

# Lawrence W. Hanlon

*November 15, 1914 — September 25, 1970*

Doctor Lawrence W. Hanlon, associate dean of Cornell University Medical College, died at the New York Hospital after a prolonged struggle with cancer. For more than twenty years he was the academic administrator most directly involved in the careers of the students. He supervised admissions, directed internship applications, and helped students with their difficulties, both personal and financial. Beyond Cornell, Dr. Hanlon was known as an articulate spokesman on the subject of medical college admissions procedures and methods of evaluation.

Born in Ridgebury, Pennsylvania, in 1914, Dr. Hanlon was graduated from Cornell University with an A.B. degree in 1935 and an M.D. in 1938. He took his internship and residency training in medicine at the Rochester General Hospital, before serving as a U.S. Army medical officer in Africa and Italy. He was discharged in 1946 with the rank of lieutenant colonel. Dr. Hanlon then returned to Cornell Medical College to work as investigator in the basic sciences at the Second (Cornell) Medical Division at Bellevue Hospital until 1949. In 1949 he was appointed assistant professor of Anatomy and was also named assistant dean of the Medical College. From 1953-55 he was acting chairman of the Department of Anatomy; in 1955, he became associate dean.

In this position, Dr. Hanlon was a member of the Medical College Executive Faculty. He was also chairman of the Admissions and Internship Committees as well as the faculty adviser of the Beta Chapter of Alpha Omega Alpha, the national medical honor society.

Among procedures developed by Dr. Hanlon to aid students were two sets of evaluations: one from Cornell graduates assessing the internship programs they have participated in at various hospitals, the other from hospital supervisors commenting on the preparation and performance of Cornell graduates as interns.

Dr. Hanlon had been active in the Association of American Medical Colleges. He served on the Association's Medical Education for National Defense Committee and was coordinator of that Committee's program at Cornell Medical College for several years. In 1959 he joined the AAMC Northeast Region Continuing Group on Student Affairs. He also belonged to the Harvey Society and the New York Academy of Sciences.

Lawrence W. Hanlon was by his own declaration one of the last general practitioners of medicine. But this definition of the man fails to recognize that Larry Hanlon was also one of the most widely read and scholarly members of our community. He was particularly well informed as a naturalist, geologist, and conservationist, and he was at

home in the world of arts and letters as he was in the field of gourmet cooking. As a medical educator he was better known and his advice more widely sought than most Cornellians ever appreciated.

The last years of Larry Hanlon's life were completely dedicated to Cornell and it was he who was most responsible for the extraordinary balance of academic and personal attributes reflected in the student body of the Medical College. Larry Hanlon was wholly committed to the egalitarian principle that there was room in medicine for people from all backgrounds and with widely varying special interests and capabilities. He was, on the other hand, an elitist in the best sense of that word. He was unswervingly committed to excellence and the notion that leadership belonged to those who excelled. He accepted the fact that the world needed those to follow as well as those to lead but he strongly believed that Cornell should be the kind of school that is known for the superior performance of all its graduates and should be given special recognition for those graduates who assumed leadership roles. None of this, however, portrays adequately the enormous warmth of this humble and understated personality. In the best tradition of a peace-loving humanitarian, Larry Hanlon defended his rigid standards with intellect, gentleness, and good humor. We will never be able to assess fully what Larry Hanlon has meant to Cornell but it is clear that he is amongst those who have had the greatest influence on this school during the past twenty-five years. It is for this reason that his memory will be honored everlastingly in this school.

He is survived by two sisters, Mrs. Inez Stirton of Wellsburg, New York, and Mrs. Kathryn Hall of Nichols, New York, and two brothers, Howard, of Odessa, New York, and George, of Fort Pierce, Florida.

*J. Robert Buchanan, M.D.*