

# Obituary

**PORTIA GRENFELL HOLMAN, retired, formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital, London NW1.**

Dr Portia Holman, a foundation Fellow of the College, died suddenly on 16 May 1983 at the age of 79.

Dr Holman, an Australian by birth, was educated at the Women's College, Sydney, but in 1923 she went up to Newnham, Cambridge, a college to which, in various capacities, she gave unstinted service for the rest of her days. At Newnham she first read economics, a subject in which she lectured and did research at St Andrew's University between 1927 and 1933.

It seems probable that the psychosocial problems she encountered in industry demanded a fuller explanation, and to this end she began a second career in medicine with psychiatry as her ultimate objective. Her career in medicine was a distinguished one: she qualified MB, BChir, Cambridge in 1933 and proceeded to the MD in 1950. She gained the MRCP London in 1944 and was elected FRCP in 1961.

Dr Holman will always be identified as a pioneer in the field of Child Guidance with a special interest in the education of maladjusted children. Nearly 40 years ago, in 1946, she was appointed consultant to the Twickenham Child Guidance Clinic. Later she was appointed to the West Middlesex Hospital and the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital, where she eventually became Senior Psychiatrist. She retired from her hospital appointment because of age in 1969. Dr Holman was the author of many learned papers, but the one work (written with Amy Sycamore) in which she was able to expound her novel ideas was *Sebastian's: A Hospital School Experiment in Therapeutic Education*.

Portia Holman was a gentle, shy, nervous lady, an appearance that tended to belie her strength of character and, indeed, her personal courage. Despite her patrician heritage and upbringing, she was always on the side of the underdog. In her political beliefs she remained steadfastly left-of-centre. She volunteered for service in the Spanish Civil War on the anti-Franco side. She was allocated the job of cleaning out latrines, a job she did, if not with relish, then with determination. 'I left them cleaner than when I started', is how she laconically described her contribution to the cause.

**NATHAN SCHELLENBERG KLINE, Professor and Director of Rockland Research Institute, Orangeburg, NY 10962, USA.**

Dr Nathan Kline, Honorary Member of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, died on 11 February 1983 at the age of 66.

Dr Kline had a distinguished career as an educator,

research worker and clinical psychiatrist. He was born in Philadelphia, educated at Harvard, Princeton and Rutgers Universities. He obtained an MA degree at Clark University in 1951 and an MD degree at New York University in 1943. He was a resident at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Washington and pursued his career in various University and Hospital appointments in child psychiatry, neurology and clinical psychiatry. At the Columbia College of Physicians he worked as Research Associate, and as Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at New York University College of Medicine.

In 1950 he became Director of the Research Centre at Rockland State Hospital, Orangeburg, New York and developed a multidisciplinary team engaged in research on the biochemical, endocrinological and social aspects of mental disorders.

He worked as adviser to the National Institute of Mental Health and WHO, and became President of the International Committee Against Mental Illness, a body which carried out remarkable pioneering work in various parts of the world, including Haiti, where he established a modern psychiatric hospital with day, out-patient and in-patient facilities.

He established psychiatric facilities in Liberia. His work in helping developing countries throughout the world gained him many honours and awards, including a high honour from the Pope (Knight Great Cross Commander), and the Grand Officer of Légion d'Honneur et Mérite (Republic of Haiti) and Knight Grand Commander of the Liberian Humane Order of African Redemption.

He was awarded the prestigious Albert Lasker Award on two occasions: the first for his work on the introduction of reserpine in the treatment of schizophrenia, and the second for his work in introducing the monoaminoxidase inhibitors for the treatment of depression.

He was honorary member of many national psychiatric societies in all parts of the world.

He was a man of great initiative and on one occasion succeeded in visiting the son of the Dalai Llama, which involved arduous and difficult travels to Tibet; not only did he have an audience, but he succeeded in persuading him to join one of his committees!

For the past 18 years he was the convener of the Denghausen meetings, usually held in the Caribbean and limited in number to leading research workers in the field of depression. The members of this group are responsible for considerable advances in research into the causes and treatment of depression and some of the work is included in a monograph dedicated to the Denghausen family called *Factors in Depression*, edited by Nathan Kline.

He was a scholar in the widest sense of the word, and I remember one occasion when I dined with him in the Hilton

Hotel in London he recited, word perfectly, the whole of Matthew Arnold's poem 'Sorab and Rustam'. Sitting nearby there was a lecturer from Oxford University who spontaneously remarked that it was the best rendering he had heard since that given by G. K. Chesterton.

