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**DONALD ROBERT WILSON, OC, MD, FACP, FRCP
1913-1991**

DONALD ROBERT WILSON, OC, MD, FACP, FRCP 1913-1991

*"I have left with the great satisfaction
of having the good fortune to work
with an active and happy group
not only from within the department, but
among chairmen of the other clinical departments as well".⁽¹⁾*

Introduction

Dr. D.R. Wilson was the first physician in this series to be born in Alberta. After graduating with his MD from the UofA, he joined the RCAF. Following WWII he completed his postgraduate training in the USA before returning permanently to Edmonton to join the UofA Faculty of Medicine in 1948. One year later Dr. Wilson became the first Markle Scholar at the UofA (1949-1953), the Department of Medicine's third Professor and Chairman (1954-1969), and the first geographic salaried full-time Professor at the UofA (1954).

During his Headship, Dr. Wilson established four new departments (Pediatrics, Psychiatry, Medicine, Public Health) and fifteen divisions (Endocrinology, Cardiology, Pulmonary Medicine, Dermatology, Internal Medicine, Neurology, Nephrology and Immunology, Gastrointestinal Medicine, Clinical Hematology, Clinical Pharmacology, Infectious Diseases, Medical Oncology, Metabolism, Rheumatic Diseases). By 1969, mergers had reduced the number to nine.

Dr. Wilson recruited all of the new Department and Division Heads. He also increased the number of postgraduate medical residents from six to a peak of over eighty, before consolidation reduced the number in half by the late 1960s. He led the faculty's research fundraising efforts. The Department of Medicine was successful in increasing its medical research grants from \$10,000 (1950) to over \$400,000 (1969) and \$800,000 (1971).

After retiring as the Professor and Chairman of the Department (1969), Dr. Wilson became the first Director of the R.S. McLaughlin Examination Center (1968-1978). He was a member of Edmonton's Muttart Foundation Board (1966-1978), and became

its Chief Executive Officer (1978-1988). In 1980 he was appointed to the Alberta College's 75th Anniversary History Committee. It was charged with updating Dr. Heber Jamieson's 1947 "Medicine in Alberta, the First 75 Years". Dr. Wilson, together with Dr. W.B. Parsons, wrote or co-wrote twelve and edited the remaining fourteen articles in "Medicine in Alberta: Historical Reflections". It was published by the Alberta Medical Foundation in 1993.

In 1985 Dr. Wilson petitioned the AMA to incorporate the Alberta Medical Foundation as the successor to the AMA's Committee on Archives. He was successful and was appointed the founding President in 1987.

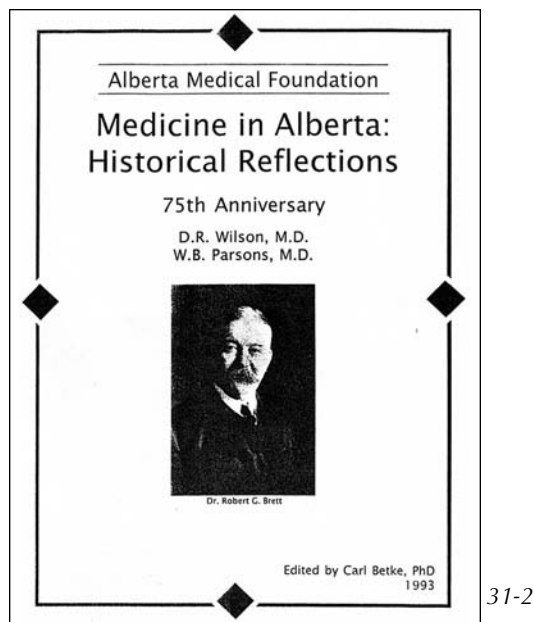
Dr. Wilson was a lifelong builder, leader, active participant, and documenter of medicine in Alberta. Together with his physician father Dr. W.A. Wilson, the two made exceptional contributions to medicine totaling one hundred years, ninety of which occurred in Alberta.⁽²⁾

From Youth to MD 1913-1939

Donald Robert Wilson was born on January 20, 1913 in Edmonton. After primary and secondary education at Oliver and Garneau schools in Edmonton, Don Wilson completed his high school studies at Brentwood College in Victoria, BC from 1929-1931.

In 1931 Wilson returned to the UofA. He decided to follow in his father's footsteps by taking medicine. While at the university he was on the football and swimming teams. Powerfully built and an excellent athlete, he became a Canadian champion in the butterfly stroke.⁽³⁾ In 1935 he was awarded a Rhodes scholarship. On the advice of Professor D.G. Revell, he applied to Balliol College at Oxford. Although he was accepted, the Oxford Credentials Committee

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1. Wilson, Donald R. "The University of Alberta Department of Medicine 1954-1969: A Personal Review," page 152, in Dr. D.R. Wilson and W.B. Parsons' *Medicine in Alberta: Historical Reflections*, AMF, 1993.
 2. Lampard, Robert Profile of Dr. W.A. Wilson.
 3. Wilson, Donald R. Unsigned one-page biography written circa 1981 by Dr. D.R. Wilson on the family typewriter. Confirmed by R.W. (Dick) Wilson, December 9, 2001. Deposited in the Wilson Family Archives.



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Medicine in Alberta: Historical Reflections, 1993

refused to recognize his UofA medical training because he did not hold an undergraduate degree. Unable to enter the Ph.D. program, he chose to take an honors degree in Physiology from 1935-1937.⁽⁴⁾



*Captain, Oxford University, Hockey team, 1936. 31-3
D.R. Wilson is 6th from the (L)*

While at Oxford, he became the Captain of the Oxford University hockey team. In 1936, he traveled with the Oxford and Cambridge hockey teams to the British Empire Exhibition in Johannesburg where they introduced hockey to South Africa. Wilson returned to Canada in 1937 and completed his MD at McGill in 1939.

