



# Thomas Edward Cone, Jr.



Thomas Edward Cone, Jr. was born in Brooklyn, New York. He received his BA degree from Columbia College in 1936 and his MD degree from Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York in 1939. Following a rotating internship at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York, he entered the Navy during World War II and remained in the service for 22 years rising from the rank of Lieutenant (jg) to Captain. He first served as Chief of Pediatrics at the US Naval Hospital in Philadelphia from 1951 to 1953 and then, with great distinction, as Chief of Pediatrics at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland from 1953-1963. Thereafter, he held the academic ranks of clinical associate professor of pediatrics at Georgetown University School of Medicine and lecturer in pediatrics at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. During this time, he also served as a consultant to the Albert Schweitzer Hospital in Haiti, as chairman of

the Academy of Pediatrics section on military pediatrics and as a member of the Pediatric History Club.

At Columbia, Tom Cone demonstrated his love of scholarship for he was a classics scholar and knew both Greek and Latin. He developed a love for the poetry of William Butler Yeats. His Navy years were happy ones and he was deeply proud of the role he played at Bethesda. He often told the story of being on duty the night the then Senator Lyndon Johnson was admitted with a heart attack. He helped coordinate the admission and subsequent care of the future President of the United States.

In 1963, Dr. Charles A. Janeway invited him to come to Harvard Medical School and Children's Hospital which he served for a subsequent 19 years until his retirement in 1982. Working initially with Dr. Janeway and then with Dr. Mary Ellen Avery, he served in several capacities including assistant director of the adolescent division, chief of medical ambulatory services and senior associate in clinical genetics and chief of the birth defects unit at the Children's Hospital. He rose in academic rank from associate clinical professor of pediatrics to clinical professor of pediatrics at the Harvard Medical School. Following retirement in 1982, he maintained an active interest in the Children's Hospital and its activities and taught several courses at the Harvard Institute for Learning in Retirement.

Tom Cone's years at Children's were productive and fruitful. He derived particular joy from joining with Dr. Park Gerald to develop the birth defects unit. Dr. Gerald's scientific approach and Tom Cone's encyclopedic clinical knowledge of relevant syndromes blended perfectly and together formed a wonderful service. He had a strong interest in residents from abroad and served as a most helpful colleague to Dr. Janeway by assisting residents and fellows find their way at Children's Hospital and Harvard.

Tom Cone's interests were many and varied. He was a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Association for the History of Medicine, the American Pediatric Society, the Benjamin Waterhouse Medical History Society, and the New York Academy of Sciences. He was a founding member of the Society for the Social History of Medicine (London), Secretary/Treasurer for 14 years of the New England Pediatric Society and co-founder and president of the Irish American Pediatric Society. He received many honors over his professional lifetime including being decorated by the Republic of Brazil with the order of Naval Merit for Distinguished Service to the children of Brazil and the Outstanding Service Award for lifetime contribution to military pediatrics from the Academy of Pediatrics' Section on Uniformed Services. The Thomas E. Cone, Jr., M.D. lecture in perinatal history, established by the Section on Perinatal Pediatrics of the American Academy of Pediatrics, was established in 1993 in his honor. On October 4, 1996, his many contributions were recognized by the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland through honorary fellowship.

Dr. Robert Masland relates that Tom was extremely proud of his long and dedicated service as Secretary/Treasurer of the New England Pediatric Society. His role as a founder of the Irish American Pediatric Society allowed him to celebrate his Irish and American roots. He attended regularly meetings held on alternate years in Ireland and the U.S. Most meaningful of all was his honorary fellowship in the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland which was awarded one year before his death. As related by Dr. Estherann Grace, in a splendid ceremony filled with brilliantly colored robes, a regal procession with fanfare and warm and generous speeches, Tom Cone received the honor in his usual humble, understated way, recalling with pride his forebears. This was perhaps the highlight of his career.

Tom Cone was a prodigious writer and a serious scholar. He served as editor for books for Pediatrics from 1965-1974 and associate editor of Pediatrics from 1967-1974. He also served on the editorial boards of *Current Problems in Pediatrics*, *Clinical Pediatrics* and *PostGraduate Medicine*. Between 1964 and 1984 he published more than 600 historical notes in *Pediatrics* under the byline T.E.C. Jr. He was the author of more than 150 scientific papers and three books including *The History of American Pediatrics* and *The History of the Care and Feeding of the Premature Infant*, both invaluable references for students of pediatric history.

Tom Cone was a scholar. He loved books and collected them. He maintained a large library in his home in Lincoln, filled with volumes on the history of pediatrics, infant feeding and nutrition. He was a critical, but kind editor. Dr. John Graef recalls that his editing of the *Manual of Pediatric Therapeutics* was always concerned with content and accuracy, but his criticism was expressed gently and in the form of a question or inquiry. His contributions to pediatrics as historical notes were read and enjoyed by countless pediatricians throughout the United States. These notes brought him renown as a collector of pediatric history. As reflected upon by Dr. Mary Ellen Avery, his talents as a collector and as a student of the works of others were legendary.

Tom Cone lived in Lincoln Massachusetts with his wife, Barbara (Cross). They had two daughters,

Mary C. Barrie of Toronto, Canada and Elizabeth C. Smallridge of Jacksonville, Florida and a son, Thomas E. Cone, III of Andover, Massachusetts as well as six grandchildren. Dr. Cone died at the age of 82 following a brief illness.

Tom Cone's human qualities were omnipresent. He was foremost and always both a gentleman and a gentle man. He was kind, decent, honest, straightforward and unadorned. He had an encyclopedic mind. He was private, self-effacing and didn't seek the limelight. He was a religious man and developed a strong interest in comparative religions. This scholar, gentleman and intensely decent man left a distinct mark on pediatrics as well as on his many colleagues and friends.

Respectfully submitted,

Frederick H. Lovejoy, Jr., *Chairperson*

Mary Ellen Avery

John Graef

Estherann Grace

Robert Masland