

Professor A.J.S. McFadzean — An Appreciation

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1975 MacFadzean Memorial Issue



Professor McFadzean retired from the University of Hong Kong in June, 1974 after 26 years of service as Professor of Medicine and died on November 29th, 1974 following a brief illness. His departure from Hong Kong last summer left a deep chasm in the local medical and academic scene and his passing is a great loss to those who had associated with him. All of us extend to Mrs. McFadzean and the Family our heartfelt sympathy.

Professor McFadzean was born in Troon, Scotland on January 28th, 1914 and studied medicine at Glasgow University where he graduated with honours in 1936 and was awarded the Brunton Memorial Prize as the most distinguished graduate of the year. After qualification, he worked in the Glasgow Royal Infirmary, Hawkhead Mental Hospital and Anlaby Road Hospital, Hull. At the beginning of the World War II he volunteered for service with the *R.A.M.C. and was commissioned in 1940, attaining the rank of Major. He was mentioned in despatches in 1942 and became a Medical Specialist with the Middle East Command in 1943. In 1946, he became a Member of the Royal College of Physicians of London and from 1945 to 1948 he was Lecturer and later Senior Lecturer in the Muirhead Department of Medicine, Glasgow University. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of London in 1956 and was also a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, the Royal Colleges of Physicians of Edinburgh and Australasia, the American College of Physicians and Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh. In 1959 Glasgow University awarded him the M.D. with Honours and the Bellahouston Gold Medal and this University conferred on him the honorary degree of D.Sc. in 1970. The Queen honoured him with the O.B.E. in 1964.

When he first arrived in Hong Kong, Department of Medicine comprised a handful of staff, three rooms and no laboratory equipment to speak of. From this has grown to present Department with a staff of about fifty and two floors of offices and modern laboratories. As a teacher he had no peer; he stressed principles rather than detail and encouraged clear and logical thinking rather

than recall. His clinical acumen and knowledge are legendary and these he shared unstintingly with colleagues and patients. A long admirer of Sir Thomas Lewis, the notable experimental physiologist, he introduced research to a Department in which none had existed. His own work on diseases of the liver and blood are world renowned and has publications number close to seventy.

Many anecdotes are associated with the “Old Man,” as he was affectionately called and two are now recounted. The first took place in Manson Ward, now Ward B2, Queen Mary Hospital in 1952. During a ward round a patient with massive splenomegaly and hepatic cirrhosis was observed to have a large bruise over the left flank. This had occurred after only minor trauma and, was out of proportion to the degree of thrombocytopenia and prothrombin deficiency. This was recalled by Professor McFadzean in patients with a similar disease had bled excessively in the course of porto-caval anastomosis or splenectomy and in fact the blood did not clot. From this relatively simple but astute clinical observation emerged a series of ingenious and now classic studies on fibrinolysis in diseases of the liver and spleen. The second concerns one of the famous Thursday morning professorial teaching clinics. The Professor was in great form waxing eloquent on the subject of subacute bacterial endocarditis. Suddenly he excused himself and re-appeared about ten minutes later, looking somewhat pale and shaken but the clinic continued. It was learnt afterwards that he had suffered a haematemesis and we marvelled at this man who placed finishing a teaching session before his own comfort and health.

He was a gifted orator with a Churchillian command of English: his recent address at the naming ceremony of the Patrick Manson Building will attest to this. A tireless worker, he possessed the rare gift of being able to inspire others to do the same. Numerous committees, which included non-medical organisations, benefitted from his advice. He was Vice-Chancellor of this University in 1965 and from 1967 to 1972 he led, as Dean, the Faculty of Medicine through a period of rapid expansion. While Dean, he established the Dean’s Consultative Committee with Undergraduates and the very successful Dean’s Loan Fund for needy students, one of the few funds where verbal agreement is the only guarantee required. His other interests included

history, poetry, pastel painting and golf in which he represented Hong Kong in international matches in 1962.

His passing marks the end of an era of Medicine in Hong Kong. On his retirement, only six months ago, past and present members of the Department of Medicine presented Professor and Mrs. McFadzean with a bronze plaque on which was inscribed this passage from Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet*: "And all knowledge is vain save when there is work, and all work is empty save when there is love." Surely Professor McFadzean exemplified this.

*Royal Army Medical Corps



Professor in a ward round



See the Professor.
He is a Scot.
He loves Scotch'n'Soda.
Drink, Professor, drink.
He doesn't like birds,
Stork, cranes, etc.
He's fond of talking von Recklinghausen.
And of Hypothyroidism too.
He issues them accordingly.
Issue, issue, issue.
Don't you wish to issue something someday?
Then you'll have to wait long, YOUNG MAN.
Colour him "Johnnie Walker, Red Label".

(Extract from ELIXIR)



Professor and his wife in their home in Scotland