



Richard Warren



A remarkably skilled surgeon, inspiring teacher, author of a leading Textbook of Surgery, devoted member of the Harvard Medical faculty for fifty years, Dr. Richard Warren '34 died on September 23, 1999, of a prolonged degenerative neurological disorder.

Born in Boston on May 12, 1907, Dr. Warren was the son of Joseph Warren, the Weld Professor of Law at the Harvard Law School, and the former Constance Williams. After graduation from Milton Academy (1925) and Harvard College (1929), Richard Warren studied for a year at Trinity College, Cambridge (1930) before enrolling in the Harvard Medical School, from whence he graduated in 1934. Following Internship in Surgery at the Massachusetts General

(1934-1936) and a Chief Residency in Surgery at the Peter Bent Brigham (1936-1938), Dr. Warren undertook a fellowship in gastroenterology under the tutelage of Dr. Jonathan Rhoads at the University of Pennsylvania.

Returning to Boston, Dr. Warren was appointed Assistant in Surgery, and began his career as a teacher, soon to be interrupted by war. In 1942 he joined the Fifth General Hospital, the "Harvard Medical Unit," a division of which was stationed in England, before moving to the Continent. Rising in rank from Captain to Lieutenant Colonel, Warren held a command position of major responsibility in the care of the wounded.

Between World War I and World War II, the United States Veterans Administration had suffered a gradual loss of interest on the part of both the public and the Congress, as well as deterioration in the academic credentials of its leadership. Veterans of World War I along with those very few survivors of the Civil War and the Spanish War, comprised the patients. With World War II came an immense overload of new clinical and surgical problems, casualties of by far the largest army in the history of the United States.

*In tribute to their dedicated efforts to science and medicine, deceased members of the Harvard Faculty of Medicine (those at the rank of full or emeritus professor) receive a review of their life and contributions with a complete reflection, a **Memorial Minute**.*

During the last year of the War, Drs. Elliott Cutler, Paul Hawley, and Paul Magnusen, active officers with a record of Army service stretching back to World War I, collaborated in reorganizing the Hospitals of the Veterans Administration. The key to their remarkable plan was the formation of regional Deans' Committees, establishing close and cordial working relationships between medical schools and the hospitals of the Veterans Administration (VA). As a result, the VA Hospitals soon took on an entirely new aspect, namely, full-time staffing from the professorial ranks of University personnel. A quiet revolution had given our VA Hospitals the status shared by the finest University Hospitals.

Dr. Warren's interest in the continuing care of the soldiers with whom he had served during the war, now veterans, led to his appointment in 1946 as Chief of the Surgical Service of the newly opened Veterans Administration Hospital in West Roxbury. He rejoined the staff of the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital (later the Brigham and Women's Hospital) and was appointed Professor of Surgery at the Harvard Medical School.

Dr. Warren's interest in medical teaching ranged widely over the next several decades, as evidenced by his several clinical visits to the Medical School in Ibadan, Nigeria, which on occasion required his presence for several months at a time; an expanding tutorial exchange with St. Thomas' Hospital in London; and an important role in the Veterans Administration central office in Washington, D.C. There, in 1965 he was appointed Chief of the General Surgery Section. Dr. Warren's work at the Cambridge City Hospital (1966-1971), strengthening both the Departments of Surgery and of Anesthesia, helped to bring that important community hospital more closely into the family of Harvard teaching institutions.

Dr. Warren was active in several roles at the Harvard Medical Library and in the Countway Library of Medicine after it was formed by the joining of the Harvard Medical Library with the Boston Medical Library. He was particularly active in cataloging, arranging, and updating the Warren Family Collection. This was a collection of books both rare and ancient as well as modern, that had been started by John Warren, the first Professor of Surgery, with substantial additions by subsequent Warrens, Richard's ancestors. This collection included a first edition of Vesalius' "Fabrica," the Etienne Anatomy Works of the early 16th century, and other notable acquisitions.

Richard Warren's clinical interest lay in the surgery of the blood vessels. During his career three major revolutions in blood vessel surgery occurred, to which he collaborated: angiography, anticoagulation using heparin, and blood vessel grafting. Disturbed by the careless methods then in use for amputation by amputees Dr. Warren promoted the establishment of a national program for their care.

Dr. Warren was Editor-in-Chief of *Archives of Surgery* from 1966 to 1976. Following this he was appointed Associate Chief of Staff for Research at the Veterans Hospital. In recognition of his services, the Richard Warren Surgical Research and Educational Fund was established by the Veterans Administration, in 1985.

Dr. Warren was an admirer of the *Textbook of Surgery* written by one of his teachers, Dr. John Homans. This text formed the basis of surgical training at the Harvard Medical School for many decades. Seeking to update this book, he published his textbook, *Surgery*, in 1963 (Saunders). As in the Homans book, the co-authors were his colleagues on the Harvard Faculty. Dr. Warren published several other books on vascular surgery and was the author or co-author of over 160 articles on many aspects of surgery, teaching, and medical writing.

Though he was asked to speak at the dedication of the Warren Building at the Massachusetts General Hospital, Dr. Warren rarely spoke of his remarkable surgical ancestry. His surgical ancestors included John Warren, the first Professor of Surgery, John Collins Warren, the second Professor, and the first surgeon to employ ether anesthesia for insensibility to pain, and Dr. Jonathan Mason Warren, one of the first to concentrate on plastic and reconstructive surgery. Richard Warren's grandfather was Dr. John Collins Warren (JCW), the first Moseley Professor of Surgery, and the first to bring principles of bacteriology and surgical asepsis from Europe to America. JCW had studied with Lister in England and, despite opposition by the conservative element of American surgery, insisted on the wide application of surgical cleanliness, now the basis of all surgical care.

Richard Warren was a handsome man with a ready smile and friendly greeting to students and colleagues. In the operating room, however, he was "commander of the ship," sometimes curt, snapping commands, and very intolerant of unnecessary delay.

In 1933 Richard Warren married Cora Lyman. They had four children, Janet Warren Rogers of Deerfield, MA, Constance Warren Mery of Point Reyes Station, CA, Richard Agassiz Warren of Grafton, VT, and John Collins Warren of Newton, MA, eleven grandchildren, and eleven great-grandchildren. Cora Warren died in 1983. In 1984, Warren married Kathleen Godfrey Kinmonth, the widow of John Kinmonth, his close friend and collaborator who had been Professor of Surgery at St. Thomas' Hospital in London.

Dr. Warren's lifelong hobbies were dendrology, ocean cruising, and racing his yacht "Phalarope." A worker at the Arnold Arboretum for many years, he was a student of conifers of the western hemisphere. He reedited Sargent's *Manual of Trees*, and *Trees in Massachusetts*. As a blue water sailor, he made two transatlantic crossings. He enjoyed ocean racing both on the Atlantic coast of the USA, and on the southern coast of Ireland.

Several years before his death he began to suffer the symptoms of Parkinson's disease. The disease progressed inexorably, with a prolonged period of semi-consciousness terminated only by the welcome relief of death.

Richard Warren will always be remembered for his work in the study and teaching of surgery, and his leadership as Professor of Surgery at the Harvard Medical School, helping to bring the entire Veterans

Administration Hospital system up to the standards of the University teaching centers. His pupils include hundreds of surgeons in many centers of this country as well as in Europe, Africa, and Asia. This remarkable career was entirely fitting for the inheritor of a family tradition of Harvard surgery going back over 200 years.

Respectfully Submitted,

Francis D. Moore, *Chairperson*

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