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By the Way . . .

JAMES MILTON ROBB, M. D.

Specialist, Teacher and Medical Leader

50th Anniversary


A physician should have at least three important attributes: (1) Availability (2) Ability (3) Stability—and the greatest of these is Availability.

Saying of J. Milton Robb, M.D.

J. Milton Robb was born June 22nd, 1884, on a farm in Elderslie, Bruce County, Ontario. He was the son of David and Ann Elizabeth Richardson Robb. There were four children.

Doctor Robb had a twin brother.

Early Education



He attended the Primary School in Elderslie, the High School at Port Elgin and the Model School at Owen Sound—all in Ontario. When he finished this preliminary education he came to Detroit in 1902, where he worked in the accounting department of the Acme White Lead and Color Works. He was too young to enter the medical school, so he spent the time working for money for his medical education. He entered The Detroit College of Medicine (now Wayne State University Medical School) and was graduated in 1908. He was Valedictorian of his class.

As a young man on the farm, Milton Robb was used to hard work and early rising. This has persisted to this day. He has breakfast at 6:00 a.m., arrives at Harper Hospital at 7:15 a.m. and starts operating at 7:45 a.m.

During 1907-1908 while in medical school, he was an extern at Harper Hospital, and after

his graduation in 1908 he remained as an intern until 1910.

Postgraduate Study

In 1912, Dr. Robb did postgraduate work in New York. In 1913 he spent four and a half months at the University of Vienna. In this same year he was the official delegate of the Michigan State Board of Health to the International Medical Congress in London, England. Then in 1914 he did further work at the Golden Square Ear, Nose and Throat Hospital, and in the celebrated Moorfield Eye Hospital in London. Later, in 1922, he studied for four months at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, where he was admitted as a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons after examination. In 1935 he was admitted to the American Board of Otolaryngology at Cincinnati, Ohio. So you see he was well grounded in his specialty.

From 1910-1913 Doctor Robb was assistant to Don M. Campbell, M.D., a leading specialist in Otolaryngology in Detroit. In 1914 he established his own practice.

Naturalization and Marriage

Before going on with Dr. Robb's medical achievements, we will stop and mention that he became an American citizen in 1918. In 1922, on April 19th, he was married to Virginia Reese Yerger of Memphis, Tenn. Doctor and Mrs. Robb have four children. James Milton Robb, Jr., is about to receive his C.P.A. David

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will graduate in law at the University of Virginia this June. Elizabeth is now Mrs. William E. Baubie and a proud mother, and Virginia Yerger Robb is a crack Math teacher at Kingswood School for Girls. She is so good that the school is sending her to Columbia University this summer for special training. That tells us a little about the family.

Teacher and Lecturer

We have said that Doctor Robb is a teacher. Read this list: He began teaching at his Alma Mater in 1913. From 1938-44 he was Associate Professor of Surgery. In 1944-45 he was Associate Professor in Otolaryngology. In 1945-48 he occupied the position of Professor of Clinical Otolaryngology and was Chairman of the Department. From 1948 to 1954 he was Professor of Clinical Otolaryngology. He is now Emeritus Professor of Otolaryngology. We should also note that in 1940 he taught at the Postgraduate School, University of Virginia. In 1932 he was Extramural Professor of Post-

graduate Medicine at the University of Michigan. He also in 1950 gave a postgraduate course at the University of Iowa. From 1938-1943 he lectured to the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology on "Tonsillectomy Technic" and "Proven Procedures in Office Practice."


Doctor Robb's first paper was published in the June *Journal of the Michigan State Medical Society* in 1919. Since then more than twenty papers have been published on his specialty. Of course there have been many more papers, lectures, presidential and other addresses which Doctor Robb has read before learned societies. All his life he has been lecturing to students, doctors, specialists. He is a fine teacher. He knows how to present his subject, does so—and stops—no long drawn out talks from him.

Active Worker in Hospitals

Now something about Doctor Robb's hospital work. You remember that he interned at Harper and was a constant attendant at the C.P.C.'s. From 1914-1937 he was Chief of the Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat department at Herman Kiefer Hospital. Since 1947 he has been Senior Consultant there. From 1919-1937 at Receiving Hospital he was Chief of Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat. In 1927-28 he was Chief of Staff. And from 1937-1948 he was Chief of the Ear, Nose and Throat Department. Since 1948 he has been Consultant.

From 1932-1948 he was Chief of the Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat Department at Harper Hospital. During 1947-48 Doctor Robb was Chief of Staff. In 1948 he was Senior Surgeon. He is still Senior Surgeon on its staff. He is also Senior Consultant at Herman Kiefer Hos-

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pital, and a consultant on the staff of Cottage Hospital.

During the years he has also served as Aurist for the Wabash Railway, Consultant in his specialty at Detroit Orthopedic Clinic, and at the Detroit Tuberculosis Sanatorium. He serves Kingswood School for Girls as Consultant in Ear, Nose and Throat.

