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editorials

P.D.W.—The Gentle Titan **Paul Dudley White,** **June 6, 1886—Oct 31, 1973**

Physician to kings and peasants, presidents and dictators, scientists and laborers; healer and teacher of people and nations, Paul White died of a stroke eight days before he was to receive the American Heart Association's Herick Award. A Yankee whose forebears stood at Bunker Hill, he witnessed the entire development of modern cardiology, the specialty he helped to establish. Intuitively and scientifically he was always on the right track, whether pursuing some new method of investigation, espousing rational measures for preventing illness, founding lay and scientific organizations to combat heart disease, or breaching international barriers to help and learn from foreign colleagues.

After training with Sir Thomas Lewis, Dr. White brought the first electrocardiograph to the United States, complete with saline bath electrodes and a balky timer that he repaired with the coil from a model T Ford. Subsequently, he developed the cardiology service of the Massachusetts General Hospital, wrote the first (1931) edition of his monumental text, and founded or cofounded local, national, and international cardiologic societies.

He traveled widely to inspire others by his example and arrange material support for investigation and teaching. An astonishing range of scientific curiosity and concern for his patients led to astute observations at the bedside, in the laboratory, and in epidemiologic studies. His efforts produced classic reports on constrictive pericarditis, pulmonary embolism, cardiomyopathy, atherosclerosis in young men, and, of course, the Wolff-Parkinson-White syndrome.

Rejecting cant and dogma, he promoted exercise for preventing heart disease and rehabilitation from its effects—and personally set the pace by vigorous walking and riding the bicycle, which became his symbol. To study the hearts of large mammals, whales were chased with an electrode-harpoon, circus elephants had ECGs, and he enlisted as medical examiner for a Boston zoo.

World War I service in both the British and American Expeditionary Forces and a postwar Red Cross assignment in Greece led to 50 years of untiring efforts to bring together men and nations to prevent heart disease and war (not necessarily in that order). In 1970 Paul White was nominated for the Nobel Peace prize. He made innumerable journeys to virtually every country on earth, ignored cold war taboos, established links across the Iron Curtain, and was among the first US physicians to visit the new

China. In this, as in his relations with colleagues, students, and patients, he was well served by exceptional personal qualities. Always courteous, even in vigorous dissent, his vast experience, dry good humor, and infectious optimism consistently charmed and converted all within reach of his gentle voice and intense blue eyes.

Paul White set himself mountains—and had the strength to climb them. His scientific and humanitarian achievements are inextricably combined: devotion to humanity included men's souls as well as their bodies; dedication to mankind never overlooked individual men. In cardiology, populated by prima donnas of all ages, he was an ageless gentleman. Respected and admired like other leaders, "P.D.W." was uniquely loved, and his passing leaves a conspicuous void in the ranks of mankind. Yet his life is already proof that the good that men do can indeed live after them—he accelerated the fight against heart disease and strengthened the fragile cement among peoples. He was one of a kind. Now he belongs to the ages.

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Bicentennial Year: Prelude

About two years from now, the United States will begin celebration of Bicentennial Year, commemorating the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4. The move toward independence, however, had begun 13 years earlier with the Peace of Paris, which signified the end of the Seven Years' War with the French and Indians. That hard-fought war had given the colonials a sense of identity, a greater confidence and strength. As Morison¹⁹⁷⁷ puts it, "From their (the colonials) point of view, they had won the war, with a little aid from the British army and navy. Causes of dissension inherent in the English colonial system had been sharpened."

Unfortunately for England, the colonies were regarded as Crown property, whereas the colonials considered themselves free men. The colonies were becoming consolidated and independent, with some exceptions, of British imports. In Boston and in Williamsburg, at schools of higher education young men were studying the ancient classics and political theory and were in fact receiving excellent training in statesmanship.

In the years following 1763, England imposed taxes and restrictions that caused deep resentment in the colonies. A proposal that England appoint colonial bishops to the Anglican Church; enforcement of a law that put a prohibitive duty on molasses imported from the foreign West Indies; Parliament's Stamp Act of 1765, which led to formation of groups of middle-class citizens who called themselves "Sons of Liberty"; Parliament's Declaratory Act, which reaffirmed England's right to tax America; the Townshend Act for taxation of America—all these at one time or other were grist for the mills of the Sons of Liberty.