

Fellows' Society  
Montreal Neurological Institute  
3801 University St.  
Montreal 2, Canada

Antone K. Tarazi, M.D. - President  
Gordon B. Thompson, M.D. - Vice-President  
Enrique Ramon-Moliner, M.D. Secretary

July 1959

Dear Senior Fellow:

It is hard on me to issue this news letter, mourning our great teacher and friend, William V. Cone. I always hoped that I would be spared this task, and that a later President of the Fellows Society, probably 10 or 15 years from now would do this. Yet, fate had calculated differently, and Dr. Cone departed early, in his prime; probably this is the way he would have wanted it to be. I was the last fellow who saw Dr. Cone alive and spent a few hours with him. This was Sunday night, May 3rd, 1959. Things were quiet on the wards, and he came up through the 6th floor Pathology Lab where I was looking at some slides. This started an unscheduled neuropathology session, looking at slides and examining gross material; then going down to his office and back to the library to look up a few references. The session ended at 10.30 p.m. when he went down to the wards, made his rounds and then went to his office. He died in the place he never wanted to leave, doing things he always loved to do ... and that was the end of a great man, a great neurosurgeon, a great neuropathologist, a great teacher, and a dear friend.

In the belief that a large number of Dr. Cone's former residents and friends would like to have his portrait, this together with the cover of the News Letter, has been made possible through the courtesy of our photographer, Charles Hodge.

The News Letter and the Annual Lecture have become established tradition at the MNI. Many thanks for your keen interest, kind encouraging letters, and generous financial support. We would like to include your news in our letter as a regular item to bring former fellows closer together, this may be possible soon, once our funds "Fellows annual donations" will be adequate to pay a part time secretary to do this job.

On May 1st, 1959 we had the Annual Lecture. Our speaker was Dr. Webb Haymaker. He spoke on "Kernicterus and Posticteric Encephalopathy". This was followed by cocktails and a banquet; the day was a real Fellows' day and was indeed a success.

Dr. Dorothy Russell will give a special Fellows Lecture in October, during the Quarter of a Century celebrations of the MNI. We hope that this occasion will bring many fellows back to Montreal; and we are looking for a large reunion.

I would like to express our gratitude as we turn over the affairs of the Society to the capable officers chosen for the coming year:

Dr. Phanor Perot - President  
Dr. Christian Vera - Vice-President  
Dr. Henry Garretson - Secretary

Sincerely yours,

To labor not for place or  
Nor wealth which lasts a  
But only that, when rest is won,  
A kindly God may say, "well done" \*

*Antone Tarazi*  
Antone Tarazi

\* In 1942, he wrote these verses in 1942, he wrote them on a piece of paper, which he framed.

Dr. William R. Cone, M.D., Noted Neurologist, Dies

Dr. William R. Cone, one of the world's leading brain surgeons, died at the Montreal Neurological Institute early today.

Dr. Cone, 62, was a professor of neurosurgery at McGill University and chief of neurosurgery at the Montreal Neurological Institute. The Montreal Neurological Institute officials said that Dr. Cone died at midnight checking on the condition of the patients.

Dr. Cone was called to the hospital at 5 a.m. by the night watchman. He assumed charge of his patients.

Dr. Cone, (M.D., F.R.C.S.), was long associated with Dr. Walter Dandy, one of the world's great neurosurgeons. Dr. Cone was born in Des Moines, Iowa, and gained his early education at Iowa State University.

To labor not for place or power  
 Nor wealth which lasts a paltry hour,  
 But only that, when rest is won,  
 A kindly God may say, "well done" \*

\* Dr. Cone came across these verses in 1942, he wrote them on a piece of paper, which he framed.

Montreal Neurological Institute  
 Friends at the First  
 Presbyterian Hospital in New

The Montreal Star, Monday 4 May 1959

Dr. William Cone, 62, Noted Neurologist, Dies

- Dr. William Cone, one of the world's leading brain surgeons, died suddenly in his office at the Montreal Neurological Institute early today. He was in his 63rd year.

