

# William Sargent Ladd

*August 16, 1887 — September 17, 1949*

William Sargent Ladd, former Dean of Cornell University Medical College, died on September 17th, 1949. In the field of medicine his activities extended from the detailed care of private patients to the administration of a Medical School. However, he was also notable as a man whose interests ranged from the mountains of Alaska to the American University of Beirut, Syria.

Born in Portland, Oregon, on August 16, 1887, he spent most of his life in the East. In 1910 he graduated from Amherst College and in 1915 received the degree of M.D. from the Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons. After an internship in the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital in Boston, Ladd returned to the Department of Medicine at Columbia and the Presbyterian Hospital but left in 1917-18 to serve in the Medical Corps of the Army in World War I. Returning to civilian life, he engaged in research and teaching at Johns Hopkins Hospital for two years and then once more returned to Columbia in New York. While still at Columbia he came to Cornell as a volunteer to work with the Sage Calorimeter in Bellevue Hospital. It was not until 1931 that he became a member of the Department of Medicine of Cornell and Assistant Attending Physician on the staffs of Bellevue and New York Hospital. In 1931 when the Cornell Medical College was about to move into its new buildings on 68th Street, the Dean, Dr. Walter L. Niles, asked Dr. Ladd to become Associate Dean. It was a wise selection because Ladd took great interest in medical students and their problems and combined a straightforward sympathetic approach with real executive ability. His background of association with four leading medical schools and five large hospitals had given him a wide experience in medical education. In 1935, Dr. Ladd was asked to serve as Dean and as Professor of Medicine and Attending Physician at The New York Hospital. As Dean he helped to clarify the relationship of the Medical School and its closely affiliated institution, The New York Hospital, and there was a steady advance in both administration and education. As a member of the Board of Managers of Memorial Hospital he exerted much influence in the establishment of this hospital in its new location. Unfortunately, a heart attack in 1942 brought on a period of invalidism and made it necessary for him to retire from the Deanship. After a few months, he returned to the practice of medicine and, though not able to attempt heavy administrative duties, continued his active interest in Cornell.

As an investigator, Dr. Ladd concentrated in the field of metabolism. His studies on diabetic acidosis published with W. W. Palmer 1920-21 and with H. B. Richardson in 1924 are still of great importance. He was also active in the study of pernicious anemia and of the food in hospitals.

A well known explorer and the first to climb several peaks in the Canadian Rockies, Dr. Ladd in 1931 led the expedition that made the first ascent of Mount Fairweather. He himself did not quite reach the summit as with characteristic generosity he turned back so that two others of the party using his food could reach the top.

In 1915 Dr. Ladd married Mary Richardson Babbott who survives him. With her he shared all his interests and activities. There are four children, Frances Wood, William Sargent, Anthony Thorton and John.

Those who knew Ladd well, remember best his militant honesty, generosity and warm heart. His spirit was the spirit of the mountain tops.

*D. J. Edwards*