

Raymond Vande Wiele was born October 2nd, 1922 in Kortryk, Belgium. He was the third child of Marie Louise and Jean Baptiste Vande Wiele, a textile family in Kortryk.

Raymond's early education was in the local school system, and in 1940 he completed his secondary education at St. Amands College in Kortryk. For the next seven years he attended the Catholic University of Louvain, completing his undergraduate requirements, medical school education and Internship in Obstetrics and Gynecology. He received his medical degree Cum Laude in 1947.

Upon completion of his medical education he entered the Belgium Army as a Lieutenant in the Medical Corps, and served the next two years with the Belgium Occupation Army on the Rhine.

After discharge from the Army he returned to the department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Catholic University of Louvain, and during the next four years served as Assistant, Junior and Chief Resident, and then as Preceptor.

During his formal training he had become primarily interested in Gynecology and gynecological surgery, and in the Spring and Summer of 1952 he spent four months as a Visiting Fellow under Professor Antoine at the Frauenklinik in Vienna. The purpose of this fellowship was to pursue his interest in Vaginal Surgery. His research activity at this time was limited, and related to the Psychosomatic aspects of pelvic pain.

At this point in his career Raymond's interest was clearly in the Clinical Practice of Obstetrics and Gynecology. He wanted to broaden his experience in the United States, and applied to Howard C. Taylor for a year of training, either as a Visiting Fellow or as a Resident. At that time Dr. Taylor was interested in pelvic pain and the Pelvic Congestion Syndrome, and Raymond's interest in this area made him an attractive candidate. He began his Fellowship in October, 1952.

Shortly after his arrival he came in contact with Dr. Joseph Jailor, an internist associated with the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and interested in the field of Clinical Endocrinology, then in its infancy, and Dr. Earl Engle, an Anatomist

in the Department with a primary interest in Endocrinology. Raymond's mind was challenged, and his course set. He quickly became interested in steroid hormones, and became a Fellow in the laboratory of Dr. Seymour Lieberman. Here developed a life-long professional relationship as well as a strong friendship.

During this time he met Beatrice Silides, then a Research Assistant in the laboratory of Dr. Jailor. As Betty would occasionally recall, she taught Raymond how to measure 17 keto-steroids. On September 25th, 1954 they were married. From this marriage three children were born: Barbara in 1955, now an intern in Surgery at UCLA; Carolyn in 1957, currently attending Veterinarian School at Purdue; and Margaret in 1959, a law student at Columbia. Raymond's family has always been a close family sharing their joys and pleasures related to their home environment.

In July of 1954 Raymond went to the Yale Medical School as a Research Fellow under Dr. Lee Buxton who had just become Chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

He returned in June of 1955 to the Sloane Hospital as an Instructor, and immediately rejoined Dr. Seymour Lieberman in his Steroid Laboratory, and began clinical work in Endocrinology and Fertility. Dr. Lieberman summarized Raymond's potential at that time as "extremely well-versed in the area of Medicine where Reproductive Physiology, Gynecology and Endocrine biochemistry meet." Raymond's achievements were not so much as a bench scientist, but in his extraordinary capacity to understand complex biochemical as well as physiological processes and foresee their clinical relationships.

The golden era of steroid research was rapidly developing in Dr. Lieberman's laboratory, and during the 1960s Raymond was associated with many scientists who were to become leaders in endocrine research. A few of them were Pentti Siiteri, Erlio Gulpide, Etienne Baulieu and Paul MacDonald, as well as Seymour Lieberman. During these years their study of the interconversion and metabolism of steroid

hormones rapidly advanced, and eventually culminated in the classic paper on the model of the menstrual cycle, presented by Raymond at the Laurentian Hormone Conference in 1969, and which stands as the basis for most subsequent research related to the menstrual cycle.