The War Years 1940-1947⁽⁵⁾

After a year of internship and another year of post-graduate studies at the Montreal General Hospital, Dr. Wilson joined the RCAF from 1941-1945.⁽⁶⁾ He was attached to the RCAF Selection unit, which was stationed at Corbett Hall on the UofA campus in Edmonton. While there, he helped with the heavy clinical teaching load in the Faculty of Medicine.⁽⁷⁾ It was the only time both "D.R." and his father worked together at the UAH. In late 1942, Dr. Wilson was transferred to the RCAF headquarters in Ottawa and attached to the clinical investigation unit which studied recruitment criteria.⁽⁸⁾

In 1943 Dr. J.W. Scott, the new UofA Professor and Head of Medicine arranged to meet Dr. Wilson in Ottawa. Dr. Scott and Acting Dean J.J. Ower had been impressed with Wilson's Oxford training and clinical physiology experience. Scott thought that he was a good prospect and had the potential to become the Chairman of the Department of Medicine at some future date.⁽⁹⁾ Dr. Scott remained in touch with Dr. Wilson. He would have a significant influence on Dr. Wilson's career before and after Dr. Scott became the third Dean of Medicine in 1948.

In 1946 Dr. Ower broached the idea of establishing a postgraduate medical training program in the Faculty of Medicine meeting at the UofA. UofT and McGill had started their programs two years earlier. The return of a large number of veterans who met university entrance requirements, or already had their MD's and wanted to intern or take postgraduate medical

4. Wilson, Donald R. "The University of Alberta Department of Medicine, 1954-1969, a Personal Review," pages 136-152, in Drs. D.R. Wilson and W.B. Parsons' *Medicine in Alberta: Historical Reflections*, AMF, 1993.
5. Parsons, William B. "Medicine in Alberta: The WWII Years," pages 97-107, in Drs. D.R. Wilson and W.B. Parsons's *Medicine in Alberta: Historical Reflections*, AMF, 1993.
6. Wilson, Donald R. Unsigned biography, page 1.
7. Wilson, Donald R. "The Faculty of Medicine, University of Alberta, 1913-1969," pages 108-119.
8. Mathewson, F.A.L. "Medical Classification of RCAF Ground crews on the Basis of Functional Requirements." *CMAJ* 49: 512-515, December 1943. Dr. Wilson was a Squadron Leader at the time.
9. Gilchrist, Dawna M. *History of the Department of Medicine*, pages 17-22, UofA, 2004. Dr. John Scott wrote a personal memoir which reflected his experiences while the Head of the Department. His successors, Dr. Wilson and Dr. Fraser continued the tradition. These recollections became the early chapters of Dr. Gilchrist's History of the Department.



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The D.R. Wilson wedding, Montreal, 1943 (L to R) Gwen Russel, Ruth Molson Russel, Don Wilson, Colin Russel

training, put considerable pressure on the faculty to increase its enrollment. The faculty responded by increasing its first year class to sixty, and by offering the first postgraduate medical education programs under the “Marshall Plan” directed by Dr. Mark (Levy) Marshall.⁽¹⁰⁾

After the War Dr. Wilson resumed his postgraduate studies, first at McGill then at Harvard. He received his FRCPC in 1947 before being enticed to return to UofA on a part-time basis (1947) and then on a full-time basis in 1948. Initially he spent several afternoons each week in Dr. Heber Jamieson’s office laboratory, as Dr. Jamieson moved into retirement.⁽¹¹⁾ In 1948 Dr. Wilson became the first of three UofA Markle scholars from 1948-1953. The scholarship was worth \$30,000 over five years. Dr. Wilson’s proposal was to develop an endocrinology laboratory. The proposal was accepted and the lab started in a small, poorly ventilated, unbearably hot room behind the elevator shaft in the 1912 wing. Despite the environmental challenges, he initiated early diagnostic tests for FSH, 17-Ketosteroids and urinary corticosteroids.⁽¹²⁾ It became the first subspecialty service to be established within the Department of Medicine at the UofA.⁽¹³⁾

By Dr. Wilson’s own admission, 1948-1954 were not noteworthy years. Even UAH Medical Superintendent, Dr. A.C. McGugan, appreciated his “tolerant restraint” during those years.⁽¹⁴⁾ Funding did not improve and would not improve until well after the 1947 Leduc oil discovery. Only when it created a provincial budgetary surplus in the 1950s, were the stringent cost control measures of the Depression and WWII relaxed. The polio epidemics of 1953 and 1954 highlighted the deficiencies and accelerated the expansion of healthcare services at the UAH.



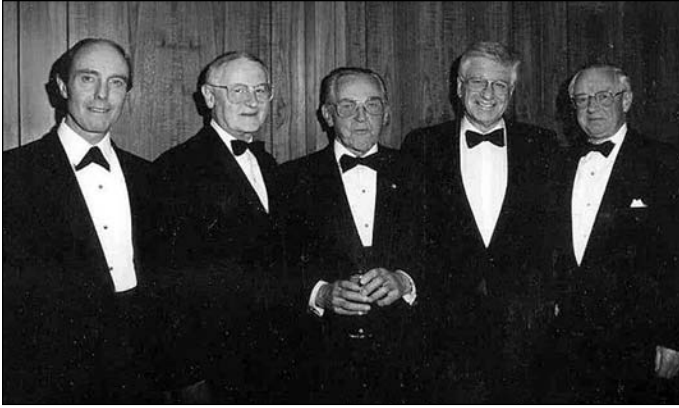
At the Pigeon Lake cottage, 1953

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Professor and Chairman, Department of Medicine 1954-1969

In 1954, Dr. Wilson accepted Dean Scott’s offer to become the first full time geographic salaried professor at the UofA, since Drs. Mewburn and Pope had been appointed full timers in 1922. He was also appointed the Chairman of the Department of Medicine when Dr. Scott relinquished the chair that year.⁽¹⁵⁾ As Department Chairman Dr. Wilson became a member of the UAH Medical Advisory Board.⁽¹⁶⁾ At that time the divisions in the Department of Medicine included Internal Medicine, Psychiatry, Pediatrics, Preventative Medicine, Public Health, Physical Medicine, and Rehabilitation.⁽¹⁷⁾ The

