

In Memoriam

Paul F. Cranefield, M.D., Ph.D. April 28, 1925 to May 31, 2003

Paul F. Cranefield, M.D., Ph.D., passed away in New York City on May 31, 2003. Dr. Cranefield was Editor of the *Journal of General Physiology* for almost 30 yr, from 1966 until 1995. During that time he became the de facto mentor to a generation of scientists through his demands for not just excellence but perfection! Under his stewardship, the *Journal* became renowned for the thoroughness of the editorial review received by all submitted manuscripts and the corresponding high quality of the papers that its authors were expected to deliver. Another characteristic that became ingrained in the *Journal* under Dr. Cranefield's editorship was fairness: fairness to the authors and fairness to the reviewers. Dr. Cranefield read and evaluated each manuscript, but he almost never made decisions based solely on his own opinion. If the two reviewers disagreed, or if he felt that one review of a manuscript was less than impartial, Dr. Cranefield invariably sought further independent advice. He expected each editorial review to be an intellectual masterpiece, and he enormously valued the judgment and advice of the *Journal's* reviewers.

Dr. Cranefield's editorial goal was to sustain the original mission of the *Journal*, which was founded in 1918 by Jacques Loeb and W.J.V. Osterhout to provide a forum for the publication of articles that dealt with basic physical, chemical or biological mechanisms of broad physiological significance. With that mission, the *Journal* aimed to redefine and broaden the scope of physiological research, which it accomplished. Major advances in understanding biology at the molecu-

lar level were published in the *Journal*, but the emphasis was invariably on function—on physiology. Dr. Cranefield was proud of that tradition, and he worked tirelessly to maintain and enhance the *Journal* as well as the scientific discipline it represents. We are all eternally grateful for his efforts on behalf of the community of physiologists.

Dr. Cranefield was a true renaissance man. He made many important contributions to cardiac electrophysiology; among these was the monograph *Electrophysiology of the Heart*, published with coauthor Brian F. Hoffman in 1960, which for many years was a "citation classic." In 1988, he and Hoffman received the Medal of the New York Academy of Medicine for their work that ushered in a "new era in cardiac physiology and pharmacology." Dr. Cranefield was particularly interested in the genesis of cardiac arrhythmias, about which he published two more books. For his work on the electrical activity of myocardial cells, he was awarded the Einthoven Medal from the Einthoven Foundation, by Leiden University, Leiden, The Netherlands, and he also received an NIH MERIT award from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.

He was a medical historian who wrote extensively on the history of physiology in the 19th century. For many years, Dr. Cranefield found time to travel throughout Southern Africa, and he wrote *Science and Empire: East Coast Fever in Rhodesia and the Transvaal*, which traced the social, governmental, and economic impact of the disease as well as the path of discovery that led to its identification: intrigued by a central character in that history, he



subsequently published a follow up book, entitled *Born Wanderer: The Life of Stanley Portal Hyatt*. Dr. Cranefield was an avid bibliophile and collector of early scientific books. He was a fellow of the International Academy of the History of Medicine, and of the New York Academy of Medicine, where he served variously as chairman of the Committee on Library, president of the Friends of the Rare Book Room, and as editor of the *Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*. He served on the Ad Hoc Committee on Historical Translations of the American Association for the History of Medicine. He was also a member of the American Physiological Society, the Society of General Physiologists, and the American Philosophical Society, and he was a charter member of the Biophysical Society.

As a committed resident of lower Manhattan, Dr. Cranefield was active in the "Off-Off Broadway" theater revival of the 1960s, and he served as the first chairman of the board of the La Mama Experimental Theater Club, and later as the first chairman of the Circle Repertory Company. Dr. Cranefield also enjoyed an active club life, and he

was a member of the Grolier Club, the Century Club, the Players Club, the Coffee House, and the Savile Club.

Somewhat paradoxically, despite his being so intensely active and interested in the world that sur-

rounded him, Dr. Cranefield remained a private man. Those of us who had the good fortune to interact closely with him, and to enjoy his penetrating wit, his booming laugh, and often scathing social commentary, feel even more grate-

ful for the opportunity to have done so.

Olaf S. Andersen
David C. Gadsby
Michael J. Held