He was professor of neurosurgery at McGill University and chief of the neurosurgery service at the Montreal Neurological Institute.

In a statement today, Neurological Institute officials said that Dr. Cone was in the hospital at midnight checking on the condition of his patients and seemed in excellent spirits.

He was found in his office at 5 a.m. by the night watchman.

Dr. Wilder Penfield has assumed charge of his patients.

Dr. Cone, B.Sc., MD, FRCS, (C), RFSC, was long associated with Dr. Wilder Penfield and was regarded as one of the world's great neurosurgeons.

He was born in 1897 at Conesville, Iowa, and gained his early university and medical training at Iowa State University.

After a brilliant career as a student and post graduate student both at Iowa and at Columbia University, New York, he came to McGill in 1928 as a lecturer in neurosurgery.

The following year he was promoted to the rank of assistant professor and in 1935 he was named associate professor of neurosurgery, to which was added in 1942 the further duties of associate professor of neuropathology.

Dr. Cone was among the first of Canada's doctors to go overseas in World War II. With Col. Colin K. Russell he organized the No. 1 Neurological Hospital, of which he was appointed chief neurosurgeon with the rank of lieutenant-colonel.

The distinguished neurosurgeon received widespread recognition for his work including an honorary degree from Bishop's University, Lennoxville, Que., in June, 1955.

One of his achievements was the fostering of a helicopter service, whereby emergency patients could be flown to Molson Stadium and taken directly to the institute.

The resourcefulness of the distinguished neurosurgeon, and his devotion to the highest ideals of his profession, was illustrated on the day on which Dr. Cone received his honorary degree at Bishop's University.

An Eastern Townships' farmer, Gerald Alden of Eton Vorner, near Sawyerville, was helping a neighbor to build a farm. A beam fell. It broke Alden's spine, crushed a vertebra and paralyzed the lower part of his body.

Dr. Curtis Lowry, a general practitioner, decided that the man to save Alden's life was Dr. Cone. He called Montreal and was informed that Dr. Cone was in Lennoxville.

Called from the convocation, Dr. Cone, still wearing morning coat and striped pants, examined X-rays that had been taken at his direction.

It was decided to move the patient to Montreal for an operation. The CPR, through B.W. Roberts, a vice-president attending the convocation, offered the use of a private train to take the patient to Montreal.

Dr. Cone accompanied Mr. Alden to the city and performed the operation which was credited with saving the farmer's life.

This was but one of the many incidents in the life of the great neurosurgeon who was ready to serve regardless of self.

Dr. Wilder Penfield, director of the Montreal Neurological Institute, said today in tribute to his long-time associate:

"William Cone and I met in 1924. We became friends at that first meeting and he joined me in my work at the Presbyterian Hospital in New

York. When we came to Montreal in 1928, Dr. and Mrs. Cone agreed to come with us, although he was offered many inducements to remain in New York.

"We have worked shoulder to shoulder for 35 years and the 31 years here in Montreal have been wonderful years together. A very large part of the original conception of the Montreal Neurological Institute, as well as its eventual creation and its achievements are due to the brilliant work and the unselfish spirit of William Cone. He, more than anyone else, has made our institute what it is.

"He published less of his scientific work as the years passed, but his actual contribution became more and more important. He added new methods to the specialty of neurosurgery; he made important contributions to our knowledge of the diseases that affect the nervous system; he taught and trained a long line of young men in this specialty, and he exalted in his new work up to the end.

"We may take some consolation in the fact that Dr. Cone succeeded in the thing he hoped to do and received recognition for it from hospitals, universities and the people of Canada, as well as those abroad. Thousands of patients and doctors are doubtless realizing now that they have lost their best and most unselfish friend, as I do."

Dean David L. Thomson, vice-principal of McGill University said today that "The sudden and unexpected death of Dr. W.V. Cone comes as a severe shock to the university, the hospitals and the whole community."

"Dr. Cone," he said, "was a man utterly dedicated to his profession. Throughout the 30 years I have known him, and I suppose long before that, he has worked impossibly hard for impossibly long hours.