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10. Scott, John W. *The History of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Alberta 1913-1963*, page 24, UofA 1963. Repeated in E.A. Corbett’s *Frontiers of Medicine*, pages 70-71, UofA, 1990.
11. Wilson, Donald R. “History of the Department of Medicine,” pages 17-22.
12. Wilson, Donald R. “History of the Department of Medicine,” pages 17-22.
13. Fraser, Robert S. *Cardiology at the University of Alberta, 1922-1969*, page 21, UofA, 1992.
14. McGugan, Angus C. *The First 50 Years: The University of Alberta Hospital, 1914-1964*, page 45, 1964.
15. Fraser, Robert S. *Cardiology at the University of Alberta*, pages 31,85. Dr. Vant, in *More Than a Hospital* indicated Dr. Wilson became the Department Head in 1955 (page 198) not 1954.
16. Wilson, Donald R. “The University of Alberta Department of Medicine, 1954-1969: A Personal Review,” page 149.
17. Vant, J. Ross, Cashman, Tony *More Than a Hospital*, pages 198, 208-215, UAH, 1986. For further descriptions of the departmental changes see E.A. Corbett’s *Frontiers of Medicine*, pages 72-101, UofA, 1990. The many changes were discussed further in Dr. Wilson’s *The Faculty of Medicine, University of Alberta 1913-1969*, page 111 and Dr. Dawna Gilchrist’s “The History of the Department of Medicine” in 2004.



UofA Professors and Heads of the Department of Medicine, 1990. Drs Garner King, George Molnar, Don Wilson, Brian Sproule and Robert Fraser

Department of Medicine's total budget was \$10,000. It included Dr. Scott's salary as the Department Head and Dean, leaving only \$6,000 per year for the department.⁽¹⁸⁾ The total faculty medical research budget was under \$9,000 (1949), most of it from the Medical Research Council.⁽¹⁹⁾

In 1953 Dr. Scott accepted Dr. Robert Fraser's application to join the department. Dr. Fraser became the second UofA Markle scholar that year.⁽²⁰⁾ His proposal was to establish a cardiac catheterization laboratory. Dr. Brian Sproule, who was attached to the cardiology lab, developed a special interest in respiratory and pulmonary medicine following the polio epidemics of 1953 and 1954. Dr. Sproule returned to the hard-pressed department after the UAH opened the 1956 polio wing. When the polio wing opened, the respiratory and artificial lung cases at the RAH were moved to the UAH.⁽²¹⁾ Dr. Wilson also added Drs. Martin (pediatrics), Monckton (neurology) and McLeod (nephrology) to the Department of Medicine.⁽²²⁾ By 1956, the Department had nineteen staff members. The total UofA faculty was thirty-two. Both figures included part-time medical staff. The medical resident staff totaled six.⁽²³⁾ The Department

had already started a clinical research program leading to an M.Sc in Medicine.

In 1956 the Special Services and Research Committee was established at the UAH. It used interest income from the \$1 million reserve accumulated by UAH Superintendent Dr. A.C. McGugan, and the half million Rockefeller Foundation Grant of 1920.⁽²⁴⁾ Dr. Wilson was appointed to the first Special Services and Research Board. The same year the approval of postgraduate medical training programs was switched by the Royal College, from primary teaching hospitals to University accredited training programs. It coincided with the site visit by the American Council on Medical Education and the downgrading of the UofA's approval rating to "conditional probation".

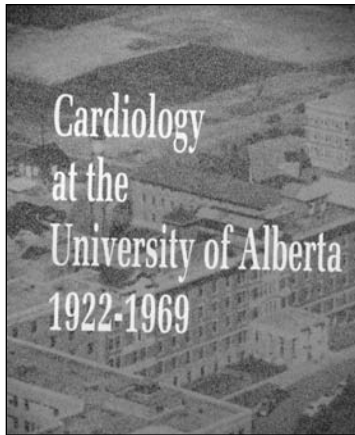
The best efforts of Drs. Wilson, Mackenzie and Scott were needed to turn around the conditional approval rating. The UofA medical faculty were successful in securing a marked infusion of funds for faculty appointments from the university from 1956-1959. The growth and expansion that occurred in the Department of Medicine also extended to all the core departments of medicine, surgery, radiology, pathology, obstetrics/gynecology, and anesthesia for almost ten years.⁽²⁵⁾ It continued and remained the hallmark of the fifteen years of Dean Mackenzie's leadership (1959-1974). Dr. Macbeth termed the decade commencing in 1956 as "the Golden years" at UofA.⁽²⁶⁾ In the end, the reputation of the Faculty of Medicine rose to make it one of the "first class medical schools" on the continent.⁽²⁷⁾

Changes in the Department accelerated with the completion of the 1956 wing. Space was created for the Departments of Rehabilitation medicine, Orthopedics, Cardiovascular surgery, and ENT. The Departments/Divisions of Pediatrics, Psychiatry, and Rehabilitation were made full Departments, and were separated from the Department of Medicine.⁽²⁸⁾

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18. Wilson, Donald R. "The University of Alberta Department of Medicine, 1954-1969: A Personal Review," pages 137, 149.
 19. Wilson, Donald R. "The Faculty of Medicine, University of Alberta," pages 111-112.
 20. Fraser, Robert S. *Cardiology at the University of Alberta*, pages 26-32, 46-52, UofA, 1992. Also noted in Dr. D.R. Wilson's "The University of Alberta, Department of Medicine," pages 137-138.
 21. Wilson, Donald R. "The University of Alberta Department of Medicine, 1954-1969: A Personal Review," page 139.
 22. Wilson, Donald R. "The University of Alberta Department of Medicine, 1954-1969: A Personal Review," page 139.
 23. Wilson, Donald R. In Dr. Dawna Gilchrist's *The History of the Department of Medicine*, pages 17-22.
 24. Vant, J. Ross, Cashman, Tony
 25. Wilson, Donald R. "The Faculty of Medicine, University of Alberta," page 114. For surgical growth see the profile of Dr. W.C. Mackenzie.
 26. Macbeth, Robert A. As quoted in Elise Corbet's *Frontiers of Medicine*, page 83, UofA, 1991. Also see Dr. Mackenzie's profile.
 27. Wilson, Donald R. "The Faculty of Medicine, University of Alberta," page 113.
 28. Wilson, Donald R. In Dr. Dawna Gilchrist's *The History of the Department of Medicine*, pages 17-22.

