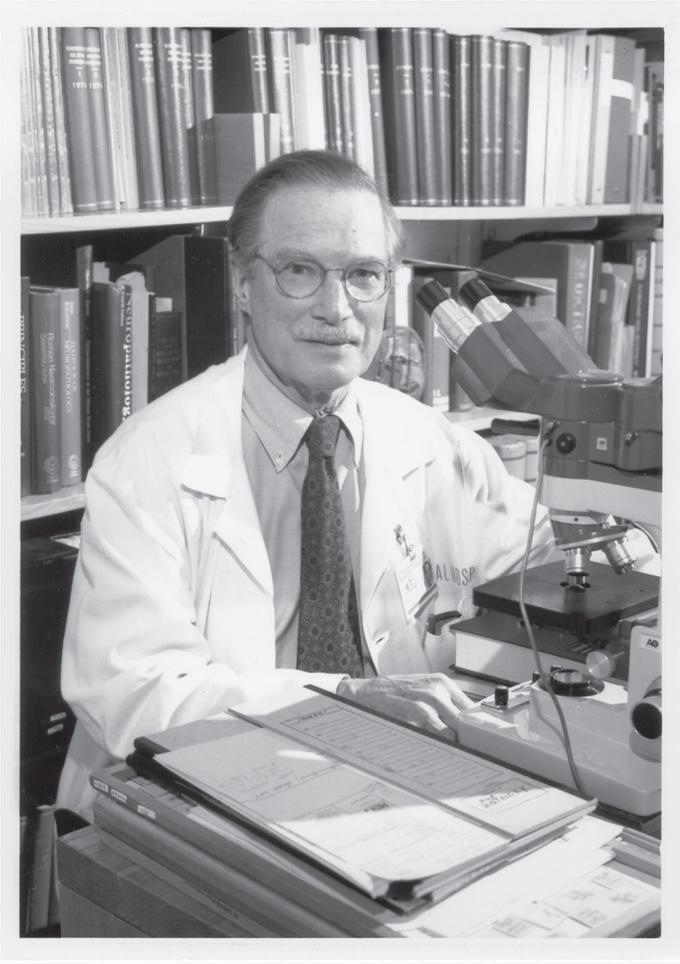




Edward Peirson Richardson, Jr.



Dr. Edward Peirson Richardson, Jr., Harvard Medical School Bullard Professor of Neuropathology, *Emeritus*, died November 30, 1998, after a long battle with lymphoma. “EP”, as he was known to generations of trainees and colleagues, was a gentleman and scholar of the highest standing. He was born at the Massachusetts General Hospital on April 3, 1918, the descendant of two illustrious Boston medical families. EP’s father and paternal grandfather were chiefs of the Surgical Service at the Massachusetts General Hospital as well as professors at Harvard Medical School, and he was the sixth Shattuck physician in the direct line, including four generations of Harvard Medical School professors, the first of whom also served as Dean (1864-1869). After preparation at Milton Academy, EP joined the Harvard College Class of 1939, majoring in German, and subsequently the Harvard Medical School Class of 1943A.

Dr. Richardson’s more than 50-year association with the Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) began with an internship in medicine (1943-44). EP then served as a US Army Physician in the

Pacific in World War II from 1944 to 1946. He returned to the MGH in 1946 for a residency in psychiatry under Dr. Stanley Cobb. In 1947 he went to London to study neurology at the National Hospital for Nervous Diseases in Queen Square, and psychiatry at the Maudsley Hospital. While at Queen Square he met Dr. J. Godwin Greenfield, the noted neuropathologist, who confirmed EP’s burgeoning interest in neuropathology. In 1949 Peirson returned once more to the MGH as assistant to Dr. Charles S. Kubik, who had established the hospital’s neuropathology laboratory some years before. In 1951, Dr. Richardson took over the direction of this laboratory and led it to international recognition, working with illustrious professors of neurology and pathology, including Raymond D. Adams, C. Miller Fisher, Benjamin Castleman, Robert E. Scully and Robert T. McCluskey. He directed the neuropathology service until 1989. Although he formally retired in that year, he continued to work and teach until a few months before his death. Despite his many neuropathological duties, Peirson remained a sought-after clinician, attending

regularly on the wards and engaging in a limited clinical neurological practice. Peirson's contributions were a *sine qua non* for making the neurology service at the MGH one of the world's foremost neurological centers.

He was a much-respected and beloved teacher of neuropathology, not only of MGH neurology residents, who for 25 years spent one year of their training in his laboratory, but also of pathology residents and Harvard Medical School students. Dr. Richardson taught in the course in classical neuropathology at the Harvard Medical School, directed by Dr. Raymond D. Adams and Dr. Alfred Pope, for more than 20 years. Although this course was designed for the second-year medical students, it was also taken by trainees in neuropathology. This course had the additional beneficial effect of enabling all the young neuropathologists in Boston to get to know each other as well as EP. EP's interest in medical student education continued well into his eighth decade and included a leading role in the design, implementation, and teaching of the neuropathological portion of the New Pathway Course in Neuroscience (Human Nervous System and Behavior). He made numerous contributions to the weekly Cabot CPC cases published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. He helped prepare the clinical protocol for the neurological cases, presented many of the neuropathological discussions, and participated in the editing of the final product. All of his writings were characterized by precise wording, clear syntax, detailed surveys of the literature, and meticulous study of the case material.

