In Memoriam: Robert Inslee Weed

1928–1976

D R. ROBERT INSLEE WEED, Professor of Medicine and of Radiation Biology and Biophysics, and Chief of the Hematology Unit in the Department of Medicine at the University of Rochester, died August 18, 1976.

Dr. Weed obtained his baccalaureate in 1949 and his medical degree in 1952 from Yale University. He interned in Medicine at Strong Memorial Hospital of the University of Rochester. This training was followed by two years of service in the U.S. Air Force Medical Corps and completion of medical residency training at the Yale-New Haven Medical Center. He returned to the University of Rochester as a Fellow in Hematology in 1957, and was a U.S. Public Health Service Research Fellow from 1958 to 1961. He advanced from the rank of Instructor of Medicine in 1957 to Professor of Medicine and of Radiation Biology and Biophysics in 1968, and was Chief of the Hematology Unit from 1967 to 1976.

Dr. Weed had a special interest in the structure and the mechanisms of destruction of the red cell and had authored more than 90 scientific articles in the fields of hematology, membrane physiology, and biophysics. He was an Associate Editor of the journal Blood Cells and was on the editorial boards of Blood, Nouvelle Revue Francaise d'Hematologie, and Clinics in Haematology. He served as an editor of three books: Hematology for Internists, The Red Cell Membrane, and Red Cell Shape; he also produced an English translation of Marcel Bessis's book Living Blood Cells and Their Ultrastructure.

As a member of the American Society of Hematology, Dr. Weed served on the Educational Committee and, more recently, on the Executive Committee. He held professional memberships in a number of organizations, including the American Society for Clinical Investigation, the American Federation for Clinical Research, The Society of General Physiologists, the American Physiological Society, the Association of American Physicians, the American College of Physicians, and the International Society of Hematology.

One of his major interests was the training of young physicians for careers in clinical investigation and academic medicine. Largely through his efforts, a program for formal training of physicians for clinical investigation was established at the University of Rochester in 1966 with support from the National Institutes of Health. Virtually all of the physician-scientists who have received training in this program have entered careers in clinical investigation. His leadership, enthusiasm, and intellect also contributed to the entrance of many postdoctoral fellows in medicine into academic careers in hematology.

In recent years he expended considerable effort to apprise federal legislators and administrators of the importance of public support for acquiring further knowledge of blood diseases and the use of blood products in transfusion. His efforts contributed to the passage of legislation calling for one of the National Institutes of Health to be named the National Institute of Heart, Lung and Blood Diseases.

Dr. Weed was named recipient of this year’s William Dameshek Prize, given
annually by the American Society of Hematology to one of its members for outstanding contributions to the field of hematology.

The absence of his leadership will be missed greatly by the academic medical community and his University. His guidance and fellowship are irreplaceable. The Robert I. Weed Memorial Fund has been established to support the training of a research fellow in hematology.

Paul L. La Celle, M.D.
Marshall A. Lichtman, M.D.
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