Geographic fulltime salaried appointments like Dr. Wilson's, were made in the Departments of Pediatrics, Psychiatry, Clinical Laboratories, and Rehabilitation medicine.⁽²⁹⁾ In September 1956 the first non-hypothermic open heart operation was performed. Several months later in 1957 a surgical cardiovascular unit was opened, supported by the new Division of Cardiology.⁽³⁰⁾

By 1958 the department's research grants were up to \$67,000.⁽³¹⁾ That year the Department of Medicine appointed Dr. R. Rossall as their first Director of Graduate Training.⁽³²⁾ The medical outpatient clinics were returned from their downtown location the next year, following completion of the north wing of the hospital and the opening of the ambulatory care unit. The Divisions of Pulmonary Medicine, Endocrinology, and Internal Medicine were created in 1959.



by Dr. R.S. Fraser, UofA, 1992

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Research in the department was augmented by a Muttart grant – one of many Muttart grants – which would eventually provide the department with more than \$4 million.⁽³³⁾

In 1958 the third UofA Markle Scholar in a row, Dr. L.E. Macleod, began the endocrine metabolic laboratory. It became the supporting unit for the acute and later the chronic dialysis program. The UAH became the first hospital in the Commonwealth to introduce the chronic Kiil renal dialysis unit in 1962.⁽³⁴⁾

In 1961 the first postgraduate fellowship candidates in medicine wrote their examinations. All six passed.

Divisionalization continued with the establishment of the divisions of Nephrology (1962), Clinical Pharmacology (1963), Metabolic Diseases (1963), and Gastroenterology (1964).⁽³⁵⁾

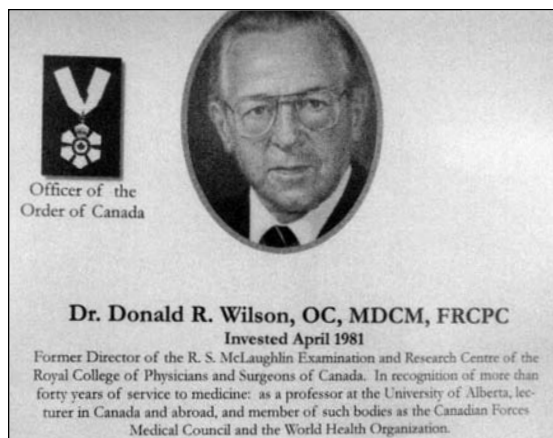
The first cardiac pacemakers were inserted in 1963. In 1964 Dr. Wilson was part of the first successful external cardiac resuscitation at UAH, that led to the establishment of a cardiac resuscitation team in 1965.⁽³⁶⁾

The Hall Royal Commission report tabled in 1964/65 predicted a shortage of doctors to care for the post-war "baby boomers". The faculty began planning for the Clinical Sciences building. It was completed in 1969.

In 1966 all the postgraduate training programs were accredited. The report exceeded expectations.⁽³⁷⁾

In 1967 the clinical clerkship program began for the fourth-year medical students. A revised curriculum

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29. Wilson, Donald R. In Dr. Dawna Gilchrist's *The History of the Department of Medicine*, page 17-22 as well as The University of Alberta Department of Medicine, 1954-1969: A Personal Review, page 140.
30. Callaghan, John C. *30 Years of Open Heart Surgery at the University of Alberta Hospitals*, pages 16-21, UAH, 1986. For a cardiologist's perspective see R.S. Fraser's *Cardiology at the University of Alberta*, pages 76-79.
31. Wilson, Donald R. "The University of Alberta Department of Medicine, 1954-1969: A Personal Review," page 140.
32. Fraser, Robert S. In Dr. Dawna Gilchrist's *The History of the Department of Medicine*, page 19 and his *Cardiology at the University of Alberta*, pages 96-97.
33. Wilson, Donald R. "The Gladys and Merrill Muttart Foundation," pages 185-189 in *Medicine in Alberta: Historical Reflections*, AMF 1993. The largest grant was for \$1.2 million which started the Muttart Diabetes Research and Training Center in 1980. Islet Cell Transplantation Research began in the Center, eventually leading to the development of the Edmonton protocol in 2000. Also see Elise Corbet's *Frontiers of Medicine*, pages 185-186.
34. Lampard, Robert *Edmonton Journal*, December 22, 1962. The first Kiil dialyzed patient was Diane Sutton on December 21, 1962. Also see the profile of Dr. L.E. McLeod.
35. Wilson, Donald R. In Dawna Gilchrist's *The History of the Department of Medicine*, pages 17-32. The mergers and amalgamations reduced the number of divisions to nine, as noted in the Department of Director's report of 1970, by Dr. R.S. Fraser.
36. Fraser, Robert S. *Cardiology at the University of Alberta*, page 39. The first successful resuscitation at UAH was performed on Dr. E.F. Donald, the week before Christmas 1964. The resuscitation was initiated by Dr. R. Lampard and continued by Dr. Wilson. Defibrillation was performed by Dr. R. Rossall. Dr. Donald's partner, Dr. R.K. Thomson, replaced Dr. Donald as the incoming CMA President for 1966/67. Dr. Wilson introduced the resuscitation team concept and approved a two bed coronary ICU unit, as outlined in R.S. Fraser's *Cardiology at the University of Alberta*, pages 39-43, UofA, 1992. The impact of Dr. Donald's resuscitation was described in J.R. Vant and T. Cashman's *More Than a Hospital*, pages 288-290, UofA, 1986.
37. Wilson, Donald R. "History of the Department of Medicine," page 32.