Honored By Professional Societies

Now we come to Doctor Robb's memberships in professional societies. He is a member, and has been President of the Detroit Academy of Medicine, the Detroit Otolaryngological Society, the Wayne County Medical Society, the Michigan State Medical Society, and the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology. His other memberships include the Detroit Ophthalmological Society and Club, the American Otological Society, American Laryngological Association, American Laryngological, Rhinological and Otological Society, American Broncho-Esophagological Association, International Broncho-Esophagological Society and Alpha Omega Alpha honorary medical fraternity. He was given the first membership in the Essex County Medical Society in Ontario.

In the American Medical Association he has been Secretary and Chairman of the Section on Laryngology, Otology and Rhinology. He is a Life Member of the American College of Surgeons. Here he was active on the Credentials Committee for years, and was also on the Board of Governors. As a member of the Pan-American Congress on Oto-Rhino-Laryngology he was Vice-president in Chicago and in Havana. In 1957 he presided at one section of the Sixth International Congress of Otolaryngology in Washington, D.C. He was also sponsor for

Michigan and representative of the Finance Committee.

Energetic in Civic Affairs

Nor does Doctor Robb limit his activities to those in his medical specialty. He contributes to the civic and cultural life of our town by membership in the Detroit Republican Club, the Greater Detroit Board of Commerce, where he is a member of the Public Health Committee, the Detroit Citizens League, the Detroit Museum of Art Founders Society, the Detroit Symphony Society, Friends of the Detroit Public Library and of the Grosse Pointe Library and the Cranbrook Institute of Science. He is a member of Christ (Episcopal) Church, Grosse Pointe. He is a Life Member of Palestine Lodge No. 357, F. & A.M.

His social affiliations are with the Country Club of Detroit, the Grosse Pointe Club, the Farmington Country Club, Charlottesville, Virginia, and the Detroit Athletic Club.

Dr. Robb's military service started in 1911 when he was appointed First Lieutenant, Medical Reserve Corps, U.S.A. He was alerted for

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service on the Mexican border, but was not called. His commission was recalled in 1917 because he had not completed his naturalization. After this was done, his commission was restored, and he was ordered to sail in 1918 when the war ended. In World War II he was awarded a Distinguished Service Medal.

From 1940-1947 Dr. Robb served as a member of the Medical Advisory Board of the Selective Service System, U.S.A.

Doctor Robb was registered on June 22, 1918, No. 6673, State of Michigan. In 1920 he was registered in the Province of Saskatchewan. He took this examination so as to have Canadian credentials for his examination for the Royal College of Surgery. He is also licensed in London, England, Colonial No. 2436.

Recipient of Special Awards

Well-deserved honors have come to Doctor Robb. In 1948 he was given the Gold Key of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology. In 1948 he also received the A.M.A. certificate for participation in a Health Education program which was nationally broadcast over NBC—"Doctors—Then and Now."

The Michigan State Medical Society honored him on March 13, 1952 with a token citation "in deep appreciation and grateful recognition of distinguished service rendered by him to medicine, medical education and research." In May of 1953 Wayne University Medical Alumni Association awarded Doctor Robb the Distinguished Service Citation "in grateful recognition of his untiring devotion and meritorious service to the College of Medicine." And in May of 1957 he was given the Wayne State University Alumni Award "in recognition of outstanding achievements and services which reflect honor to Wayne State University."

A Dedicated Physician

We have listed the various achievements of this talented physician. What about this dedicated man of medicine as a person? I have known Doctor Robb for a long time. I have watched him in his office when he is examining a patient. He has the ability to put the individual, whether adult or child, at ease. He carefully makes his examination. Then, sitting on a stool in front of the patient, he explains in non-technical language what the trouble is, what must be done, and why. Doctor Robb

takes time with his patients. No wonder people flock to his office.

He has a fine command of the English language. When he speaks you have no difficulty in understanding him. He can be most emphatic in his words when aroused. His lectures and talks are masterpieces. In terse sentences comes the story.

J. Milton Robb is urbane, easy to approach—in other words he is a perfect combination of a brilliant surgeon and a cultured gentleman. He is always dressed in good taste and in a manner appropriate to the occasion. He is a good friend to have when in trouble either medically or otherwise. This writer had occasion to see this side of his character when he worked on a committee during the uneasy days when the Medical School was in trouble. His advice was invaluable in solving problems. He is a good fighter to have on your side.

Doctor Robb is clever at repartee, and enjoys a good story or joke. He likes to play a game of golf when he has time. He takes time to attend church.

Looking back over the achievements of Doctor Robb's life, I wonder how he has been able to accomplish all that he has. And now, in his 50th year of medical practice, he continues to do his work, seemingly as easily as he has always done it. To this day, he starts his operations at Harper Hospital at 7:45 a.m.

There is much more that could be said about Doctor Robb and his activities in medicine, education, and civic affairs—but we must stop.

In 1589, Leonard Wright, who wrote "Display of Dutie" used some words that I think apply to I. Milton Robb. He tells of what makes a good surgeon:

In a good surgeon, a hawk's eye; a lion's heart; and a lady's hand.

wjs

CANDIDATES FOR WCMS OFFICES

The following candidates have been nominated by petition:

Surgical Section Secretary: John Kraus, M.D.

Medical Section Secretary: Clayton Shors, M.D.

• Among the Lhopa of Sikkim (in Tibet), the bride's mother was customarily eaten at the wedding.