During this period Raymond's achievements in clinical work and teaching were equally outstanding, and he rapidly received Academic recognition with successive appointments to full Professor in 1968. In 1970 he became Acting Director of the International Institute for Human Reproduction, succeeding Dr. Howard Taylor, and in 1971 became Chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and the Willard C. Rappleye Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology. His primary attention now had to be diverted to the administrative tasks of re-establishing forward momentum within the department. His involvement in research, however, never ceased, and during the 1970s in conjunction with Michel Ferin he made outstanding contributions in the areas of central nervous system control of the menstrual cycle and the relationship of Ovarian hormones and endogenous opiates. With Ralph Jewelewicz he made many contributions on the Induction of Ovulation, and the use of Bromocriptin in hyperprolactinemic ammenorrhea and pituitary adenomas.

In the twelve years of his Chairmanship of our department Raymond accomplished much, and during very difficult times. He moved the Obstetrical Service into the modern era of Perinatology and created a Perinatal Center and Perinatal network second to none. He planned and executed our move from the old Presbyterian Hospital into our current location in the Center for Women and Children. He initiated our divisions of Ambulatory Surgery, Endoscopy, Genetic diagnosis and Counseling, revision of our Clinics and the delivery of Ambulatory Care, improvement in our Residency program and medical student education, and nurtured our relationships with associated institutions. Most recently he had established our In Vitro Fertilization program, and as always not only for its clinical application but for the opportunity

it provided for basic research in reproductive physiology. He encouraged young physicians on his staff, and was compassionate to those reaching the end of their careers or retired.

Raymond was recognized throughout the World. He was consultant to many hospitals in the New York area, as well as to the National Institute of Health. He was a member of over twenty Medical Societies, and past President of the New York Obstetrical Society. He was a member of numerous Editorial Boards, and Consultant to many Medical Advisory Committees.

I have recounted Raymond Vande Wiele's life as a physician and scientist and medical leader. It would be remiss to remember him only in this context. Raymond Vande Wiele was a remarkable man. His mind was as brilliant as any I have known, and his capacity for intellectual pursuits outside of medicine awesome. He read and spoke French, Dutch, and German, as well as English, and was facile in both Latin and Greek. His knowledge and interest in the liberal arts was profound. He was capable of discussing literature, art, music, history or religion with any expert, and his leisure hours were given to these pursuits.

He enjoyed travelling, and wherever he travelled he was so well informed in advance, and wanted to see so much, that he would invariably fatigue his travelling companions.

Raymond had little interest in spectator sports, but he was an avid tennis player and sailor. He found great relaxation in tennis, and played nearly weekly all year. Each summer he allotted some time to sail with a close friend along the New England coast, and he was an expert in ocean navigation. Gardening was another special enjoyment and he displayed great pride in the flowers and vegetables he grew.

Of all of Raymond's attributes: intelligence, charm, humor, integrity, loyalty, I believe the one I admired most was his compassion. A required decision that

would be hurtful to anyone was an agony for him, and he would go to any extreme to soften its impact. He was incapable of a vengeful decision. He would go out of his way to help anyone in circumstantial difficulty, and many of our staff were indebted to him for this compassion and generosity.

If I were to summarize Raymond's life in one word it would be "elite". Elite, not in the context of arrogance, which he abhorred, but as a purposeful way of life. Perhaps it can best be said by his final paragraph in his presidential address to this Society: And I quote: "We have to be an elitist Society, a term from which I do not shirk. An elitist Society is not a Society composed of Professors or of individuals involved in esoteric aspects of research. It is a Society that is composed of physicians who consider medicine still as a profession, whose goal is excellence and whose pride is moral integrity. It means a Society composed of individuals who are interested in continuous self improvement, which perhaps implies some type of involvement with a teaching institution. Finally, it means individuals who are willing to transmit their own knowledge by teaching, even if it is only under the form of apprentice teaching."

"Such a Society could have a major impact by holding up to the rest of our Profession a mirror, a mirror however distant, reflecting a form of medicine that I hope will not disappear." End of quote.

On Sunday, August 14th, 1983, Raymond Vande Wiele suddenly died. His death was as he would have wished it, but his multitude of friends, colleagues, patients and this Society have suffered a grievous loss.

W. Duane Todd, M.D.