

Hi Everyone

This week's Departmental Acknowledgement goes to F Clarke Fraser, Professor Emeritus of our Department and is based on his induction earlier this week into the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame.

The Canadian Medical Hall of Fame is physically located in London, Ontario and was established in 1994. With his induction, Clarke joins in the Hall's distinguished ranks another McGill Department of Pediatrics and Montreal Children's Hospital luminary, Charles Scriver. Indeed, two other "pediatric" superstars from McGill, Sir William Osler (who wrote a monumental work on cerebral palsy) and Maud Abbott (who defined the concept and pathogenesis of congenital heart disease) are charter members of the Hall.

After a childhood mostly spent in Jamaica, Clarke was educated at Acadia University before coming to McGill to undertake a PhD with Arthur Steinberg followed by medical studies in which he failed anatomy and two other courses. Perhaps he can be excused for this by the observation that he was simultaneously teaching undergraduate courses in biometry and developmental genetics (!). Upon graduation, he remained at McGill and the MCH and under the tutelage of Alton Goldbloom and later Alan Ross embarked on a truly legendary career at the MCH from 1950-1999 (with the exception of 3 years spent in Newfoundland in the early '80s). Clarke was responsible for the establishment of the MCH's Medical Genetics Division, where he was an active participant in the truly revolutionary advances that swept the field. Clarke was a pioneering figure in dysmorphology, teratology, and genetic counseling. He formulated the multifactorial threshold model and coined the terms 'anomolad' and 'natural insemination donor' (he always had a great dry sense of humor) and predicted the advent of genetic engineering. Clarke was even present at the seminar at McGill where Lejeune first revealed that Down Syndrome was the result of a trisomy of chromosome 21. Clarke was an international leader in genetics serving as the youngest President of both the American Society of Human Genetics and the Teratology Society. Together with Charles Scriver, he formed a remarkable partnership on the 7th floor of the A-wing that made us the envy of world of clinical genetics.

If I may be permitted a personal observation, it's only with age that we truly appreciate the teachers we had. I can look back at my residency in pediatrics here and sitting in a room on A-7 during a genetics elective with Clarke, Charles, David Rosenblatt, Paige Kaplan and Golder Wilson discussing cases and science. It was a seminal elective that convinced a budding pediatric neurologist to go outside the fold and do a post-doctoral fellowship in molecular genetics. Similarly when I look now at the roster of members of the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame I am struck by how fortunate I was to be educated at McGill. The roster of members in addition to Clarke who were my teachers in undergrad, medical school and residency include; Albert Aguayo (neurology), William Feindel (neurosurgery), Phil Gold (internal medicine & physiology), CP Leblond (histology), Heinz Lehmann (psychiatry), Ronald Melzack (psychology), Brenda Milner (neuropsychology), and Charles Scriver (biochemical genetics). Legends all, a place among whom Clarke is most deserving.

Have a great weekend