

*By his successor, Phillip V Tobias**

"A man to whom it has been given to bless the world with a great creative idea has no need for the praise of posterity. His very achievement has already conferred a higher boon upon him.

"Yet it is good—indeed, it is indispensable — that representatives of all who strive for truth and knowledge should ... bear witness that even in these times of ours, when political passion and brute force hang like swords over the anguished and fearful heads of men, the standard of our ideal search for truth is being held aloft undimmed."

These words were uttered by Albert Einstein at a Memorial Service for Max Planck. They are germane to this tribute to the towering personality of Raymond Arthur Dart.

What words can one find which will do justice to a man who was at once anatomist, philosopher, anthropologist, physician, historian, teacher, actor, man of action, guide, mentor, fount of inspiration, friend and father-figure? For such a man was Raymond Dart. His was a life of pioneering ventures that started when he was in the cradle and continued to his old age. Indeed his first voyage of exploration occurred when, as a newborn babe, he floated with his mother out of a second-storey bedroom during the great Queensland flood of 1893.

Young Raymond was a pioneer student and scholarship winner when he entered the newly-founded University of Queensland at Brisbane in 1911. After completing Bachelor of Science and Honours degrees, he entered the Sydney Medical School. While taking his medical degree, he fell under the spell of Professor J T ("Jummy") Wilson, the Head of the Department of Anatomy. This began his lifelong love affair with Anatomy and Physical Anthropology. His service in the Australian Army Medical Corps during World War I (1918–1919), his intellectual experiences as a newly-demobilised young lecturer under Elliot Smith at University College, London (1919–1922), his adventures in the USA as one of the first two Foreign Fellows of the Rockefeller Foundation (1921–1922) — all paved the way for his appointment to the Chair of Anatomy at the University of the Witwatersrand from January 1923. It was a month before he would reach his 30th birthday.

Professor Dart filled the Chair of Anatomy for no less than 36 years. For 18 of these years he served concurrently a Dean of the Faculty of Medicine. For 15 years he was the University's representative on the S A Medical and Dental Council and he was a member of the S A Nursing Council from its inception in 1944 until 1951. He gave 15 years' labour as a member of the board of the S A Institute for Medical Research. Among many other public service commitments, he was a member of the Loram Commission which enquired into the establishment of medical training facilities for black students in South Africa (1927–1928).

This list of the indefatigable Dart's services is far from complete. He was an officer in the SA Field Ambulance and later he commanded the Officers' Training Corps Field Ambulance of Wits University. At various times he was president of the SA Society of Physiotherapists, the Associated Scientific and Technical Societies of SA, the SA Association for the Advancement of Science. He ushered in far-reaching developments such as the first university courses in physiotherapy and occupational therapy, diploma courses for Sister Tutors, university diplomata in Public Health, Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, Psychological Medicine, and Master of Surgery courses. He catalysed the establishment of a Dental Faculty at Wits; encouraged community ventures such as the Vrededorp and Alexandra Township health and family centres; and helped medical

students' cultural amenities, student periodicals and social service ventures. His pioneering initiatives pervade almost every aspect of his medical school and many threads in the warp and woof of South African medicine.

Throughout his 36 years at Medical School he proved himself to be a maker of men. Whether by direct tuition, or by example, whether by inspiration or intellectual ferment, Dart's charismatic effect on countless students, research workers and staff members was surely one of his enduring and most puissant qualities. The tally of his former medical, therapy, science and honours students, and staff members, includes numerous medical scientists and anthropologists of high international repute.

All of these distinguished accomplishments are eclipsed, in the domain of science, by his remarkable contributions to our knowledge of man's place in Nature and his evolution. While not yet 32 years old, he was responsible for uncovering and appraising the Taung skull. It was the first-to-be-found of all of Africa's now multitudinous early hominid fossils. The prominent American journal *Science* 84 included the Taung discovery and what Dart made of it, as one of "the 20 scientific discoveries that shaped the 20th century". It brought controversy and contrariety to Raymond Dart, echoes of which still awaken periodically. He was well before his time in claiming that this small-brained creature walked upright and was close to humankind's earliest ancestors. It was a notion that was some 25 years ahead of its time.

It was typical of Dart to be bold, imaginative, indeed fearless, in standing out against the acknowledged crowned heads of world science. Despite doubts and queryings, opposition and disregard, he lived to see his claims vindicated and well-nigh universally accepted. Well on in his fifties, he added importantly to the African evidence through the researches he led at Makapansgat. He saw his colleagues and erstwhile students adding immeasurably to the stockpile of Africa's fossil treasures. Above all, he saw his brainchild acknowledged as one of the earliest Primates to embark upon the humanising change that ultimately spawned the species *homo sapiens*, modern man.

To few men of the 20th century, in this or any other country, has it been given so greatly to expand the frontiers of humanity's understanding of itself and its origins.

The constraints of space scarcely allow me to do justice to his personality and preclude mention of numerous other contributions of Raymond Dart. His stimulating spirit was the most memorable feature of the impact he made on those about him. His research students will remember his vivid attempts to inculcate into them linguistic and verbal skills; and science class seminars became a training-ground for good public speaking as well as clear thinking.

It would be wrong to dwell inordinately upon the fame, the honour and the glory of Raymond Dart. For he was the most human of human beings, the most gentle and genial; the warmth of his smile will always be carried in the memory. Deep compassion was the very stuff of his outlook and he was capable of great and abiding love.

Growing old gracefully, Professor Dart fulfilled Cicero's ideal: for this was a man who grew old in body, but never in mind. For him, old age was the crown of life, our play's last act. His enthusiasm remained undimmed; his zest for ideas undiluted.

We are all the poorer for his having died; we and countless others are the richer for his having lived.

A tribute to Professor Dart who was instrumental in ensuring that Physiotherapy was accepted as integral departments at Universities in South Africa — Editor ♦

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