IAN FERGUSON SOMMERVILLE

1924–1976

In memoriam

DR Ian Sommerville was tragically killed in a motor accident in Italy on 11 February at the early age of 52 years. The loss of such a brilliant clinical endocrinologist is a tragic one for medicine. His work was much respected and widely admired.

He received his undergraduate training in Edinburgh University and in 1946 graduated M.B., Ch.B. He had exceptional ability in the field of biochemistry and in 1949 was awarded a Ph.D. for his excellent work on the metabolism of progesterone. Shortly afterwards he gained the degree of M.D. with honours with the award of a gold medal for his thesis on 'Steroid Metabolism in Normal and Rheumatoid and Arthritic Human Subjects'. All his early work was undertaken in the department of Biochemistry in the University of Edinburgh. There followed a period of service in the Sloan-Kettering Institute for Cancer Research in New York as a Commonwealth Fund Fellow where he greatly broadened his experience.

Fortunately for the progress of medicine in this country, he returned to take up in 1952 the Directorship of the Endocrine Laboratories at the Chelsea Hospital for Women from which he was subsequently

to play a major role in the field of reproductive endocrinology not only in this country but on the European continent.

Dr Sommerville made a significant contribution to co-operative endeavour between doctors and scientists in this country and elsewhere in Europe since he was a brilliant linguist and had friends and colleagues in several countries, especially in Italy. He became a national adviser in endocrinological research in that country because of his distinguished collaborative work with Italian colleagues. He was awarded the doctor of medicine *honoris causa* of the University of Bologna in recognition of all that he had achieved in this field.

Dr Ian Sommerville was, despite all these accomplishments and awards, a modest person, considerate, kind and unassuming. He was much admired and respected by his colleagues and patients alike. It is deeply to be regretted that there are few like him in this field and he will be a tragic loss to science and medicine.

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