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Biographical Feature

Eileen L. Randall, Ph.D.

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Dr. Eileen L. Randall was an accomplished clinical microbiologist when the field was still developing its identity. As her colleague and friend Dr. Josephine Morello recently said, "Eileen Randall was a distinguished clinical microbiologist even before most microbiologists knew what clinical microbiology was. She was in the forefront of this nascent field, widely imparting her vast knowledge of infectious microorganisms." Her contributions included research in bacteriology, the clinical care that her laboratories performed, and, perhaps foremost, her educational work and mentorship of clinical microbiologists.

Dr. Randall received her B.S. in medical technology from Ohio State University in 1948. She attended graduate school in microbiology at the Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia, PA. Her master's dissertation was titled "Studies on the morphology, physiology, and immunology of *Endamoeba histolytica*, *Endamoeba coli*, and *Endamoeba invadens*." Her Ph.D. work was done with the guidance of Dr. Henry Stempen. Dr. Randall turned from parasitology to bacteriology, which remained her primary area of research throughout her life. She completed her Ph.D. in 1960, on "Studies on Mima-like and Herellea-like organisms."

After her studies, Dr. Randall became director of the microbiology laboratory at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital and was appointed in the departments of microbiology and pathology. In 1973, she became director of the microbiology laboratory at Evanston Hospital. She rose to become professor of pathology at the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine and senior attending in medicine at Evanston Hospital. Mr. Richard Gottschall, who was manager of microbiology at Evanston Hospital, said "Because she started as a bench-level technologist, she always had a profound understanding of the issues facing the techs

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in the lab every day and for that she was respected and appreciated."

Dr. Randall was a leader in the national and local ASM. She was chair of the ASM clinical division from 1979 to 1980 and served on several committees, including the American Board of Medical Microbiology, the Board of Education and Training, and the Foundation for Microbiology Lecturer series (1). Dr. Randall was the secretary of the Eastern Pennsylvania branch of the ASM from 1970 to 1973, and she was on the steering committee in 1967 when the clinical microbiology section was formed in the Eastern Pennsylvania branch (2). She directed and participated in many workshops and symposia in the Clinical Microbiology branch. Dr. Randall was also the president of the Illinois Society for Microbiology.

Chief among Dr. Randall's contributions were those in education. She started a master's degree program in clinical microbiology in Philadelphia, PA. Dr. James Poupard recalls, "She applied all her talents of persuasion to convince faculty and administration of the Thomas Jefferson University Graduate School to establish a program. It was a big struggle on her part, but she finally got approval in August of 1972, just 1 month before classes were to start. The program was a complete success and had a significant effect on the quality of clinical microbiology in Philadelphia." Dr. Randall and Dr. Morello taught a traveling workshop on staphylococci and streptococci sponsored by the ASM, and Dr. Morello recalls, "Many times. . . the days would be prolonged, because she invariably got caught up in answering questions about any topic of diagnostic microbiology raised by the attendees."

Dr. Randall was a mentor to those interested in clinical microbiology. Dr. Gary Doern recalls that when he knew her, early in his career, "She was not only an extraordinarily gifted clinical microbiologist; she was generous in spirit, full of enthusiasm and a truly wonderful teacher. Indeed, I cannot remember a single instance when we were together that she didn't teach me something." Dr. Paul Schreckenberger says, "Dr. Randall befriended me when I first arrived to work at the University of Illinois Chicago in 1974. She encouraged me (actually pushed me) to go back to graduate school and get my Ph.D. degree because she always felt that I had the calling to be a laboratory director. Eileen was proud as a parent when I fulfilled my dream of becoming a laboratory director."

Dr. Randall published over 30 articles, mainly in clinical bacteriology. Her early work included extensive analyses of the biochemical characteristics of clinical isolates of members of the Mimae tribe (now reclassified), which included bacteria that mimic the morphology of *Neisseria* in clinical specimens. Biochemical identification of organisms was a lasting interest, and one of her later publications is an evaluation of a system for identifying *Enterococcus*. Dr. Randall published a series of studies on improving and validating methods of blood culture and articles on detection of pharyngeal *Streptococcus pyogenes*. These papers emphasize the clinical utility of the methods, but they are also striking for their careful analysis of laboratory concerns, including ease of use, workflow, and instrument requirements.

Her achievements and contributions were recognized with several awards (2). She received the Distinguished Alumni Award from Thomas Jefferson University, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, in 1984. This award "focuses on the professional accomplishments of alumni and helps to foster communication between current and former graduate students." Her professional accomplishments were recognized with the Significant Contributors to Clinical Microbiology Award from the South Central Association for Clinical Microbiology in 1980 and the Pasteur Award from the Illinois Society of Microbiology in 1990.

Dr. Randall was an important voice in shaping the field of clinical microbiology. Dr. Randall passed away on December 9, 1990, after a long illness that she met with courage. Her early death was a great loss to her colleagues, friends, and family. She left an important legacy through her impact on our field. Dr. Tom Thompson, who was a student and friend of Dr. Randall, said, "The commitment and passion that we in clinical microbiology have today has flowed, in large part, from Dr. Randall's career and life. She was smart, compassionate, unselfish, fair, loyal and fiercely dedicated. When I look at our profession today, that is what I see."

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