

## Patrick Theodore Joseph O'Farrell

**Born:** 1889  
**President:** 1958-1960  
**Died:** 1968

Patrick Theodore O'Farrell was born on 16 February 1889 to a family well-established in medicine, his father having been Surgeon General in Ireland. He was educated at Jesuit Colleges in Ireland and England and then attended the medical school of the Catholic University in Dublin where he was awarded gold medals in surgery, midwifery and pathology. He obtained the conjoint diploma of the Royal College of Surgeons and Physicians of Ireland in 1910.

Having completed several junior hospital appointments, he joined the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) Medical Service and was deployed in Ireland, France, Belgium and the Middle East. During the post-war period, having become Captain in the RFC, he then served as Medical Officer to the Dunlop plantations in Malacca. He became Assistant Physician at Saint Vincent's Hospital in 1923 with later attachments to Saint Kevin's Hospital and the British Ministry of Pensions. He gained the Diploma in Tropical Medicine in 1920 and the Diploma in Public Health in 1924, proceeding to Membership of the College of Physicians in 1931 and Fellowship in 1933. He was awarded MD in 1945.

O'Farrell founded the Irish Cardiac Society in 1949 and was its first President. He had a long association with the British Medical Association serving on many committees and becoming President in 1952. He had been President of the Irish Medical Association in 1950, and the Royal Academy of Medicine of Ireland in 1954. The honorary degree of LL.D. was granted by Dublin University in 1952 and the University of Wales in 1953.

O'Farrell, or 'Patsy' to his colleagues and friends, while considered somewhat brusque and impatient was held in high esteem both as an administrator and as a clinician. He was one of the earliest cardiological practitioners in Dublin, and is reputed to have brought the first ECG equipment to Saint Vincent's Hospital in the form of Einthoven's original string galvanometer adapted for use on patients. He published many papers on cardiology; however, his contribution to the development of medical services consequent on his involvement with the Irish and British Medical Associations are better remembered. His chairmanship of committees was characterised by a tendency to bring meetings to an early close if items which did not find favour with him were proposed.

It is of interest to note that in 1916 he was a co-signatory of the certificate issued concerning James Connolly which attested to Connolly's rational mental state and thus capable of



undergoing trial. Interestingly, an older brother was involved in training Irish volunteers in Galway in 1912.

He held the Irish Sisters of Charity, the founders of St Vincent's Hospital, in the highest esteem and having retired from practice in 1960 he relocated to London and assisted in their hospice work there in subsequent years. He married Laura Barnes who predeceased him and with whom he had two daughters. He died in June 1968 and is buried in London.

JH



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