

Former Winners, 1951

## **Albert Lasker Award for Clinical Medical Research**

### **William Lennox Obituary**

The following is an obituary on Dr. Lennox published by the New York Times on Saturday, July 23, 1960.

Dr. William G. Lennox, a former medical missionary, and the 'father' of modern treatment of epilepsy, died yesterday in Deaconess Hospital. He was 76 years old.

Dr. Lennox, who lived in Newton Centre, retired from Harvard two years ago after an association that began in 1922. Before beginning his teaching and research career at Harvard, Dr. Lennox spent four years as a medical missionary in China at the Union Medical College in Peiping. It was there, when the 8-year-old daughter of a friend was stricken with epilepsy, that he became interested in the disease. When Dr. Lennox returned from China, he found that epilepsy was a disease cloaked in fear and superstition. For ten years, he worked alone, studying brain cells. He discovered that in an epileptic person, ordinary brain rhythms were disturbed by some chemical or physiological change. Later, Dr. Lennox worked with Dr. F.A.Gibbs, studying the circulation and metabolism of the brain, tracing the disease in thousands of families and keeping careful records of many sets of twins, trying to determine if epilepsy is an inherited trait. The two physicians were among the first in the country to use the electroencephalogram, a device that records brain waves.

Born in Colorado Springs, Dr. Lennox attended Colorado college. He had hoped to attend the Boston University Divinity School, but when he was turned down because of a weakness in Latin and Greek, he entered the Harvard Medical School instead.

Dr. Lennox organized the American Epilepsy League and the Committee for Public Understanding of Epilepsy. He was also chief of the seizure division at the Children's medical center in Boston, where he established a training program for physicians in epilepsy. In 1951, he won the Lasker Award for his efforts.

Dr. Lennox is survived by two daughters and two sisters.

<http://www.laskefoundation.org/awards/orbits/lennoxorbit.shtml>