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Order of Canada, 1981. First of 7 recipients from the Department of Medicine (Drs Wilson, Dosseter, Gilbert, Sproule, Tyrrell, Holloran, Aung)

was introduced in 1968.⁽³⁸⁾ Medical research grants to the department were rising and exceeded \$250,000.⁽³⁹⁾ The Rheumatic Disease division was created with its own beds in 1967. The first J.B. Collip Research Professor, Dr. Brian Hudson of Australia came to the department for a year.⁽⁴⁰⁾ A Muttart grant secured an electron microscope for the Collip Research Laboratory.⁽⁴¹⁾

By 1968 Dr. Wilson's interests were changing. The R.S. McLaughlin Research and Examination Centre was established that year with Dr. Wilson as its part-time director. Dr. Wilson located the center at the UofA. Its purpose was to develop a Canadian fellowship examination question database in English, and to begin to standardize national examination questions for graduate medical students.⁽⁴²⁾ That same year the Division of Infectious Disease was established and a transplantation laboratory was opened in the Division of Immunology.⁽⁴³⁾ With it came a three year MRC grant totaling \$1.25 million which augmented the Department's research budget of \$437,000 (1969), increasing it to \$683,000 (1970).⁽⁴⁴⁾ The number of

Residents in medicine peaked at eighty-two before being consolidated as residency training programs began at the University of Calgary. There were ten medical research fellows.

When Dr. Wilson paused to reflect on his fifteen years as Professor and Chairman of Medicine in June 1969, he wrote with some pride "I left with the great satisfaction of having had the good fortune to work with a happy and active group, not only within the department, but among Chairmen of the other clinical departments as well".⁽⁴⁵⁾ Dr. Wilson's written recollections continued a tradition started by Dr. J.W. Scott. Their reflections were incorporated into a recent history of the UofA Department of Medicine.⁽⁴⁶⁾

THE R.S. McLAUGHLIN EXAMINATION AND RESEARCH CENTRE

Donald R. Wilson

Following World War II there was a gradually increasing body of opinion among the Boards of Examiners and the Committee on Examinations of the College that the examination system should be carefully reviewed with the intention of introducing more objective, comprehensive and reliable techniques. The form of the examinations had remained essentially unchanged since the inception of the College in 1929. The first reference in the Committee on Examinations and at Council to the moves in this direction was contained in a two-line notation: Dr. Donald Webster, then professor of surgery at McGill University, inquired as to the nature of the objective examination concept and in reply it was stated that Dr. D.R. Wilson, a member of the Committee, would look into the matter.

At about the same time Dr. Wilson, who had just completed a survey of the examining techniques of the Medical Council of Canada, became acquainted with Dr. John P. Hubbard, who was a visiting professor in paediatrics at the University of Alberta and who had recently been actively engaged in the further development of the National Board of Medical Examiners. This acquaintanceship became increasingly valuable over the years and ultimately resulted in the introduction of a completely objective system of evaluation by the Medical Council of Canada.

From the 50th Anniversary of the RCPSC, 1979

38. Corbet, Elise A. *Frontiers of Medicine*, pages 158-160. The third and fourth years were taught using a more "systems basis" curriculum.
39. Wilson, Donald R. In Dawna Gilchrist's *The History of the Department of Medicine*, pages 17-22 and *The University of Alberta Department of Medicine, University of Alberta, 1954-1969: A Personal Review*, page 145.
40. Wilson, Donald R. *The University of Alberta Department of Medicine, 1954-1969: A Personal Review*, page 146.
41. Wilson, Donald R. Named for Dr. James Bertram Collip. Dr. Wilson wrote of Dr. Collip's Alberta years, in the Appendix to the Committee on Archives report in the Committee Reports to the 1977 annual AMA/College meeting of September 30/October 1, 1982, pages 20-25. For more extensive biographical coverage of Dr. Collip see M.L. Barr and R.J. Rossiter, "James Bertram Collip 1892-1965," in the *Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the Royal Society* 19: 235-251, December 1973 and R. Lampard's profile of "Dr. J.B. Collip."
42. Wilson, Donald R. "The University of Alberta Department of Medicine, 1954-1969: A Personal Review," pages 146-147.
43. Wilson, Donald R. "The University of Alberta Department of Medicine, 1954-1969: A Personal Review," pages 148-149.
44. Fraser, Robert S. "Notes from the Chair 1969-1974" in D.M. Gilchrist's *The History of the Department of Medicine*, pages 23-27. Also see Dr. D.R. Wilson's *The Faculty of Medicine, University of Alberta*, page 114.
45. Wilson, Donald R. "The University of Alberta Department of Medicine, 1954-1969: A Personal Review," page 152.
46. Gilchrist, Dawna M. *The History of the Department of Medicine at the University of Alberta*. For an abridgement of Dr. D.R. Wilson's 1954-1969 report see pages 17-22.

The R.S. McLaughlin Examination and Research Center 1968-1978⁽⁴⁷⁾

Before 1963 the use of essay papers, subjective orals, and clinical examinations for the Royal College of fellowships examinations, produced an inconsistent pattern of examination results. The process raised questions about the reliability of the examinations. The lack of standards or criteria for the pass point was a hardy annual discussion after the Royal College examinations.

Dr. Wilson discussed the lack of guidelines and concern over the process with Dr. John P. Hubbard, the President of the US National Board of Medical Examiners, as early as 1961. The American approach led to the introduction of the first objective Canadian fellowship examinations in Medicine in 1963. The concept was extended to Surgery in 1966, followed by a separate examination on general surgical principles.⁽⁴⁸⁾

In 1967 Dr. F.G. Kergan of Toronto secured a \$50,000/year grant to establish the R.S. McLaughlin Examination and Research Centre. It started on July 1, 1967. Dr. Wilson became the first part time Director in 1968 and the full time Director of the Center on July 1, 1969. Dr. John Beaudoin was appointed the French language Director. He was based at Laval. A five-year grant of \$300,000 from the Muttart Foundation in 1973 completed the computerization of the examination process. In 1975/6 Dr. Wilson took a six-month leave of absence and shared the Canadian experience with Australia, where he was the Guest Director of Continuing Education for the Royal Australian College of Physicians.⁽⁴⁹⁾ By 1977 all of the Part A portion of the MCC examination was from Canadian material.⁽⁵⁰⁾ In 1980 the computerized bank of test questions reached twenty-five thousand. The concept of a global



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Mr. and Mrs. M.D. Muttart present a cheque to UofA President Walter Johns (L) and Donald R. Wilson (R), 1966

examination was also pursued with the World Health Organization. It was easily achievable, but international politics and the fear of losing bright students in underdeveloped countries thwarted its implementation.⁽⁵¹⁾

The Muttart Foundation Board member 1966-1978⁽⁵²⁾

The Muttart Foundation was established by Gladys and Merrill Muttart in 1953. Mrs. Muttart was an insulin-dependent diabetic who relied on Dr. Wilson for her continuing care. Mr. Muttart also became a Type II diabetic. The Muttarts asked Dr. Wilson to help form and guide the Foundation in its selection and support of worthwhile projects. In 1978 he became its Executive Director.