He was a person of tremendous personality and unique charisma. He will be greatly missed by all his colleagues and friends.

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**ELIOT TREVOR OAKESHOTT SLATER, retired, Honorary Lecturer, Institute of Psychiatry, De Crespigny Park, London SE5.**

One of the most distinguished clinical scientists to have worked in the field of psychiatry this century died suddenly on 15 May in his 79th year. In the eleven years that followed his election to Editorship, he was mainly responsible for transforming what had been the *Journal of Mental Science* into one of the world's most respected and influential psychiatric journals. The pains he took with the papers submitted to him, the personal interest he evinced in the work of authors, and the sharp, trenchant, but ever kindly and constructive, criticism he conveyed from the Editorial Chair made a contribution of inestimable value to psychiatry in Great Britain and wider afield.

One brief example of his editorial writing must suffice here. 'May I recommend to you very strongly the great desirability of writing scientific communications in the simplest and most straightforward English possible. Such polysyllabic words as "categorization" should be avoided, unless for some reason they are absolutely essential. I wonder whether you would like to go through your paper carefully just from this point of view, with your kind assessor's comments at your side, and see whether you cannot write something in a more "told to the children" style, which, at the same time, conveys all that you really want to say?'

In the 1930s he came under the influence of a group of distinguished refugees from Nazi Germany, including Willy Mayer-Gross, Eric Guttmann and Alfred Meyer, and was inspired by their teaching of phenomenological psychiatry to abandon Meyerian psycho-biology which he came to regard as scientifically sterile. But in clinical practice his approach remained broad, flexible and imaginative. In his papers on the Sonnets of Shakespeare and his delightful 'What Happened at Elsinore?' he showed himself well able to use psychodynamic ideas with flair and a compelling clinical authority.

From the year of his first publication in 1935 to the week in which he died, creative contributions continued to flow from his pen. The stamp of scientific rigour, intellectual lucidity, distinction, originality and the vigorously flowing and distinctive literary style already manifest in the early years were to be sustained over nearly half a century. The neurotic constitution, hysteria, schizophrenia, the inheritance

of a number of forms of mental disorder, the methodological aspects of genetic research, the pathography of musicians of genius, the judicial process, and voluntary euthanasia were all to engage his restless curiosity. He could be controversial and provocative. Yet hardly ever did he fail to illuminate and cause one to reconsider well entrenched opinions. Three of the textbooks of which he was co-author, *Physical Methods of Treatment in Psychiatry* (with W. Sargent), *Clinical Psychiatry* (with W. Mayer-Gross and Martin Roth) and *The Genetics of Mental Disorder* (with Valerie Cowie) have become widely influential, and the first two were to be translated between them into a total of ten languages. But as he was to show at several stages in his scientific and clinical career, he was indifferent to renown or reward. His intellectual brilliance and integrity and his personal interest in and kindness to all his associates evoked affection and deep loyalty in the many pupils who came from different parts of the world to work with him.

His wisdom, insight and clarity of mind, the generosity with which he gave his time and energy was of inestimable value to those engaged in laying the foundations of the College in the stormy early years after its initiation when differences threatened to divide it.

In the years after his retirement the many streams of his interests merged into a river of wider concerns for the future of mankind. Scientific life was only one side of the man. Jung, who had never laid claims for the scientific validity of his ideas and his concept of a global consciousness that extended without limit into the past and impelled the motivation of self into the future, appealed to him more than Freudian theories whose claims to *scientific* status he questioned. He devoted an increasing amount of time to paintings which bore the unmistakable imprint of his personality. His Mapother Lectures provided the most lucid and comprehensive analysis on record of the philosophical foundations of knowledge in psychiatry. But he never managed to achieve the final synthesis which he had hoped to embody in a fourth and final article. In his 76th year he was awarded his PhD for a thesis devoted to a statistical word study of the authorship of a play, *Edward the III*, in which he had applied his own version of mathematical techniques originally introduced by Udney Yule. It was sad that he did not live to learn that the Cambridge University Press had decided to publish the greater part of his thesis as a book. He devoted most of his other writings in the last few years to medical ethics, euthanasia, and nature conservation; his gentle compassionate spirit had been deeply stirred by the threats of pollution, over-population and the destruction of mankind that he saw looming increasingly large.

British psychiatry has lost its most renowned representative and with him the influence of a mind vigorous, bold, and imaginative and a spirit generous, disinterested and noble to an exceptional degree. His loss will be widely and deeply felt.

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