

Obituary

Editor: Henry R. Rollin

JOHN DUNNE, formerly Professor of Psychiatry, University College, Dublin

News of the death of Professor John Dunne at the age of 92 will come as a shock to his many friends and colleagues and indeed to the people of Ireland generally. All the more so because his tall, erect, youthful looking figure, his wide range of interests – social and sporting as well as professional – had for so long belied his advancing years. His genial gracious manner made him the focus of attention on social occasions and his intervention at professional meetings, whether critical or complimentary, invariably enhanced and enlivened the proceedings.

To the wider community in Ireland, he had reigned so long and so successfully as the outstanding figure in Irish psychiatry that his name had become synonymous with the specialty in its various aspects. For many years he was Medical Superintendent of the largest psychiatric hospital in the country, Professor of Psychiatry at University College Dublin's Medical School and indeed was the first occupant of a Chair of Psychiatry in the Republic of Ireland. He was a much sought after consultant and an outstanding expert witness in the many knotty medico-legal problems posed by our specialty. He was elected President of the Royal Medico-Psychological Association for the session 1955/56 and the annual meeting of the Association in Dublin in the year of his presidency was a hugely attended and memorable occasion. He was elected a Foundation Fellow of the College in 1971.

As a doctor, John was kind, understanding and persuasive and enjoyed the challenge of the perplexing problems which so often arise in the practice of psychiatry. Despite his vivacity and obvious enjoyment on social occasions, close observers were aware of a well disguised reserve and he had in a large measure the gift of shrewd appraisal of human nature in health and sickness. Although he retired from his public appointments at the usual age, he continued to work in his consulting rooms and remained attached to a general hospital where he held a weekly out-patient clinic almost to the end of his life.

John Dunne's passing represents the end of an era in Irish psychiatry when one man could undertake so much responsibility for so many facets of a rapidly developing specialty. Ireland was fortunate indeed to have a man of his spirit and critical enthusiasm to meet the challenge of a time of so much change in psychiatry, particularly the advent of the revolution-

ary physical methods from the malarial treatment of general paresis to modern chemotherapy. Although he made skilful use of these new and exciting methods of altering and controlling mood change and behaviour patterns, his more abiding interest was in the power of psychotherapy to influence his patients' lives. In this area of psychiatry, he may not have fully realised the effects of his own confident beliefs and the persuasive power of his own natural gifts. It is safe to say that he had become a legend in his life-time and he will be remembered with gratitude and respect for his contribution to our specialty. Legends beget anecdotes, and his memory too will provoke reminiscent smiles and tales of his larger-than-life personality for many a day to come. Our sympathy goes in particular to his son, David, who is Clinical Director of Psychiatry in St Stephen's Hospital, Cork, and to the other members of his successful family.

JNPM

ARTHUR NICHOLSON MUNRO, Consultant Psychiatrist, Sunnyside Royal Hospital, Montrose, Angus, Scotland

Dr Arthur Munro, a founder member of the College (he was elected to the Fellowship in 1984) died on 2 April 1990 at his home in Montrose at the age of 53.

Arthur was born in Sumatra on 18 June 1936, the only son of Captain Arthur Munro, MC and Mrs Lilia Munro. In March 1942 Arthur and his mother were compelled to leave Sumatra because of the Japanese invasion, taking the last plane out of the island. Arthur's father, a rubber planter responsible for a large number of plantations in the Dutch East Indies, was compelled to remain behind and was a prisoner of war until June 1945. In 1947 the Munro family returned to the United Kingdom, where his education was completed at the Arbroath High School.

He graduated from St Andrew's University in 1959, having earned in his student days a reputation for whimsical humour. Shortly afterwards he decided to pursue a career in psychiatry and he obtained posts at the Royal Gartnavel Hospital, Glasgow, and the Royal Dundee Liff Hospital. At the age of 30 he became a consultant at Sunnyside Royal Hospital, Montrose. Initially he worked as a general psychiatrist, but from 1975 onwards he ran the Psychogeriatric Unit of the Angus Psychiatric Service. He became an outstanding champion of elderly people with mental illness and helped to mould positive