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# Obituary

## Dr. Allan G. Gornall, B.A., Ph.D., D.Sc., F.R.S.C 1914-2006

Dr. Eugene Reno Tustanoff, Professor Emeritus of Biochemistry'  
University of Western Ontario

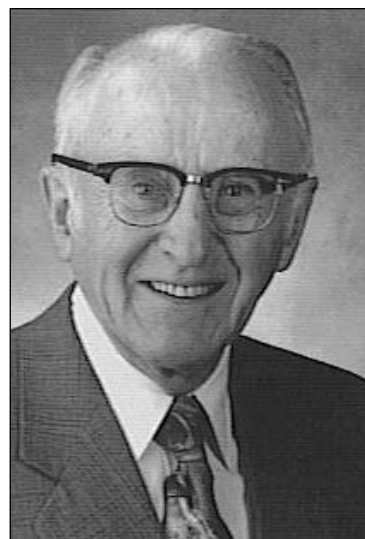
Dr. Allan Gornall peacefully passed away at the age of 91 in Toronto on March 15. As Treasurer of the Canadian Physiological Society, and one of a small group of biochemists who were restless to see the formation of a Canadian Biochemical Society (CBS), he helped foster the establishment of our Society in 1957. He also served as the Honorary Treasurer of the Canadian Federation of Biological Societies during its formative years from 1957-1962. He was responsible for the formation of a joint committee of the CBS and the Canadian Society of Clinical Chemists (CSCC), which he chaired from 1970-75, whose purpose was to direct the attention to Clinical Chemistry as a challenging career opportunity for biochemists.

Dr. Gornall was born in River Hebert, Nova Scotia, in 1914. As his father, a Methodist Minister, moved a number of times to various Maritime parishes, Dr. Gornall's early academic life was influenced by these venue changes. He entered Mount Allison University and graduated with a B.A. degree (cum laude) in chemistry in 1936, and then went on to receive his Ph.D. in Pathological Chemistry from the University of Toronto in 1941. Working under the supervision of Professor Andrew Hunter, Dr. Gornall investigated the relationship that ammonia played between citrulline and ornithine in the urea cycle for his Ph.D. dissertation. Enlisting in the Royal Canadian Navy in 1942, he served as a clinical chemist at the Royal Canadian Naval Hospital in Halifax during World War II, retiring in 1946 with the rank of Lieutenant Commander. His subsequent career in effect spans the history of clinical biochemistry in Canada, and his contributions to its development are legion. After the war, Dr. Gornall returned to Toronto as an Assistant

Professor in Dr. Hunter's Department, and rose through the ranks to become Chairman of the Department of Pathological Chemistry in 1966. He held the Chair of the Department, which in 1972 was renamed the Department of Clinical Chemistry, for the next ten years. He retired from U of T in 1980 as an Emeritus Professor.

As evidenced by a long series of publications, his research interests were broad and productive, particularly in the field of plasma proteins and endocrinology. His seminal paper "Determination of serum proteins by means of the biuret reaction", published in 1946, in the *Journal of Biological Chemistry*, became a "classic", the 9th most frequently cited scientific publication over the next thirty years. In 1949, as a Nuffield Scholar, he studied steroid endocrinology in Edinburgh with G.F. Marrian, and then used this experience to further his work in delving into the biochemistry of aldosterone over the following two decades, which resulted in more than a hundred publications.

He became a keen champion of academic clinical chemistry and was responsible for the high standards which were achieved in his Department. He instituted the post-doctoral diploma course at the university for Ph.D. clinical chemists, and also initiated the refresher courses held biennially in Toronto in early summer. Dr. Gornall was a founding member of the Canadian Society of Clinical



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Chemists (CSCC), and was a prime mover and founding Fellow in the formation of the Canadian Academy of Clinical Biochemistry in 1986. This last project occurred during his so-called retirement, which featured a schedule many younger people would describe as exhausting. He has edited both the First and Second Editions of "Applied Disorders of Clinical Biochemistry", and contributed several chapters to this popular textbook as well. Travelling widely in North America and abroad, he presented invited lectures on the education of clinical biochemists to AACC sections across the U.S. (1974-75) and in Australia, New Zealand, and Japan (1977). In 1978 Mount Allison University conferred on him the honorary degree of Doctor of Science, and in 1989 the CSCC bestowed on him its first "Award for Outstanding Contribution to Education".

When Dr. Gornall's final edition of Applied Biochemistry of Clinical Disorders was published, he turned his talents of critical investigation from

clinical biochemistry to the less material composition of the nature of man and the philosophical capabilities of the human mind. As a member of Leaside United Church, many of his articles were published in a book under the title "Understanding God and the Ultimate Reality of Love", published by Lancelot Press. More recently, his thinking enlarged to the existence of spiritual energy which would enrich lives, and further moral values and justice in the human community. In this vein, he expressed his thoughts in the form of prayers which called for the growth of wisdom, compassion and love in our lives. Included in some of the texts was a profound belief in the eternal nature of each human spirit. Allan Gornall sought to leave a lasting mark on this world, both professionally and spiritually and his written words in books and scientific papers provide his research findings and his personal views for the benefit of those who follow.