

OSLER LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

McGILL UNIVERSITY, MONTREAL, CANADA

No.52 – June 1986

THE SIR WILLIAM OSLER HOSPITAL OF McMASTER UNIVERSITY, HAMILTON

A name proposed but not used



URING THE SUMMER of 1969 when construction of what is now the McMaster University Medical Centre was well underway, Dr. J.R. Evans, Vice-President of the Division of Health Sciences, wrote enthusiastically to the President of McMaster University,

Dr. H.G. Thode, proposing that the Health Sciences Centre be called the Sir William Osler Hospital of McMaster University, Hamilton. Dr. Evans outlined various reasons for such a name. Osler had lived and gone to school in Dundas, close by Hamilton, from age seven to fourteen. (Dr. Evans did not mention that Osler had been expelled from the school in 1864.)

As a youth Osler collected biological specimens in the waters of the Desjardins Canal, Cootes Paradise, and Burlington Bay, all in the neighbourhood of Dundas, and such work had been referred to in one of his early papers published in the *Canadian Naturalist*. Also, before assuming his faculty appointment at McGill, Osler practised briefly in Dundas and at the City Hospital in Hamilton. By associating itself with the distinguished name of Osler, Dr. Evans believed that McMaster would create an aura in the mind of the public of a hospital not only striving for the best in education and research, but also pledged to serve the people of Hamilton and the region.

McMaster's Board of Governors approved the name in principle, subject to the approval by the surviving Osler family and the concurrence of other medical groups. Faculty Executive and the Provisional Hospital Board Committee appeared to be favourably disposed to the name. The Health Sciences Council representing Nursing, Medicine, Biochemistry, and Biology discussed the name, voted in its favour, and passed a recommendation to the University president. To ensure that the name was fully acceptable to the university community, Dr. Wendell W. Watters of the Department of Psychiatry was asked by the Council of the Faculty of Medicine to conduct a questionnaire which would solicit student and faculty opinion. The questionnaire consisted of

The author of the leading article in this issue, Carl Spadoni, is a very welcome newcomer to the *Osler Library Newsletter*. He is the Archivist of the Health Sciences Library at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

the following two questions: (1) Do you feel the name McMaster University should be used in the official designation of the hospital, i.e. McMaster University Hospital?; (2) The name The Sir William Osler Hospital of McMaster University, Hamilton has been suggested. Do you feel this is an appropriate designation?

The results of the questionnaire were not quite what Dr. Evans expected. Many people misinterpreted the first question and answered as if the actual designation, McMaster University Hospital, was up for consideration in the competition with the proposed Osler name. Many respondents felt that the Osler name was original, appropriately sentimental, and appealing — a befitting tribute to a local son who had made good. The tradition of studying disease from a scientific and humanistic point of view was what Osler emphasized and what McMaster wished to emulate. As one respondent commented, "Who could hate Osler? [The name] would unify and dignify." Unfortunately, this was the minority view. In spite of the apparent ambiguity of the first question, the majority of those responding, by a ratio of approximately three to two, opposed the Osler connection. The name was said to be unrepresentative, unwieldy, obscure, and pretentious, smacking of Madison Avenue gimmickry. The majority believed that McMaster's link to Osler was tenuous and that too many laurels had already been heaped on Osler's head. "Much as I revere his name and works I am sick of him!"; one respondent complained. "His name is used everywhere to name everything. Let's kick the habit."

Since the proposed Osler name had been approved in principle by various bodies of the Hospital and University, the negative results of the questionnaire placed Dr. Evans in a rather embarrassing position. After hearing Dr. Watters' report, members of the Faculty Council overwhelmingly defeated the motion to adopt the Osler name. The trustees of the provisional Hospital Board Committee followed suit and recommended the designation, McMaster University Hospital and Medical Centre. Eventually, after considerable controversy unrelated to the use of the Osler name, the designation McMaster University Medical Centre was adopted. (Continued on page 2.)

(Continued from page 1.)

A further attempt to use the Osler name was made in November 1983 by the Faculty of Health Sciences' Sub-committee on Campus Names. The McMaster University Medical Centre consists of two related but distinct administrative bodies, the McMaster Faculty of Health Sciences and the McMaster Division of the Chedoke-McMaster Hospitals. The Sub-committee on Campus Names proposed to re-name the McMaster Division as the William Osler Hospital. In addition to reasons similar to those given by Dr. Evans in 1969, the Sub-committee stated that some patients were obviously confused about the location of the McMaster Division of the Hospital and had mistakenly ended up at Chedoke Division on the Hamilton Mountain. A memorandum on the proposed re-naming was circulated to members of Faculty Council, but the proposal was defeated.

Although Osler was not memorialized in the naming of McMaster's health sciences complex, there has been a small contingent of admirers of Osler at McMaster. In 1983 several members of the medical faculty organized a celebration in Dundas on the occasion of the great physician's 134th birthday (see *Osler Library Newsletter*, October 1983). In May 1985 two of McMaster's Oslerites, Dr. W.B. Spaulding and Dr. Charles Roland, were elected as President and First Vice-President respectively of the American Osler Society and in April 1986 Dr. Roland succeeded Dr. Spaulding as the Society's President. So Osler has not been forgotten at McMaster University.