The Foundation gave preference to projects: 1) of global significance, followed by 2) Canadian pro-

47. Wilson, Donald R. "The R.S. McLaughlin Examination and Research Centre" in the *RCPSC 50th Anniversary History*, pages 113-134, RCPSC, 1979. Also reviewed in "The McLaughlin Examination and Research Centre," pages 219-221, in Drs. D.R. Wilson and W.B. Parsons's *Medicine in Alberta: Historical Reflections*; R.B. Kerr's *The History of the Medical Council of Canada*, pages 46-47, MCC, 1969 and James Darragh's "The R.S. McLaughlin Examination and Research Center and the McLaughlin Center for Evaluation," pages 159-171, in *The Evolution of Specialty Medicine 1979-2004*, RCPSC, 2004.
48. Wilson, Donald R. "The McLaughlin Examination and Research Centre" in *Medicine in Alberta: Historical Reflections*, page 221, AMF, 1993.
49. Wilson, Donald R. Unsigned biography, page 1; R.B. Kerr's *History of the Medical Council of Canada*, pages 46-47, 1979; and the "R.S. McLaughlin Examination and Research Centre," page 121.
50. Kerr, R.B. *The History of the Medical Council of Canada*, pages 46-47, MCC, 1979.
51. Wilson, Donald R. "The McLaughlin Examination and Research Centre," page 226, 1993.
52. Wilson, Donald R. "The Gladys and Merrill Muttart Foundation," in *Medicine in Alberta: Historical Reflections*, pages 185-189, AMF, 1993; Dr. D.R. Wilson's "Gladys and Merrill Muttart – Philanthropists par-excellence in Medicine" in the *Faculty of Medicine Bulletin* pages 18-19, Spring, 1986; Dr. D.R. Wilson's "James Bertram Collip," page 23; E.A. Corbett's *Frontiers of Medicine*, pages 185-186; R. Vant and T. Cashman's *More Than a Hospital*, pages 216-217.



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AMF Board 1991: Drs. Robert Lampard, Nick Kuzyk, Peter Winkelaar, Donald Wilson, Gerald McDougall (President)

grams to improve quality of life, before 3) local projects in western Canada or Alberta. The Muttart Foundation gifted start-up funds to address native health problems as well as those for the young, the old, the disadvantaged, and the disabled. Foundation funds were also used to build the Muttart Conservatory in Edmonton and an Art Gallery in Calgary.

Muttart grants to medicine provided the initial funding for the cardiovascular unit at UofA that supported the open heart surgery program. They started the Canadian Diabetic Association and an Alberta diabetic camp. Grants to the UofA Faculty of Medicine funded a curriculum review of medical education, the R.S. McLaughlin examination center, a slow virus laboratory, growth of insulin producing cells on artificial culture media, and two electron microscopes for the Departments of Medicine and Urology. The grants to the Faculty of Medicine were estimated to exceed \$4 million by 1980.⁽⁵³⁾

The Alberta Medical Foundation 1981-1991

AMA interest in medical history dated back at least to 1912. Faculty interest in medical history can be traced as far back as 1924 and a UofA Medical History Department to 1928. Dr. H.C. Jamieson, a lifelong Wilson family friend was appointed the first Professor of Medical History that year.⁽⁵⁴⁾

In 1981 the Committee on Archives asked the AMA to create the framework to solicit donations from

physicians and others.⁽⁵⁵⁾ The next year Dr. D.R. Wilson became Chairman of the Archives committee. On February 12, 1982 Dr. Margaret Hutton, a retired member of the O&G Department, amended her will to gift the residual of her estate to the AMA. She died on June 10, 1983. The funds were transferred on August 31, 1985.

The AMA Board sought submissions from its members on how best to use the bequest. Dr. Wilson, the most experienced AMA member at forming Foundations, proposed that some or all of the funds be transferred to a new foundation, that would research, study, publish, collect and retain artifacts, and encourage the teaching of medical history in Alberta. Dr. Wilson was the successful applicant.

The new Alberta Medical Foundation (AMF) was officially incorporated in 1986/87 and the Hutton bequest of \$313,218 was transferred to it. The AMA Board, as the AMF shareholders, appointed Dr. D.R. Wilson as the founding Chairman. He presided over the AMF Board from August 11, 1987 until the summer of 1989. By the turn of the century, the AMF, through direct or matched contributions, disbursed \$1.5 million toward medical history projects in Alberta.⁽⁵⁶⁾

Dr. Wilson as a Raconteur

Dr. Wilson was always a fountain of stories. When "D.R." met Lt. Governor Dr. R.G. Brett on the way to Sunday school circa 1920, he informed him his father was a doctor too. So Lt. Governor Brett offered to take D.R. to church. The offer petrified him, so he found an excuse to decline it and avoid embarrassment.⁽⁵⁷⁾

Dr. Wilson's forty-two page unpublished manuscript entitled "Life with my Medical Father" (Dr. W.A. Wilson) was an entertaining source of many "D.R." stories.⁽⁵⁸⁾ In 1922 a youthful Don Wilson flew on his first flight with Wop May. After starting school, D.R. wrote how he developed tularemia and typhoid fever from cow's milk, so his Father brought a goat home. His Mother replied just as quickly, "it is the goat or me", so the goat was replaced with a Jersey cow to provide milk for the summer. His father's love affair

53. Wilson, Donald R. "The Gladys and Merrill Muttart Foundation," page 189.

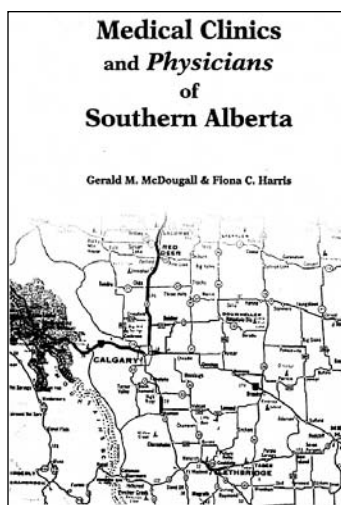
54. Corbet, Elise *Frontiers of Medicine*, pages 16, 146, UofA, 1990. The earliest activities directed to recording and preserving Alberta's medical history appear in the AMA/CPSA Proceedings of 1911/1912.

