ARCHIVES OF DISEASE IN CHILDHOOD

The Journal of the British Paediatric Association

JAMES SPENCE MEDALLIST 1990

Professor Leonard B Strang

The James Spence Medal was presented to Professor Leonard Strang on 4 April 1990. Professor June Lloyd, President of the British Paediatric Association, gave the following citation:

Professor Leonard Strang

Leonard Strang is a true disciple of James Spence and it is typical of him that he would really have liked this citation to be an appreciation of that great man in whose honour we present this medal, our highest award. Leonard, however, cannot be allowed to escape an account of his own achievements; he has done so much in so many fields and my regret is that I shall not be able to do justice to all of them.

Leonard's clinical training started in Newcastle in the department established by Spence and in its early golden years. He very quickly showed his ability to observe the natural history of disease at the bedside, to apply physiological principles to the investigation of disease states, and to exploit basic science in the unravelling of clinical problems. These skills have been the cornerstones of his research career, which began with the development of respiratory function measurements in normal children and those with asthma, and progressed to systematic studies of the development and function of the lung in the perinatal period. After a spell at the Hammersmith Hospital where he held a Medical Research Council Fellowship and developed, among other things, techniques for the measurement of alveolar ventilation in the newborn, he had the opportunity to spend some time in the USA at Harvard where he concentrated on the changes in the pulmonary circulation. He subsequently continued this work in Oxford with Geoffrey Dawes, himself a James Spence medalist in 1969. Back in London Leonard soon moved to University College where he developed his systematic studies with series of elegant experiments on lung liquid, its production, control, and resorption. For this work he and his colleagues are internationally

known and the proceedings of every workshop, symposium, or conference on the perinatal lung contain more entries under his name than almost any other. In 1976 he gave the Charles West lecture at the Royal College of Physicians of London and the Croonian lecture at the College in 1982.

But Leonard's contributions to paediatrics have extended far beyond the research environment be that laboratory, uterus, or neonatal nursery. He held the first chair of paediatrics in an undergraduate medical school in London and rapidly ensured that University College Hospital became a leading institution for paediatric education and research in that university. Just as his research work was systematic so was the way in which he recruited and nurtured younger colleagues. He took endless pains to see that each member of his staff was placed in jobs suitable for their talents and given the opportunity to turn their early 'geese like waddles' into the 'flight of swans'. It is no accident that six current holders of chairs in the UK have passed through his hands at a critical period in their careers—to say nothing of the innumerable consultants he has trained. His interest in training, however, extended more widely than simply among his own staff. He was concerned that the examination hurdle of the membership should be appropriate for, as he put it, 'the internal medicine of childhood' and, while Secretary of the Paediatric Committee of the Royal College of Physicians of London he helped push through the Paediatric Part II.

Academics are supposed to show excellence in research, in teaching, and in clinical care. Few manage to both achieve this tripartite feat and to sustain it throughout their careers. Leonard has been one of the few. His meticulous attention to the problems and needs of individual patients and their families is legendary; nothing was too much trouble, no hour of the day or night inconvenient, his patience with distressed and anxious parents was inexhaustible. Not so, however, was his patience with what he perceived as inattention, laziness, or just plain stupidity in colleagues or assistants. To those

his explosiveness was equally legendary, even consultant colleagues have been known to come—or go—running.

Leonard has done much to raise the profile of British paediatrics in other countries. Nowhere has this been more apparent than in France. He is a confirmed Francophile and a perfect linguist. None of his friends were surprised—though they were probably saddened—when he

chose to retire to France. We are delighted that he has recrossed the Channel to be with us today.

The James Spence Medal is awarded for outstanding contributions to the advancement or clarification of paediatric knowledge. Leonard has achieved both these things and it is a great pleasure to present him with the James Spence Medal for 1990.

James Spence Medallists

1960 Professor A A Moncrieff	1977 Professor R S Illingworth
1961 Professor R A McCance	1978 Professor S D M Court
1963 Sir F Macfarlane Burnet	1979 Professor K W Cross
1964 Professor L S Penrose	1980 Professor J M Tanner
1965 Dr Cicely D Williams	1981 Dr Elsie M Widdowson
1967 Professor R R A Coombs	1982 Dr D MacCarthy
1968 Dr Mary Sheridan	1983 Professor J O Forfar
Dr D W Winnicott	1984 Dr J W B Douglas
1969 Dr G S Dawes	1985 Dr N S Gordon
1970 Professor D V Hubble	1986 Sir Peter Tizard
1971 Dr W W Payne	1987 Professor J L Emery
1972 Dr R C MacKeith	Dr F J W Miller
1973 Professor C A Clarke	1988 Professor O H Wolff
1974 Dr J Bowlby	1989 Professor D C Morley
1976 Dr D M T Gairdner	