EP's contributions to neuropathology are extensive: the original description of progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy; papers on cortical basal degeneration, granulomatous angiitis of the nervous system, multiple sclerosis, leukodystrophies and other demyelinating conditions, Huntington's disease, Hallervorden-Spatz disease, Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, developmental abnormalities and peripheral neuropathies; and the training of many of the leaders in neurology and neuropathology around the world as well as in the United States. The breadth of his interests in neuropathology was extraordinary, encompassing almost every category of neurological disease.

EP continued a tradition begun during Dr. Kubik's tenure as Director of Neuropathology of holding a neuropathological teaching session uninterrupted by clinical duties on Tuesday evenings. The group assembled for dinner for discussions of sailing, music, or other subjects of interest, and afterwards EP would get out his little black book containing the most instructive (or puzzling) cases and select the slides from one of them, stained with many of the classical neuropathological stains, for examination by the group. After everyone had discussed their observations, diagnoses and possible clinical history, as he listened attentively while creating "doodles" of ships, trolley cars, etc., he would reveal the real story and discuss the correlation between the clinical and pathological features of the case.

He was widely recognized for his achievements and received numerous honors. He was appointed Professor of Neuropathology in 1974 and Bullard Professor of Neuropathology in 1984 at the Harvard Medical School. He served on the editorial boards of many neurology, pathology, and neuropathology journals. He was elected President of the American Association of Neuropathologists for 1973-74, and in 1988, the American Association of Neuropathologists awarded him its Meritorious Service award. He was a Charter Member of and an active participant in the Diagnostic Slide Session of the American Association of Neuropathologists from its inception in 1958. He served as a consultant to the National

Institutes of Health in many capacities including service on the Council of the National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Disorders and Stroke. In 1982, he received the Senior Scientist Award of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. He was elected a member of the Royal Society of Medicine in 1984. He was twice Litchfield Lecturer at Oxford University, first in 1975 and again in 1990. Also, in 1990, he was the Dorothy Russell Memorial Lecturer of the British Neuropathological Association. He served on the Boards of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, The United Leukodystrophy Foundation, The French Foundation for Alzheimer's Research and others.

Peirson had a deep appreciation of music. He played trombone for the Harvard Band while in college and again at the 75th Anniversary of the Band celebrations in 1994, including performing on the field. He also played each year in the Annual Carol Sing at MGH. He was an active supporter of the New England Conservatory of Music. In addition, he was fluent in French and German and welcomed every opportunity to speak these languages as well as study new ones. Peirson maintained a life long interest in sailing. Many of his happiest moments were with his family aboard their schooner, "Serenity", in Maine waters. He also kept up a longstanding interest in railroads, steam trains, narrow gauges and Pullmans. He remained vigorous and even while ailing would still run up three flights of stairs, chop wood or vault a rural streamlet like a youth.

Above all, Peirson was a warm, friendly, courteous, cheerful person who was unfailingly kind to all he met. His soft-spoken, friendly manner endeared him to his trainees and to his colleagues. He was a paradigm of fellowship and probity, and had an equanimity that was the envy of his colleagues. He was, however, never reluctant to disagree quietly but firmly with any proposed diagnosis he thought was incorrect. The breadth and depth of his knowledge in neuropathology was continually fed by his excitement on looking through the microscope, especially when it was rewarded by finding a hitherto unrecognized diagnostic feature or by gaining insight into a disease process. Such an event would suddenly alter his placid manner to one of joyful exuberance. The deep affection that he engendered in his trainees was demonstrated by the return of more than 130 of them to a celebration in his honor in 1990.

EP's long-term interest in medical students and education was manifested by his benefactions to the Harvard Medical School, as well as to the Massachusetts General Hospital. We all miss him and his zest for life. He is survived by his wife Margaret "Peggy" Eustis, whom he married in 1951, two daughters, Clara Richardson Simpson and Margaret Eustis Reick, a son, Edward Peirson Richardson III, a brother, George, and four grandchildren. His brother, Elliot, died a year after Peirson in 1999. His brother, George, speaking at his memorial service, captured him in the following words:

"Tended and taught by the gentlest and wisest of beings,
He became as a teacher the gentlest and wisest himself,
with all the good things in that Latin word, "pius":
dutiful, filial, brotherly, fatherly,
honest, upright, conscientious.
What seemed to be quaint and old-fashioned formality
was the merest hint of a deep-seated reverence:

seeing the Universe in its details,
the world in a grain of sand,
and in us, in all of us,
striving souls, like himself.”

Respectfully submitted,

E. Tessa Hedley-Whyte, *Chairperson*

Alfred Pope, Co-chairperson

Raymond D. Adams

Umberto De Girolami

C. Miller Fisher

David N. Louis

George S. Richardson

Robert E. Scully

Jean-Paul Vonsattel