55. Lampard, Robert Minutes of the AMA Committee on Archives, June 5, 1981.

56. Lampard, Robert See the profile of Dr. Margaret M. Hutton. The AMA charter Board members were: Drs. D.R. Wilson (Chairman), P.B. Allen, N.J. Kuzyk, G.M. McDougall, R.W. Winter, F.D. Semaka.

57. Wilson, Donald R. Introduction to *Medical Clinics and Physicians of Southern Alberta* by Dr. G.M. McDougall, pages iii-iv, UofC, 1991.

58. Wilson, Donald R. "Life with my Medical Father," by Dr. W.A. Wilson. 42 page manuscript, in the Wilson Family Archives.



by G.M. McDougall and F.C. Harris, UofC 1991

with animals extended to dog shows. He took D.R. to one in Manitoba and kept him out of school for three weeks.

On another occasion his father borrowed the College Registrar Dr. G.R. Johnson's Dodge car in Calgary, because his own car would not start. They drove it from Calgary to High River. A dust storm on the way back halted the two at Midnapore for the night with little money for supper. His father promised to make it up dinner wise, and did the next night. Once when D.R. was answering the telephones in his father's office, the northern fur trader Colin Fraser arrived to pay his bill. The aroma from not bathing for the winter was enough to empty a very full waiting room in minutes. Since payments were usually in furs, the family always had a warm and furried winter.⁽⁵⁹⁾

In 1941 Dr. Wilson went on an Air Force recruiting trip to Ft. McMurray. No one answered the recruitment call, so Dr. Wilson and his pilot ventured off on a successful grouse hunt. Missing the return flight they had to take the train back to Edmonton which took another two days. During the war he met Grant McConaghey the founder of TCA (now Air Canada), and told the story of how McConaghey became so hypoxic in an over-the-mountains flight without supplemental oxygen, that he became disorientated and flew the plane back to Edmonton, only to realize his mistake when he landed.

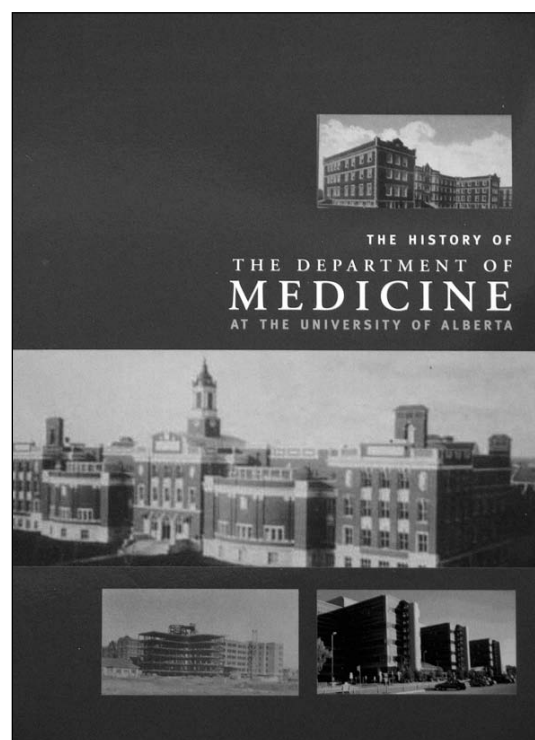
Another airplane story centered on Dr. Heber Jamieson. In his retirement, Dr. Jamieson was learning to fly and was afraid to land the training plane. To force the issue his instructor detached his joystick, tapped Dr. Jamieson on the shoulder, and threw it

out of the plane. Dr. Jamieson did the same. Fortunately Jamieson had brought an extra stick "just in case" and landed the plane without difficulty. When the Wilson's eldest son was "lost" for several hours, Dr. Wilson called all the Edmonton radio stations to broadcast a call for the missing boy. The Wilson's neighbor Wop May found him not far from home.⁽⁶⁰⁾

Dr. Wilson as a Medical Historian

Dr. Wilson's bibliography, albeit incomplete, covered a very broad range of the subjects. (Appendix 1) His observations were usually based on personal experiences and thus have additional value, as often they were the only articles written on the topic.

While one of Dr. Wilson's most lasting contributions was to secure the Hutton endowment and bring the AMF into existence, it wasn't the only one. With Dr. W.B. Parsons', the two authors became the core committee charged with editing the Colleges' 75th Anniversary History book. It was to update Dr. H.C. Jamieson's "Early Medicine in Alberta" (1947), the only source book on Alberta's medical history. "Medicine in Alberta: Historical Reflections" was published by the AMF after Dr. Wilson's death in 1993. It contained 295 pages of rich reflections, anecdotes and recollections from medicine in



by Dr. Donna Gilchrist, UofA, 2004

59. Wilson, Donald R. "Life with my Medical Father," pages 37-41.

60. Wilson, Donald R. "Life with my Medical Father," pages 15-17.



Investiture into the Order of St. John, by Gov. Gen. Schreyer, 1981 31-11

Alberta to 1980. Dr. Wilson authored eight and Dr. Parsons four of the twenty-six topics.⁽⁶¹⁾

Dr. Wilson encouraged many of his colleagues, not just for the 1980 medical history project but on the AMF Board, to become authors and record their own stories. He remained very interested in any Alberta medical history projects.⁽⁶²⁾

Acknowledgements and Awards

Dr. Wilson was a longstanding consultant and a member of the Medical Advisory Board of the RCAF and Canadian Forces Medical Council. He received an FACP in 1956 and was made an honorary fellow of the Royal Australian College of Physicians in 1980. Like Dr. Mackenzie, he was asked to give the Louis Mervish Lecture in South Africa in 1978.