Carl Spadoni

APPOINTMENT OF HISTORY OF MEDICINE LIBRARIAN

McGill University has appointed Dr. Faith Wallis to the post of History of Medicine Librarian. As such she is Librarian in charge of the Osler Library and replaces Dr. Philip Teigen who left us at the end of 1984 (see *Osler Library Newsletter* no. 48). Dr. Wallis has received three degrees from McGill University — Bachelor of Arts with First Class Honours in History (1971), Master of Arts in History (1974), and Master of Library Science (1976). More recently (1985) she obtained a Ph.D. from the Centre for Medieval Studies at the University of Toronto.

Dr. Wallis is already known to readers of the *Osler Library Newsletter*. Since January 1985 she has been Assistant History of Medicine Librarian on the staff of the Osler Library and a member of the Editorial Committee for the *Newsletter*. Several articles in the *Newsletter* bear her name as author.

E.H.B.

OSLER LIBRARY RESEARCH FELLOWS FOR 1986

Dr. Roger N. Buckley, Professor of History at the University of Connecticut and Dr. William P. Stoneman, Assistant to the Principal, Victoria College, University of Toronto are the recipients of Osler Library Research Fellowships for 1986. Dr. Buckley's project will be the medical history of the British Garrison in the West Indies during the 18th and early 19th centuries. Dr. Stoneman will begin to record and analyse the features specific to the Osler Library copies of incunabula.

The Osler Library Research Fellowship program is designed to assist those with need to travel to and establish temporary residence in Montreal while undertaking research at the Osler Library.

THE PERSISTING OSLER

The Persisting Osler is the title of a volume offering a selection from the transactions of the first ten years of the American Osler Society. These transactions consist of papers presented at the Society's annual meetings, more or less in the form in which they were originally read. A number of them appear in print here for the first time. The papers are grouped around the themes of "Personal Life", "Professional Life", "Friends and Colleagues" and "Societies", and are illustrated by an impressive wealth of photographs. Three well-known Oslerians served as editors: Jeremiah A. Barondess, John P. McGovern and Charles G. Roland. Published in 1985 by the University Park Press, 300 North Charles Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201, it is a truly elegant volume, bearing witness to the loving care which its editors and publisher have bestowed upon it.

OSLER DAY — NOVEMBER 1986

As explained in the February 1986 *Osler Library Newsletter*, there will be a second Osler Day this year. It will fall on Wednesday, November 5th. The Osler Lecturer is to be Stephen Jay Gould, a member of the Faculty of Harvard University since 1967 and professor of Geology there since 1973. His monthly column "This View of Life" in *Natural History*, his award winning collection of essays *Ever Since Darwin* and *The Panda's Thumb*, and his brilliant exposé of the abuse of intelligence testing in *The Mismeasure of Man* have made him one of the most widely read evolutionary biologists living today. At Harvard he teaches geology, biology, and the history of science. His latest collection of essays, published earlier this year, is entitled *The Flamingo's Smile: Reflections in Natural History*.

As is customary, the Osler Banquet will be held on the evening of Osler Day. Professor Gould will be the honoured guest at the banquet and will respond to questions from the floor about his Osler lecture delivered that afternoon.

More About Osler In Japan

In April 1985 a bust of William Osler was unveiled in front of the City Hospital in Niigata, the largest city on the west coast of Japan's main island of Honshu. The bust was made by Mr. Riki Watanabe, Professor of Sculpture at Niigata University and is based on a photograph of Osler taken in Baltimore in 1913. Through the kindness of Dr. Tsutomu Sasagawa, President of the Niigata City Hospital, and Dr. Shigeaki Hinohara, already well known to readers of the *Newsletter**, the Osler Library has received several elegant photographs of

the bust; one of them accompanies this article. In a covering note, Dr. Sasagawa states that the bust "is a symbol of the kind of patient-oriented medical care which Osler advocated and which we are trying to put into effect at our hospital". Readers of the *Newsletter* who wish to get in touch with Dr. Tsutomu Sasagawa should write to him at the following address: 6-1, Shichikuyama 2-chome, Niigata City, Japan.

**See Osler Library Newsletter, no. 45, February 1984.*



Bust of William Osler at Niigata City Hospital

FRIENDS OF THE OSLER LIBRARY

The appeal to the Friends for the 1985-86 academic year concluded at the end of May and the Library is grateful to have received about \$11,300 contributed by 310 Friends. Most of the contributions have come from Friends in Canada and the United States of America. However, very welcome contributions have come also from Australia, Belgium, England, Switzerland, West Germany, and the West Indies. The Library acknowledges with thanks the support of all its Friends. The following have been added to the list since the publication of the February *Newsletter*.

- * H.D. Attwood
- E.H. Bensley
(in memoriam J.A.F. Stevenson)
- † A.R.C. Dobell
- Alfred M. Donovan
- † Althea & Creighton Douglas
(in memoriam J. Allan Walters)
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- Linda M. Ordogh
- † Campbell R. Osler
- † Mrs. C.J.F. Parsons
(in memoriam C.J.F. Parsons)
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Newsletter:

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Medicine Librarian;
Elizabeth Ricci, Editorial
Assistant.

The appeal for the 1986-87 academic year will be made in the October *Newsletter*.

