

Obituary

Robert Bruce Sloane, MD, 1923–2007

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Dr Robert Bruce Sloane, a member of the college since 1961 and Fellow Emeritus, died on February 1, 2007, after a long bout of Alzheimer's disease. He was born on March 28, 1923, in Yorkshire, but named Robert Bruce after the fourteenth-century Scottish hero. He obtained his medical degree from London University and proceeded to take his Boards in internal medicine at the age of 23 and later his MD by thesis and the Diploma in Psychological Medicine (London).

After completing his house jobs, he spent 2 years of national service in the Royal Air Force, where he held the rank of Squadron Leader. On his return to London, he spent a year at Queen Square and one at Guy's Hospital, Department of Neurology, before proceeding to the Maudsley as Registrar and then Senior Registrar in the Professorial Unit (Sir Aubrey Lewis). This was followed by a Fullbright scholarship to Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA. After a 1-year return to the Maudsley, he came back to North America, where he joined the Alan Memorial Institute in Montreal under the direction of Ewan Cameron. The Alan was at that time a most stimulating program comprised of a very diverse group of scientists, psychiatrists, psychologists, and psychoanalysts. Bruce immediately made an impression as a critical thinker. This led at times to an emphasis on skepticism, but as someone who was supervised by him, it made for great learning. He became

Chairman of the Department of Psychiatry at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Chairman at Temple University in Philadelphia; and Chair of the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Southern California (USC), retiring in 1993 from a Chair he held for 21 years.

He published widely. Publications included papers with Stanley Cobb, Ted Sourkes (which must be one of the earliest papers on catecholamines and mental illness), and Murray Saffrin on steroids all in the late 50s. He was also interested in the new treatments, that is psychotropic medications, which were newly available, and he had an enduring interest in psychotherapy, which included early studies on LSD as an adjunct to psychotherapy. This led to many papers in psychotherapy and culminated in the publication 'Psychotherapy vs Behavior Therapy' in 1975, which was translated into several languages. He continued to write in this area for many years. An interest in diseases of the elderly produced publications and considerable activity at USC.

Dr Sloane had one of the finest minds I have ever known, with an available reservoir of knowledge for anyone who picked up the phone and called him. It is not easy to find someone who is exceptionally knowledgeable that you can comfortably call about an unusual case. Bruce was such a person. He leaves behind his wife, Vera, a devoted family, and many people throughout the world who will be able to smile and remember Bruce Sloane.

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