

James John Leahy

Born: c.1780
President: 1825-1826
Died: 1832

There is a paucity of information concerning James John Leahy who was elected President of the College of Physicians of Ireland in 1825.

Leahy was born in Dublin circa 1780 and was educated at Trinity College Dublin obtaining a BA in 1800 and proceeding MA in 1804. He was admitted as a Licentiate of the College of Physicians in August 1805 and advanced to Fellowship in November 1807. He also obtained an MD from Edinburgh University around this time.

He was appointed King's Professor of the Practice of Medicine in 1829 and he held an appointment at the Dublin General Dispensary at Temple Court where he was in charge of the medical beds at Saint Peter and Saint Bridget's Hospitals in Peter Street. This post also included teaching at Kirby's School in the subjects of chemistry, pharmacy and medicine.

He died in Sligo in 1832 from Asiatic cholera a condition which, having ravaged continental Europe and spread to England, had then begun to be manifested in Ireland. A severe epidemic is recorded to have occurred in Sligo in that year with many deaths including that of five doctors. Misinformation led to culpability for the outbreak being attributed to doctors. Perhaps his presence as President of the College was related to this development.

There is extant a note of a payment from the College, funded by Sir Patrick Dun's estate, to his administratrix, Eleanor Maria Leahy, of 15 pounds 7 shillings and 8 pence being two months outstanding salary. However, no other family references remain available. He is said to have been a good all-round man of a diligent disposition. The sudden nature of his demise in troubled times may account for the lack of personal information.

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