighted and in the same year he was appointed Physician to Her Majesty The Queen in Scotland.

Retirement from the Chair of Therapeutics in 1962 found him still at the height of his powers – he was invited to assume responsibility for the inauguration of the new Committee on Safety of Drugs and in due course he became its first Chairman. It is no exaggeration to say that the firm establishment of this important regulatory body and its present smooth operation are largely a consequence of his leadership. His great qualities of statesmanship and diplomacy were never put to better use than in the early development of cordial relationships based on mutual trust between the Committee and the pharmaceutical industry.

As a student Sir Derrick had been an enthusiastic member of the Royal Medical Society and in 1925 he became a Junior President. Few things gave him greater pleasure in his retirement than the re-establishment of his links with the Society and he was deeply immersed in its affairs until shortly before his death. He became Chairman of the Society's Appeal Committee and in this rôle he played a notable part in all the events which led to resettlement in the Society in its new premises within the Student Centre. It was only natural that when the Royal Medical

Society Trust was set up last year he should be invited to act as its Chairman, although by this time his health was failing.

The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh conferred upon him its Honorary Fellowship and its Honorary Fellowship in Dental Surgery – a unique distinction that he prized greatly.

As he entered his eighth decade his intellectual powers remained undiminished as did his talent for oratory, and he was in constant demand as a speaker. Very few medical men have been such complete masters of the English language and in the ability to delight, to amuse or to inspire an audience he had no superiors within his profession.

His courtesy and charm were in keeping with his splendid appearance and his conversation remained sparkling and gracious even in the latter stages of his final illness. This, with all its physical tribulations, he bore most bravely and no one who saw him near the end will easily forget his contentment and serenity in the face of death. Much of this stemmed from the happiness of his family life which, in spite of all the activity of his brilliant career, was always of first importance to him. He is survived by his wife, his son and daughter. Behind him he has left countless memories of a great doctor who, in every aspect of his life, exhibited to the full that mysterious and indefinable quality which is called "style".

*Iain F. MacLaren*

