

Edward Thomas Freeman

Born: 1890
President: 1952-1955
Died: 1974

Edward Thomas Freeman was born in Dublin in 1890 and having attended Belvedere College proceeded to study medicine at the old Royal University graduating MB in 1914. Having spent seven years in India where he acquired an interest in oriental and tropical diseases, he returned to Dublin via London and Paris, attending ward rounds and lectures at a number of hospitals.

In 1923, he was appointed as a pathologist and physician at the Mater Hospital where he played a seminal role for the rest of his career. He also held appointments at Newcastle Sanatorium, St Vincent's Hospital Fairview and the Coombe Maternity Hospital. Freeman was interim Professor of Medicine at University College Dublin commencing in 1955 and was appointed to the General Medical Council London and the Medical Registration Council of Ireland in 1956.

In 1962 Dublin University granted him an honorary Doctorate of Science, and the National University of Ireland conferred an honorary Doctorate of Laws. A Papal Knighthood followed in 1972 when he became a Knight of the Order of Saint Gregory.

Freeman was very much a man of his times and was always very well dressed. He invariably carried a walking stick when inspecting the hospital facilities in which he took an abiding interest in his capacity as Hospital Secretary and subsequently Chairman for almost 30 years. Contrary to general belief his sobriquet 'Flash' referred to a comment by one of the Jesuits at Belvedere, his having obtained a major prize in English literature that this success was 'just a flash in the pan'. This doubtful accolade stayed with him throughout his life.

He was noted for his kindness and thoughtfulness to all he came in contact with; and his diligent discharge of his responsibilities to the Mater Hospital administration is credited with greatly advancing that institution's therapeutic and academic development. He played a leading role in coordinating the hospital's undergraduate and postgraduate medical training according to the new principles then becoming current. He gave expression to this by bringing about the construction of a hospital block containing an auditorium which now commemorates him, lecture rooms, a medical library and a large staff restaurant. In other areas of the hospital he established day rooms for patients and enlarged the laboratories and X-ray department. He remained Chairman of the medical board until his retirement in 1971.



LIVES OF THE PRESIDENTS



On his farm in Wicklow he was renowned for the attention given to the farming environment and the quality of the pedigree animals bred there. Freeman died in 1974 and was survived by his wife, Emily Creed, three sons and one daughter.

JH



HERITAGE
CENTRE

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