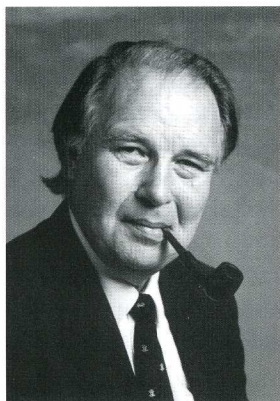


IN MEMORIAM

John R. Casley-Smith, D.Sc., M.D. (h.c.)



1936-1997

John R. Casley-Smith, a founding member of the International Society of Lymphology (ISL), was a large part of lymphatic history over the last 35 years. He enjoyed living in the pursuit of happiness, which in John's case was first and foremost the pursuit of knowledge as it pertained to the multitude of various conditions that the discipline of lymphology encompasses. He investigated and taught about the lymphatic system in every nook and cranny of the world, always trying to both understand further the basic workings of the microcirculation while doing his very best to better the life of patients with peripheral lymphedema.

John Casley-Smith's career that was ultimately to become the consuming part of his life, began in Oxford, England, where he studied with Sir Howard Florey, an experimental pathologist who had won the Nobel Prize in Medicine for his pioneering work on

use of penicillin. At the Dunn School, Florey had brought together a team of eminent basic and clinical scientists who were doing spectacular and original research in many "less popular" areas including lymphatics and their regeneration. John, who had come to Dunn on a Rhodes Scholarship, was asked by Sir Florey: "Would you like to look at some lymphatics?" John's affirmative response launched him on a lifetime career in Lymphology. The totally original work he initially embarked upon was the pathophysiology of the microcirculation including lymphatics using for the first time the electron microscope for investigating form and function of the microvessels. As it turned out, John, during the first half of his career, made many seminal contributions to basic lymphology and microcirculatory physiology. His first paper to the ISL at its inaugural congress in 1966 in Zurich, Switzerland was on the function of the lymphatic system under normal and pathologic conditions. While enthusiastic about his discoveries, John, with a researcher's humility, also readily realized that what appear as wonderful mathematical models and well-reasoned theories were in reality over-simplifications of complex biologic conditions. In this regard, he had eminent respect for the vast oceans of ignorance that still dominate our age of information and knowledge explosion. Noticing my personal interest in possibly applying surgical therapy for chronic lymphedema, John looked at me with a wonderful twinkle in his eyes, laughed and said, "You are a typical surgeon." The

implication of this remark was clear: namely, attempts to reconstruct fragile, thin-walled lymphatics were likely doomed from the outset, a point of view that sadly I was slowly to come to recognize over the next 25 years. Subsequent research time spent at the Centre de la Recherche sur la Cellule at Villejuif, Paris, provided John with additional basic insight for lymphologic research.

Upon returning to Australia, at the University of Adelaide, John founded the Henry Thomas Laboratory for Microvascular Research, the first unit devoted to electron microscopy in the Southern Hemisphere, and he served as its Director for 30 years. Many of the topics and findings investigated in this laboratory became well-known, including structure and function of the endothelial cell and its intercellular junctions (open and closed), topography, embryology and pathophysiology of the collecting lymph vessels, tissue channels, vesicles and pathomechanisms of plasma leakage and uptake of tissue fluid into lymphatics. With almost non-stop global lectures and scholarly papers, John became the quintessential teacher of the burgeoning lymphatic community, particularly as it related to electron microscopy of the lymphatic capillary system in both health and disease. As John astutely recognized in 1966, "When pathophysiologic conditions are being considered, an understanding of the basic factors [becomes] even more important."

John Casley-Smith recognized early on that lymphology was only a stepchild of medicine, and with a family of three children, that he had to eke out an income in this remote scientific field. Along perhaps with the late English surgeon John Kinmonth and with the Internist Professors Földi in Germany, John was one of few scientist/practitioners devoting most of his scholarly life exclusively to lymphology. While receiving many tributes, awards, honorary degrees, and other titles, John never lost sight of the "vanity problem" or "ego trip." He needed rewards to survive, but with great

humility he never spoke about his incredibly impressive list of accomplishments including books, films, videos, papers, invited lectures, and the myriad honors bestowed upon him.

Despite his remarkable success in both basic research and later patient care, John was well aware that lymphology dealt with only a relatively small segment of Nature. For relaxation, he especially loved good books. Indeed, when I visited him in Adelaide, I was stunned by the prodigious size of his private library, which included poetry of every kind and Greek mythology. He was a founding chairman of the Adelaide School of Drama Trust. His favorite Bible text was Ecclesiastes and at times he would quote freely:

"What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?"

and:

"further by these my son be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is in the weariness of the flesh."

