

## Thomas M. McMillan, Jr., M.D.\*

1892-1976



Thomas M. McMillan, Jr. died October 17, 1976 at the age of 84 in his native and beloved Mobile, Alabama. He had returned there in 1964 after a long life of devoted professional service in Philadelphia. He was a member of the College of Physicians (of Philadelphia) for fifty two years.

Tom was born in Mobile Alabama on January 27, 1892. His father had served as a youngster in the Confederate Army and was self-educated. After the war he entered the lumber business, running a sawmill and later acquiring large tracts of farm and forest land. He had a country plantation in Stockton, Alabama where his family spent

many happy vacations. His mother was an outstanding woman and a very progressive person in the community. She was one of the first women to graduate from college, started the first library in Mobile, and was a leader in the cause of education for Negroes. From her Tom received early religious training and exposure to the classics.

Tom attended Mr. Wright's Military School in Mobile where he played on the baseball team. He played the violin and showed an early interest in religious things, a preview of what was later to become an important part of his professional and social life. An older brother became a Presbyterian Minister. He came north to attend Princeton where he received an A.B. degree in 1913. He was Vice President of his class and manager of the Track Team and was voted the most popular man of his class. He was later awarded the class cup and cited for embodying the highest ideals of his profession. Tom entered the Medical School of the University of Pennsylvania where he graduated in 1917. He immediately joined the Army Medical Corps as a first Lieutenant and served for a period of two years including an overseas assignment in France. On his return to civilian life he spent two years doing special work at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania and the Philadelphia General Hospital. While in the army he had considered a future career in Surgery or Radiology but in his hospital experience he was greatly influenced by Alfred Stengel and Edward Krumbhaar. The latter was one of the first physicians in this country to use the string galvanometer and had published his first paper in that field as early as 1916. He was engaged in functional and pathological studies on the heart at this time. Krumbhaar was later to become a life long benefactor of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia and to serve as its President from

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1940 to 1943. With this experience young Tom McMillan decided on the field of Medicine and he spent nearly a year in London working in Cardiology and Physiology with Sir Thomas Lewis and E.H. Starling.

On his return to this country he began a career of hospital practice, teaching, and editorships, seldom equalled to our profession. In 1923 he was appointed an Assistant Physician to the Pennsylvania Hospital and to Physician and Chief of the Out Patient Department in 1932. In 1946 he was made head of the Department of Internal Medicine and Consultant Cardiologist to the Pennsylvania Hospital. He served in the Division of Cardiology at the Philadelphia General Hospital beginning in 1932 and was chief of this Division for many years. He was cardiologist and later consultant cardiologist to the Burlington County (N. J.) Memorial Hospital. He served as a chief consultant in Cardiology to the Veterans Administration for many years. With William D. Stroud and others he was active in the formation of the Philadelphia Heart Association in the late 1920s, one of the first associations of its kind, later to become affiliated with the American Heart Association as the Heart Association of S.E. Pennsylvania. He served as its president from 1941 to 1944. He was active in the Pennsylvania State Heart Association serving as a Director and was a member of many committees. He was one of the Founders of the Childrens Heart Hospital.

Tom was a master bedside teacher and his gentle, friendly manner in discussing patient's problems on rounds was an example to all. His lectures in Electrocardiography were outstanding and hundreds of medical and post graduate students received a practical, working knowledge of this new and important field from his series of lectures, given patiently year after year, but always including the newest information in this rapidly growing subject. In 1946 despite his many duties, he accepted the Editorship of the AMERICAN HEART JOURNAL, then the official journal of the American Heart Association. He devoted much time to this important task and was so successful in it that in 1950 when the Heart Association decided to launch a new official journal, *Circulation*, representing its broadening interest from the heart to the entire circulation, no one else was even considered as Editor. He held this position for five years and at the termi-

nation of his editorship, a special issue of *Circulation* was dedicated to him. He was a director of the American Heart Association for many years and received the Gold Heart Award of that Association in 1955.

Tom was active in the American College of Physicians serving as Governor for Eastern Pennsylvania from 1949 to 1958. He was chairman of the Committee on Post Graduate courses of the College from 1949 to 1953. He was honored by the College and the Alfred Stengel Award in 1954 and a Mastership in 1964. He was a Regent of the College from 1960 to 1964, and was a Vice President. When it was decided to publish a bulletin for the College, he was chosen as its Editor and he served in this capacity from 1960 to 1964.

With all of these professional duties Tom found time for his family and he had many interests outside of Medicine. He was a member of the Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia for many years, and a Trustee of the Princeton Theological Seminary from 1948 to 1967. He also served as a Trustee of Lincoln University.

He was a great student of history and an admirer of Robert E. Lee and had many of his personal effects. On his return to Mobile in 1964 he did not practice Medicine but his interest in medical affairs did not wane. He was an Honorary Consultant in Cardiology to the Mobile General Hospital and an Honorary Member of the Alabama Medical Society. He was active in the formation of the new Medical School of South Alabama. He attended rounds at the Hospital of the Medical School, the Providence Hospital, and the Mobile Infirmary. A physician many years his junior said "he was well known, respected, and admired by all of the Medical community." He was an active member of the Board of the City Museum of Mobile.

His extensive collection of letters and manuscripts related to the early history of the city of Mobile extended from colonial Mobile under the French through the Revolution and up through Civil War Times. It was left to the City Museum of Mobile.

Thomas McMillan married Julia Talcott of New York City in 1919. They had become acquainted during many visits to her relatives in Mobile. This lovely, gracious lady who survives him, was his lifelong companion and ever present

helper. There are three children from this devoted couple, Thomas M. McMillan, III, a physician and cardiologist in Mt. Holly, New Jersey, and two daughters, Frances T. Russell (married to a physician) and Mrs. Julia L. Turnball. There are nine grandchildren. Harold M. Marvin, a close friend who followed Tom as the Editor of *Circulation* wrote the following in his preface to the special edition of this journal dedicated to him: "The first ten volumes of this journal will stand as a lasting monument to his ability and his consecration to the work that he loved. But he has created something else which even though invisible and intangible, he may regard as much greater: the respect, admiration, and abiding affection of all who have been privileged to know him. His students, associates, and friends are agreed that few indeed have been blessed with

such a rare combination of qualities: intelligence and understanding, complete sincerity, patience and tolerance, an unfailing gentleness rarely encountered in men, a sweet and happy disposition. The years in Philadelphia have taken away none of the consideration for others or the charming graciousness that he brought from his Alabama home. His inability to think or speak harshly of anyone has been an inspiration to those who recognize it as strength, not weakness, as another manifestation of a warm and lovable personality."

Thomas McMillan will long be remembered as a refined, sensitive, cultured gentleman. His influence lives on in his many friends and former students.

*Joseph B. Vander Veer, M.D.*