"Hundreds of his patients will bear me out when I say that he was not merely a most skilful and distinguished surgeon, but was a man who selflessly devoted himself to everything that could affect his patients' health or hope or comfort.

"To be his patient was to feel that you were in the hands of a master and that your welfare was his over-mastering concern. It goes without saying that a man so skilled, so patient and so dedicated, was a constant inspiration to his students and his colleagues.

"Ever since he came here with Dr. Wilder Penfield to build up the field of neurosurgery, for which McGill is now internationally famous, he has enjoyed both the respect and the affection of those with whom he came in contact.

"He will live on in the hearts and the skills of all his students, interns and assistants."

Henry W. Morgan, president of the Royal Victoria Hospital, said in his tribute today: "The sudden death of Dr. William Cone is an irreparable loss. Dr. Cone first came to the Royal Victoria in 1928, and very soon was recognized as an outstanding teacher, leader in research, and one of the most devoted men ever to honor the profession.

"Although the Montreal Neurological hospital ceased to be a legal part of the Royal Victoria in 1953 the association of the two institutions has remained very close and Dr. Cone was the neurologist and neurosurgeon-in-chief to the Royal Victoria since 1954.

"We shall miss his wise counsel on our Medical Board and his unfailing support of every measure to advance the best in patient care."

J.W. McConnell said: "Dr. Cone's death is a great shock to me. A great man, a tireless and efficient doctor, his passing is a heavy blow to the institute to which his whole life was dedicated. Dr. Cone was held in the highest esteem by all members of its staff. He will be greatly missed.

Dr. Lloyd G. Stevenson, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine of McGill University, said in his tribute: "Dr. Cone's devotion to his work knew no limits. His warm heart and his contagious enthusiasm provided inspiration for colleagues and students alike.

"The welfare of the patient was always his first consideration and no demands on his time and skill were rejected. He was a great neurosurgeon and a great teacher, and hundreds of the former Fellows of the Montreal Neurological Institute have carried his lessons to many parts of the world.

"Co-founder with Dr. Penfield of this famous institute, his superb contributions to his critical work in neuropathology made him one of the outstanding figures in modern neurosurgery.

"He was not only a fine surgeon and influential teacher, he was also a sympathetic, lovable man."

Dr. F.W. Fitzgerald, president of the Canadian Medical Association, Quebec Division, voiced his own personal loss and that of the profession in his tribute:

"I was deeply shocked to hear of the death of Dr. Cone. He was a friend for many years and he was held in high esteem by the profession for his outstanding work at the Montreal Neurological Institute. His death will be a great loss to the world of medicine."

The Montreal Star, Editorial, May 5, 1959

Patients remember Dr. Cone's Solitude.

In one of the wings of the Montreal Neurological Institute there is to be found the inscription from the Book of Job:

"Where shall wisdom be found" and where is the place of understanding?"

For Job wisdom was not to be found in the land of the living, but for those who selected the mottoes that adorn the Neurological both wisdom and understanding were attributes that might come by diligent search and assiduity. Not wisdom in all its perfection, perhaps, nor complete understanding, but a measure of both that would serve the healing art.

One of those who often contemplated this quotation was Dr. William Cone. He had been at the Neurological from its beginnings. He had helped found it. He had devoted most of his time and all of his great skill to the furtherance of its purpose, which was not different from that of any hospital: to heal the sick.

It would be wrong to suggest that that was the Neurological's only purpose. It is one of the world's foremost centres of neurological research. To this purpose Dr. Cone contributed in full measure, but he will be remembered by countless patients as one who had taken to heart another saying inscribed on the hospital's walls. It defines both the limitations and the hopes of medicine when it says: "Guerir quelquefois, soulager souvent, consoler toujours," - "sure sometimes, assuage often, comfort always."

The account of Dr. Cone's passing reads that he was in the hospital at midnight checking on the condition of his patients. He seemed in excellent spirits. At five in the morning a watchman found him dead in his office.

