

RESOLUTION ON THE DEATH OF DR. JOHN ANTHONY KELLY

PRESENTED ON MARCH 11, 1980  
BEFORE THE NEW YORK OBSTETRICAL SOCIETY  
BY BERNARD J. PISANI, M.D.

Doctor John Anthony Kelly, a Life Fellow of this Society, died on March 16, 1979 after a relatively short illness. He was 77 years of age and had maintained a practice until December 31, 1978, three months before his death.

Doctor Kelly was a native of Ontario, Canada, having been born and brought up in Toronto, where he attended college and then the University of Toronto School of Medicine. His birth date was April 28, 1902 and he was 25 years old upon graduation from medical school. He had a splendid background in post-graduate training, having interned for two years at St. Joseph's Hospital in Toronto with an appointment to the junior faculty of his medical school and an associate fellowship in the Toronto Academy of Medicine. John then moved to the United States, where he was a house officer or resident at the Manhattan Maternity Hospital and Dispensary, the Misericordia Hospital and, in 1930, an assistant resident at the Memorial Hospital Treatment Center for Cancer and Allied Diseases.

He began private practice in New York City and was associated as a visiting clinician with the Lincoln and Mount Vernon Hospitals. Active service on the Misericordia Hospital attending staff began in 1931 and extended to 1963, with a directorship of

the department from 1949 through 1963. He became Emeritus Director and was so appointed annually until the time of his death. In 1940 he was certified in obstetrics and gynecology by the American Board. He also served on the attending staffs of St. Clare's Hospital and Health Center, University Hospital, Memorial Hospital for Cancer and Allied Diseases, the James Ewing Hospital and Doctors Hospital.

Doctor Kelly also contributed as a teacher and directed the careers of many young MD's in a successful residency program at the Misericordia Hospital. He was an Associate Clinical Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology from 1950-54 at NYU-Bellevue Medical Center. In organized medicine he served the New York County Medical Society as an appointed member of several committees -- Special Committee on Infant Mortality (1939-46), Special Committee on Maternal Welfare (1946-73), Ad Hoc Committee for Study of Abortion and Sterilization (1968-74) and the Standing Committee on Legislation (1954-61). He was a member of the Medical Society of the State of New York and the American Medical Association, and was elected to Life Membership on April 10, 1972. In 1936 Doctor Kelly was elected a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons, and he became, in 1937, a United States citizen.

His Fellowship in this Society was by election on February 10, 1942, during the presidency of Dr. Henry T. Burns. Jack was involved for many years in the activities of the fellowship and was voted by the Council to Life Fellow in 1966. In addition to these honors, he was elected a member of the Society of Surgical Oncology, the American Radium Society, and was a Founding Fellow of the New York Gynecological Society,

which began in 1960. Furthermore, a period of 3 1/2 years was spent during World War II with the Medical Corps of the U.S. Army; appointed as a Major upon entrance to the service, he was honorably discharged as a Lieutenant Colonel.

John Kelly had no major hobby; his dedication to his patients throughout his career was primary and exemplary. His acuity in diagnosis was legendary and he attributed much of this to association with his senior and admired teacher -- a past president of this Society and the American Gynecological Society -- Dr. William Patrick Healy. It was also to Dr. Healy that he attributed his long interest in and ability with the management of malignant disease of the female reproductive tract. Another facet of his practice was the devotion and personal attention he rendered to the many women, pregnant out of wedlock, who were residents of Rosalie Hall, a facility that provided refuge and board for these mothers-to-be in the 40's through the early 70's who were without husbands or who had reluctant or no family support. Any complications that arose in these patients were always managed by consultation with Dr. Kelly -- and this program he initiated is carried out to this day by his successor as director at Misericordia Hospital, Dr. Stephen Burgess.

As may be seen from his list of achievements and activities, he had a full life professionally. His heart was in the office, the delivery room and the operating room; he was an unusually deft operator, and there he made his place. Research and writing appealed little to him. He had a large private practice and his assurance, confident ways and kindly manner and personality made his patients friends and his friends patients. At all times his paramount interest was in clinical medicine and the welfare of

the individual patient was his only consideration.

Dr. Kelly lived for most of his career in Jackson Heights in Queens and had his offices in Manhattan. He had been married to Gertrude Dargin, who died fifteen years ago. They had one child, the sole direct descendent, Jane Kelly Farley, who resides in Bedford, N.Y. The Farleys are the parents of John Kelly's two grandchildren, a boy and a girl whom he loved very tenderly. They had been delivered by his good friend and colleague, and a member of our Society, Dr. Hugh Barber.

Mr. President, may I request that this memorial be spread upon the minutes of this meeting and that our secretary send a copy to Dr. Kelly's family.

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