

Charles C. Shepard, M.D.
1914–1985



The field of leprosy research lost one of the truly great men in the field with the death of Dr. Charles C. Shepard on 18 February 1985 at the age of 70.

Dr. Shepard, or "Shep" as he was widely known, gained international prominence when he reported in 1960 the successful multiplication of *Mycobacterium leprae* in the foot pads of mice. This discovery was widely accepted as the greatest laboratory breakthrough in leprosy, or Hansen's disease, control since the discovery of the causative organism by Dr. G. Armauer Hansen in 1873. The word "monumental" as it is applied to "discoveries" is often overused, but in the case of Dr. Shepard's foot pad work, it is most certainly warranted.

The mouse foot pad technique of Shepard provided a criterion for identifying *M. leprae*, for determining viability and, among other things, for conducting drug trials prior to human testing. At present the mouse foot pad is the major means of confirming the presence or absence of drug-resistant *M. leprae*. It has proved immensely useful, for instance, in the study of dapsone and rifampin resistance—and can be used for similar studies of every chemotherapeutic agent used to treat the disease.

Dr. Shepard did his undergraduate work at Stanford and Northwestern universities, graduating with a B.S. degree from Northwestern. From the same university, he was awarded an M.S. degree and then an M.D. degree in 1941. After graduation, he joined the U.S. Public Health Service as a Commissioned Officer and remained an officer until 1978, when he retired. In 1979, he became a U.S. government civil servant and was able to remain at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta, Georgia.

Prior to joining the CDC staff in 1953, he served at the National Institutes of Health,

Bethesda, Maryland, from 1942 to 1950 with a detail to Uppsala, Sweden, in 1949 and part of 1950. He then was assigned to the Rocky Mountain Laboratory in Hamilton, Montana, from 1950 to 1953. From 1953 until his death, Dr. Shepard was assigned to the CDC, where he became Chief, Leprosy Section, Respiratory and Special Pathogens Branch, Division of Bacterial Diseases, Center for Infectious Diseases.

Although the world will probably not remember him for his monumental work with leprosy, it is important to note that he contributed considerable information about the antigenic composition of epidemic and murine typhus rickettsiae, was instrumental in the development of vaccines for scrub typhus, and added significantly to our knowledge of the epidemiology of Rocky Mountain spotted fever and Q fever, including improved methods of diagnosing rickettsial diseases.

Another contribution which could easily rival his leprosy research contributions was the isolation of the etiological agent of Legionnaire's disease by him and his staff and the development of a method of serodiagnosis for this disease.

During his career, Dr. Shepard authored over 180 publications, served on numerous committees, and gave of his time in many other ways. Included were his memberships on the Commission of Rickettsial Diseases, Armed Forces Epidemiological Board (1956–1968); Chairman, U.S. Leprosy Panel, U.S.–Japan Cooperative Medical Science Program (1965–1977); Associate Editor, INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LEPROSY (IJL) (1967–1978); Editorial Board, IJL and INFECTION AND IMMUNITY (1970–1977); Council, International Leprosy Association (since 1973); Advisory Panel on Leprosy, World Health Organization (since 1965); WHO-IMMLEP Scientific Working Group (since 1974), and a member of its Steering Committee since 1978. He became a member of the Board of Directors of the IJL in 1978, had been a member of the Scientific Advisory Committee of The Heiser Program for Research in Leprosy since 1973,

was Chairman of the Leprosy Research Council, Bureau of Medical Services, U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) from 1980 through 1982, and then became Chairman of the H.D. Research Advisory Committee of the Division of National Hansen's Disease Programs, USPHS.

Dr. Shepard received many well deserved awards and recognitions during his career. Among them were the Gorgas Medal, 1962; Kimble Methodology Award, 1962; Meritorious Service Medal, U.S. Public Health Service, 1964; Philip R. Edwards Award, 1964; World Leprosy Day Award, 1970; Ambuth Nath Bose Bequest, 1974; CDC Medal of Excellence, 1977; HEW Distin-

guished Service Award, 1978; Raoul Follereau Award, 1978; and Richard and Hilda Rosenthal Award, 1979.

We mourn the loss of Dr. Shepard, and we offer our deepest sympathy to his wife, Vickie, who so frequently accompanied him on his many travels. Many of us have been privileged to know this legendary man personally and to have worked with him. He is gone, we know, but we are also confident that the brilliant contributions he made will undoubtedly be a major factor in the eventual eradication of one of the world's great health problems.

—John R. Trautman, M.D.