This brief statement contains the key to his character. He "was in the hospital at midnight checking on the condition of his patients." To his patients he seemed always to be in the hospital and he seemed always to be checking on their condition, sitting with them like one with endless time on his hands, relaxed, cheerful, pursuing the imjunction of the motto: "comfort always".

Yet patients knew that in between his visits to them he was performing emergency operations or the long, meticulous operations that brain surgery requires. Patients wondered when he slept, what outside interests he pursued, for he seemed to give all his time, all his energies to a dedicated task. Outside interests: He had and needed few. The hospital was his life and work.

These stories of Dr. Cone's always being there recalls one of the men responsible for his coming to Montreal, Dr. Edward Archibald was Professor of Surgery at McGill and Canada's first neurosurgeon. It was he who greeted Dr. Penfield as he was about to enter the operating room of Presbyterian Hospital in New York, took him to lunch and invited him to come to the Royal Victoria Hospital and McGill University. Dr. Penfield later asked that Dr. Cone should come too. The young William Cone was Dr. Penfield's associate in New York.

It was one of Dr. Archibald's "endearing defects" that he was always late. It has been said of him that the only time he arrived punctually for an operation was the day he was 24 hours late. The story is re-told here not for its amusing content but to point up the fact that Dr. Cone was never late. He was never late because he was always there.

No one who passed through his hands as a patient or was associated with him as a physician or research student could fail to realize that there was in him a sense of dedication. This was in him before he came to Montreal, when, as Dr. Penfield has said on another occasion, the two dreamed of founding an institute of neurology somewhere. That dream was to be fulfilled here. To its fulfilment Dr. Cone brought both vision and skill, and to his patients an unmatched solicitude.

The Gazette, Editorial, 5 May 1959

When Dr. William V. Cone established the helicopter service, to fly the sick and injured to the Montreal Neurological Institute, this was not merely one of his achievements. There was something very much of his own heart in the project. For to him the Institute was not only a place for the exploration of the mysteries of science. For him, the Institute was to be a place of hope and kindness, to which all those in need should be brought as quickly as possible, that all might be done for them.

This sense of reaching out to those in need was the very spirit of his work. Those who came under his care as patients knew what it was, in all their anxieties, to look up into his face and to find vigorous encouragement, from one they knew would stand by them, with the strength of his skills, even into the terrible valley.

And among those who mourn him today will be the members of all those families who had taken their sick to the Institute for his care. There are few experiences in life so bleak and desolate as calling at a hospital when someone loved is critically ill; it is a time of bafflement and worry and fear. But to all those who came to him wondering and worrying, he gave them the fullness of his hope and, in the hopeless times, stood with them in their sorrow.

Yet he was, through it all, not only the kind of heart, but the great of mind. As Dr. Penfield said in his tribute to Dr. Cone, the two of them

worked together for 35 years, 31 of those years in Montreal. Together they created the Montreal Neurological Institute. It was not to be another hospital; it was to be a place where advances might be made on the frontiers of knowledge, even in the mysterious borderlands of the brain and the soul.

In the world of science Dr. Cone won his honored place. And it was won in a most exacting field, with all the enterprise of research, and with the intricate balance of judgment between audacity and caution. Year after year, students in this field, from over the world, studied under him, learning something of his skills, and sharing something of his dedication.

Through all his years as a surgeon nothing of callousness or harshness ever crept over his mind. The excitement of the search for still further knowledge remained with him, as did his feeling that science attains its greatness and its fulfilment when it is at the service of mankind, and seeks to lift a little of the terrible burden of sickness - the burden of the ages.

Though he had little time in his crowded and hasty days, he had time enough and to spare whenever it was needed. And though he had an immense strength, he gave it away, until it was spent.

He died in the Institute that had been the scene of his triumphs and his ministrations, after caring for his patients until midnight.

He who fought Death with resolute spirit and the most skillful weapons, has now been claimed by Death. But like Great-Heart in "Pilgrim's Progress", he died as the defender of the afflicted, worn out by his long and unceasing struggle for the lives of others.



**IN MEMORY OF  
DR. WILLIAM V. CONE**



