

Richard F. Webb

1910-1979

A Tribute by Hallett Smith



Richard F. Webb, MD, FACP, died February 24 of a heart attack. From 1953 to 1973 Dr. Webb was director of Health Services at Caltech. He served as a consultant on the planning of the Young Health Center and was instrumental in arranging for physical and psychological counseling for Caltech students. He was a member of the Caltech Associates and in 1976-77 served on the Institute Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects.

Dr. Webb was born in Covina, California, in 1910. He graduated from Stanford in 1932 and took his medical degree at the University of Pennsylvania in 1936. He interned at the University Hospital in Cleveland, Ohio, and was a resident in internal medicine at the University of California in San Francisco. In 1937 he married Janet Farrington; they had two sons, Charles, the author of *The Graduate* and other novels, and Sidney Webb, MD, of Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Dick's eminence in his field is indicated by his election as a Fellow of the American College of Physicians in 1950, his presidency of the Los Angeles Academy of Medicine in 1966-67, and his directorship of many organizations engaged in education and health care. He was a staff member of the Huntington Memorial Hospital in Pasadena for 40 years and was its president in 1955. A fund in his memory to support medical research and teaching has been established at the hospital.

Dr. Webb was on the faculty of the University of Southern California School of Medicine from 1940 to 1959. In

1968 he joined the medical teaching ship *Hope* and spent several months in Sri Lanka, teaching Ceylonese doctors and nurses the latest developments in American medicine. He was an enthusiastic traveler and photographer, gladly sharing his experiences with a host of friends. He gave up private practice in 1976 to become the first Medical Director for the Fluor Corporation and set up his office at the firm's headquarters in Irvine. He helped to establish the policies for executive health and employee health services and, to his delight, was able to guide Fluor's clinic and health services for its employees in Saudi Arabia, Algiers, and Venezuela. Between visits to Fluor operations abroad he wrote a "Medical Byline" for one of its publications, answering medical questions from any of its employees.

Dick's hobbies were golf and trout fishing. Anyone who has been on a trout stream with him (and I have been on many) knows that Dick's character was as evident when he was in waders as when he wore a white coat. He was a patient, gentle, humane man — the kind Izaak Walton portrayed as the good fisherman. He had a keen sense of humor. He loved nature; if he spent a whole afternoon without catching a trout (it didn't happen often), he would come back with his creel full of wild flowers. He was a good friend to Caltech; he will be missed. □

Hallett Smith is professor of English emeritus and former chairman of the division of the humanities and social sciences at Caltech.