OBITUARY

SIR NORMAN GREGG, 1892–1966

The entire ophthalmological world will learn with regret of the death of Sir Norman Gregg in Sydney on July 27, 1966, after a brief illness at the age of 74. He was the best known of Australian ophthalmologists and among the best liked. Norman McAlister Gregg graduated at the University of Sydney in 1915 and immediately left for the first world war wherein he served as a Captain R.A.M.C. on the western front and gained the Military Cross (1915–19). Thereafter he studied ophthalmology in London, took the D.O.M.S. in 1922, and returned to Sydney where he worked at the Prince Alfred Hospital and the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children, an institution of which he subsequently became president, and was lecturer in ophthalmology at the university (1939–52). He was also President of the Children’s Medical Research Foundation. During all his working life he conducted an exceptionally busy and successful private practice. He was always a sportsman; in his youth he played both cricket and tennis for New South Wales and was president of the Royal Sydney Golf Club.

Gregg attained his world-wide reputation because of the revolution he created by his inspired observation that rubella contracted during the first trimester of pregnancy could lead to the occurrence in the child of congenital cataract, deafness, and anomalies of the heart, great vessels, and other organs (1941–44). This discovery resulted not from experimenting in the laboratory but from painstaking and exact clinical observation at which he was an adept; in a sense it resembles the discovery of vaccination by Edward Jenner from the observation that milkmaids who had contracted cowpox were immune from smallpox. The importance of Gregg’s work in the sphere of teratogenesis lies in the fact that it constituted the first proof that an environmental agent could cause congenital deformities in man, and disproved the validity of the general belief that such clinical syndromes of congenital origin were always due to a faulty “germ plasm”. His observations were confirmed by many others in all countries of the world and led to a revolution in thought.
in this branch of medical science. From the practical point of view his work led to the protection of pregnant women from this otherwise harmless infection by anti-rubella serum.

Gregg was widely honoured; he was awarded the Charles Mickel Fellowship by the University of Toronto (1952), elected a Fellow of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (1952) and of the Royal Australian College of Physicians (1953), awarded a doctorate in medicine *honoris causa* of Melbourne University (1952) and an honorary D.Sc. of Sydney University (1953), and was knighted in the same year. In 1963 he was elected an Honorary Fellow of the Australian Postgraduate Federation in Medicine, and in 1964 he shared with Dr. Kate Campbell of Melbourne (who observed the effect of hyperoxia in the development of retrolental fibroplasia) the 10,000 dollar Encyclopaedia Britannica Award for the most outstanding achievement of medical research in Australia. A kindly and sympathetic doctor and a friend of great personal charm and unfailing honesty, he will be missed throughout a wide circle, most particularly by his widow and his two daughters.

**ALAN WILLIAM STUART SICHEL, 1887–1966**

Alan Sichel was one of the greatest medical personalities that South Africa has produced, and his interests were wider than ophthalmology: he was President of the Medical Association of South Africa (1945–51) and of the British Medical Association (1951–52). Born in South Africa he studied medicine at the University of Edinburgh. One of his earliest tasks was to investigate trachoma in Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean and on his way there he met and married his wife at Singapore. He then travelled to England and served in France with the R.A.M.C. during the first world war and, having afterwards pursued postgraduate studies in ophthalmology, returned to Capetown in 1921, where he remained as one of the leaders in his profession both in an active practice and as a teacher in the University for the remainder of his life. He received the degrees of Honorary LL.D. from the National University of Ireland and the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, as well as the Gold Medal of the Medical Association of South Africa for distinguished services to his profession.

**JOHN ANTONY MAGNUS, 1900–1966**

J. A. Magnus, who died suddenly on September 1, 1966, was one of the well known and respected surgeons of the north of England. Born in Aachen in Germany, he was medically educated in Heidelberg, and graduated in 1923. In his youth he served as an ophthalmologist in several German hospitals, but in 1934 came to Britain as a Jewish refugee, to the enrichment of this country. He requalified at the University of Glasgow in 1935 and thereafter gained ophthalmic diplomas including the F.R.C.S.Ed. (1938). In that year he was appointed ophthalmic surgeon to the York City Hospital where he worked until his retirement in 1966. He was an able clinician and surgeon, and with his kindly and gracious manner he gained immediate popularity in the country of his adoption; not only was he mainly responsible for the modernization of the ophthalmic department at York, but he was an active member of the North of England Ophthalmological Society and became president of the York Medical Society.