

IN MEMORIAM

Charles D. Smith, M.D.

(1907–1982)

Dr. Charles D. Smith, radiologist, was born in Texas in 1907 and died in Roanoke, Virginia, July, 1982. He graduated from Texas A & M, received his M.D. from Baylor University, and his radiology training at Johns Hopkins University. Dr. Smith's accomplishments were numerous. He began practice in Richmond in 1938 but soon moved to Roanoke. His practice, however, was interrupted by World War II, during which he served as a Colonel and Chief Radiologist with the 45th Army General Hospital in North Africa and Italy. After the war, he returned to Roanoke and resumed his duties as Chief of the Department of Radiology at Roanoke Memorial Hospitals, retaining this position until 1963. He served as Chief of Nuclear Medicine from 1963 to 1980 and twice was Chief of Staff at Roanoke Memorial Hospitals. During this time he was also Clinical Associate Professor at the University of Virginia School of Medicine and a staff member and consultant of several other hospitals. Dr. Smith was a Diplomat of the American Board of Radiology and of the American Board of Nuclear Medicine and a Fellow in the American College of Radiology. His memberships included the Radiologic Society of North America, American Roentgen Ray Society, the Society of Nuclear Medicine, Medical Society of Virginia, AMA, and the Roanoke Academy of Medicine. He was a founder and Charter Member of the Eastern Radiologic Society and its President in 1963. He also served as President of the Virginia Chapter of the American College of Radiology and was a Representative of the American College of Radiology as a trustee of the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists.

All of these facts cannot adequately express the scope of Charles D. Smith's life to those of us who knew him. A phrase taken from a statement by Edmund Burke seems appropriate for a radiologist:

“What shadows we are,
and what shadows we pursue”

Dr. Smith spent his adult life pursuing shadows, not the shadows of life, but the shadows of disease and death. In the darkness of a radiograph or the black dots of a nuclear image, he tirelessly strove for better technique and methods to improve and facilitate pursuit of disease. After more than twenty years in radiology, he undertook the challenge of a new field—“medical isotopes” as it was then called. He continued the study of nuclear medicine with enthusiasm and vigor until a short time before his death. His endeavor took him to the level of achievement as an examiner in Nuclear Medicine for the American Board of Radiology, and he established one of only two schools in Virginia for the training of nuclear medicine technologists. As radiology grew, Dr. Smith grew with it, for his inquisitive mind never dulled nor abandoned him.

Although Dr. Smith's professional life was devoted to the pursuit of shadows, his personal life was spent in the light of a deep love and devotion for his wife, Genevieve, who predeceased him by eight months, and his three sons, Doug, Stewart, and Kent. In his leisure he enjoyed the brightness of the golf course or the serenity of his lake home. His pleasures included the warmth of many friends with whom he shared his bourbon and conversation for his interest in correct English usage was legendary, and the wit and realism of H. L. Mencken never failed to amuse him.

He worked hard and long to improve medical practice not only at Roanoke Memorial Hospitals but also throughout the Roanoke Valley, the state, and the nation. In life, Dr. Smith cast a long shadow. His pursuits are ended. May he rest in peace.

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