Despite being an indefatigable worker, I never saw John uneasy, anxious, or in bad humor. He was always willing to generously help those who came for consultation. He liked and enjoyed his work and he was an irrepressible optimist. All of us pleasantly remember his ingratiating bursts of laughter. He never wavered in his love for teaching theoretical and practical knowledge and he never seemed to get irritated. Unjustified criticism, on the hand, would wound him deeply.

In the last half of his career, John became aware of the multitude of neglected patients with peripheral lymphedema and especially elephantiasis. Merging his theoretical knowledge with clinical lymphologic practice, he became attracted to lymphoactive drugs and, in particular, a class of drugs known as the Benzopyrones, with their wide range of actions on the lymphatic system and tissue macrophages. At the renowned Hinterzarten Lymphedema Clinic of the Földis, he learned of the many benefits of complex decongestive (non-operative)

physiotherapy (CPT) and its unquestioned success in improving thousands of patients with impaired lymphatic drainage. He thereafter founded the Lymphedema Association of Australia, and assisted by his wife Judith to help patients using CPT and further by administration of Benzopyrones while educating the medical profession that lymphedema could and should be treated.

Alongside lengthy statistical and basic articles on lymph dynamics and its treatment, John thoroughly enjoyed the ultimate reward of a happy, thankful smile from patients improved by his devotion and treatment. With unfettered idealism, he would have loved to do it all for nothing. Yet, he also appreciated that pure altruism would never pay for all his global activities so necessary both for education, science, and service.

John Casley-Smith was aware that he had coronary artery disease since he had previously survived a myocardial infarction. Yet, so unlike his vigorous insistence on treating patients with lymphedema, he nihilistically decided against further diagnostic evaluation and therapy for his own heart. John's life and death in a way holds a magical secret of our own existence. We tend to construct our simplified intellectual theories to justify our personal ways we deal with life and death. Not too long ago, John whimsically mentioned that some day he would like to get a doctorate in a field much more exalted than natural science—Theology.

Leo Clodius, M.D.

More on JR Casley-Smith

The news of John Casley-Smith's sudden death will have cast a shadow over all of us who are proud to call ourselves lymphologists. While obituaries written by those more capable than I will undoubtedly do his memory justice, I would like to express my sadness on a more personal note and extend my very deepest sympathy to Judith and to other members of his family.

My wife, Patricia Jean, and I first met John some 25 years ago at the IVth International Congress of Lymphology held in Tucson. What particularly impressed me was that his consistent good humor appeared to match his great size. He even took the severe admonitions of his fellow countryman, Bede Morris,* with grace and a smile. Bede clearly did not believe John's osmotic pressure theory of lymph formation and made no bones about giving vent to his disbelief. I, as a relative newcomer to the field of lymphology, well remember cowering as Bede publicly berated John and told him in no uncertain terms that he could cease espousing his theory until he had derived sufficient data to support it. I was sure at the time that had I been spoken to in that way I would have left the Congress forthwith, never to return! But not John, who smiled good humoredly throughout. Sadly these two giants in the field of lymphology have both left us, each dying suddenly on visits far from their native Australia.

On a subsequent occasion, we remember with great joy and pleasure when he stayed in our Chicago home during one of his visits to the United States. His presence seemed to fill the house and his good humor was infectious. One of his socks succumbed to the proverbial ability of washing machines to devour them, and this provided much amusement at that and many subsequent meetings.

One of the great pleasures that I am sure most of us have felt, as we prepared for almost any congress related to lymphology, was certainty that John and Judith would be there. His frequent and characteristic laugh heralded his presence. His jovial personality was catching. His presence always seemed to fill a room and no one was left in any doubt that he was there. The last time that I met

**Late Professor and Chairman, Department of Immunology, John Curtin School of Medical Research, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia (Ed.)*

him was a year ago at the World Congress on Microcirculation held in Munich, Germany. I particularly remember talking to him in a historic town hall as he and Judith explained to me how to find and download on the Internet the cryptic crossword from the *Daily Telegraph*. I have thought of him so many times since then as I struggle with each day's crossword even though it was Judith, not John, who was the crossword buff. Attendance at congresses will never be the same without him.

The world of lymphology is a sadder place, yet his memory and his achievements will always be given prominence in the field. There are few who knew as much about

lymphology as he, but more important than his knowledge were his enthusiasm and ideas. John's vivid imagination raced ahead of his ability to put thoughts to the test. Fortunately for us, John was never inhibited by Bede Morris' admonitions and he continued to keep us all thinking as he championed his ideas— from osmotic force to benzo-pyrones— even though the data often lagged behind.

He will be missed by all of us, but we are all richer for having known him and enjoyed him.

Charles C.C. O'Morchoe, M.D., Ph.D., D.Sc.
Past President, ISL