



COLLEGIUM RAMAZZINI



TOWN OF CARPI

The Collegium Ramazzini and the Town of Carpi are honoured to recognize

Professor

ALICE M. STEWART

from Birmingham, United Kingdom, as Ramazzini Lecturer and recipient of the Ramazzini Award for 1991.

Doctors tend to be at least reasonably knowledgeable and at least reasonably committed to the public's health. We expect, too, that there always will be, what with so many variables and permutations in human experience, something of an art in medicine, so that the admixture is sought and evaluated in the person of the physician. In doing this, nowadays, a third ingredient is added — a core of good science, that enriches and directs what is to be done: in modern terms, the scientist/physician or, perhaps better still, the physician/scientist.

Each generation then has the responsibility of selecting and personifying the standard it sets. Ours has its task somewhat easier in that issues have been clearly put: how can we apply scientific knowledge for the amelioration and protection of the public's health?

Not that the scientific problems were simple or readily solved. Environmental, exogenously-induced disease, with all of the its complexity and long latency, at the interfaces between industry, social needs, and attempts at disease prevention, is bedeviled by statistical problems inherent in incomplete data and probability approaches.

Fortunately, medicine and science were able again to bring forth the individual who answered their needs — Dr. Alice Stewart. Carrying forward the traditions of a famous family of Sheffield physicians, she became a well-known medical consultant, joining the faculty of Oxford University in 1941. Here, fortunately, she had the advantages of access to problems of environmental toxicology and the utilization of epidemiological approaches. Both stood her in good stead when she made the acute observation that children who have been exposed to prenatal x-rays subsequently experienced excess cancer. This was the first time that it had been clearly shown that adverse health effects could follow low level radiation.

A lifetime of productive research followed and its results now lie at the core of modern concerns with radiation effects, low level environmental exposure, radiation in the atomic power and uranium industries, even of theoretical questions of thresholds to carcinogens. This difficult research has been accomplished with steadfastness, courtesy, integrity, good humour, despite controversy and objection. Indeed, Dr. Stewart welcomed skepticism and doubt: they spurred her to replicate and extend available data. The latest acknowledgement of the pertinence of her research was the announcement in March 1991 by the U.S. Department of Energy that it would now open its records, long tightly held, on workers' health in the atomic industry, so that additional research could be done, with free exchange of scientific ideas.

The Collegium Ramazzini and the Town of Carpi are proud and honoured to acknowledge their debt to Dr. Stewart for her critical contributions to environmental medicine, for the personal and scientific standards she has set, which constitute goals for all of us.

Carpi, November 22, 1991

IRVING J. SELIKOFF, M.D.
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