Dr. Wilson was appointed to many boards including the Royal College of Physicians of Canada, the American Board of Medical Examiners and the American Board of Internal Medicine. Stimulated by discussions during Dr. Harold Orr's CMA Presidential tour, Dr. Wilson, with Drs. Walter Mackenzie and T.C. Routley founded the UofA Chapter of Alpha Omega Alpha Society (AOA) on November 28, 1958. The society, then one hundred years old, was estab-

lished "to recognize and perpetuate excellence in the medical profession". The AOA Charter was presented by Dr. Walter Dierring of the American AOA to Dr. Walter Johns, UofA President.⁽⁶³⁾ The first Chairman was Dr. E.P. Scarlett.

Dr. Wilson was appointed an Officer in the Order of Canada, April 8, 1981 and an Officer in the Order of St. John, October 23, 1981. He received the prestigious Duncan Graham Award for outstanding contributions to the RCPSC in 1981, as had Dr. W.C. Mackenzie in 1971. The RCPSC gave him their first Award of Merit on September 23, 1989. Dr. Wilson became the AMA's expert on forming foundations. He managed or formed three that continued: the R.S. McLaughlin Examination Centre, the Muttart Foundation and the Alberta Medical Foundation. In 2005 Dr. Wilson was named one of Alberta's 100 Physicians of the Century.



Receiving the Order of Canada, from Gov. Gen. Edward Schreyer, 1981 31-12

Dr. D.R. Wilson and the Wilson Family

Dr. Wilson contributed to medicine and medical institutions for over fifty-two years. His contributions reflected his diverse talents, interests and ability. He was a well-rounded athlete and a natural leader. After he had made his mark, his practice was to step aside and promote the well-trained successors he had selected. Quiet, unpretentious, supportive, unobtrusive but always in command, he never lost the admiration of the many colleagues who worked above him, along side him or under him.

61. Wilson, Donald R., Parsons, William B. *Medicine in Alberta: Historical Reflections*, 295 pages, AMF, 1993. The Forward by Dr. R.S. Fraser outlined how this important book almost didn't get completed.

62. Wilson, Donald R. Drs. G.M. McDougall and R. Lampard were two physicians who benefited from Dr. Wilson's interest and encouragement in the writing of their books.

63. Wilson, Donald R. "The Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society," pages 292-295, in *Medicine in Alberta: Historical Reflections*, AMF, 1993.

He was a person's person. He could talk to anyone and he was interested in everyone. Like his father Dr. W.A. Wilson, D.R. could work all day and live on four hours of sleep a night. His straightforward, direct and to-the-point approach was the hallmark of his leadership style.⁽⁶⁴⁾ On occasion his contributions were confused with a second Dr. D.R. Wilson, his namesake and the well known surgeon from Toronto, and a third Dr. D.R. Wilson, the UofA Dean of Medicine from 1984-1994.

While Dr. Wilson's later life was a challenge, it never diverted him. He faced colon and prostate cancer and his wife developed a benign but inoperable tumor of her lower spine. Before he died on December 19, 1991, he asked his friends and colleagues to make donations to the Palliative Pain Foundation he established in her name.

Dr. Wilson was remembered with fondness and admiration for the impact and influence he had on the medical lives, careers, and contributions of many of his colleagues and students. He was one of the unsung heroes of medicine at the UofA during its most important years of growth.⁽⁶⁵⁾

I have very clear memories of Dr. Heber Jamieson; Dr. George Johnson, Dr. Mackid, Dr. Brett, Dr. George Stanley and Dr. Earle Scarlett. It was my privilege to follow in the footsteps of that somewhat unpredictable physician and historian, Dr. Heber Jamieson, in developing a division of endocrinology at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Alberta. I also became his doctor during the latter years of his life. Heber's spirit of adventure never failed him right up to the end of his days.

I have many warm recollections of Dr. Earle Scarlett. To relate them here would be overloading this foreword. Suffice it to say that he was unquestionably the leading figure in medical history in the province among his many other accomplishments.

The statement is often made at these times that there are no more colorful characters, that they are all gone, and that nothing very exciting is happening on the medical scene. I don't happen to believe that current times are dull.

Excerpt from Dr. Wilson's Foreword to Medical Clinics and Physicians of Southern Alberta, March 1990

In 1942, Dr. Wilson married Ruth Molson Russel of Montreal. Her father was the physician who recruited Dr. Wilder Penfield to start the Montreal Neurological Institute. The Wilsons had four children: Donald Barrie, MD, FRCP (1946), Joan Russel, MD (1948), Richard Wilfred, LLB (1952) and his fraternal twin sister Barbara Kerr (1952), an Edmonton physiotherapist. Dr. Wilson's brother Gordon was an orthopedic surgeon on the UofA/UAH medical staff.

Related Profiles: Rankin, W.A. Wilson, Jamieson, Collip, Mackenzie, Hutton, McLeod

Related Perspectives: Medicine, the War Years

Key Words: Rhodes scholar, swimmer and hockey player, Endocrinologist, Professor and Chairman of the Department of Medicine (UofA), Muttart Foundation, R.S. McLaughlin Examination Centre, Alberta Medical Foundation

Attachments: A bibliography of Dr. D.R. Wilson's publications



31-13

Ruth and Don Wilson at the Rhodes Scholar reception, Balloil College, Oxford; circa 1988

64. Stogryn, Joan

65. Sproule, Brian

Interview with R. Lampard, Vancouver, BC, October 29, 2004. Dr. Stogryn is Dr. D.R. Wilson's daughter. Tribute to Dr. Donald R. Wilson, presented to the UofA Department of Medicine in February 1992. Three pages. Copy in the possession of the author.

Appendix I

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