

Thomas Henry Wilson

Born: 1865
President: 1925-1927
Died: 1941

Thomas Henry Wilson was the first child of John and Anne Thomasine Wilson of 31 Rutland Square, born on New Year's Day 1865. He was baptised in St Mary's Church on 10 February 1865. His father, John, was a Lieutenant in the 14th Infantry Regiment and his family had a long history of military service. His great grandfather, Joseph Wilson, fought in the American War of Independence and was an 'aide de camp' to George Washington, and he was later appointed the first American Consul in Ireland.

Thomas Wilson attended prep school in Stratford upon Avon, then Foyle College in Londonderry, before attending Trinity College Dublin, where he was conferred with an MA. Interestingly, he did not take any medical degree in the University, but did postgraduate studies in Leipzig and acted as a ship's surgeon.

Following his time as a ship's surgeon he commenced practice in midwifery, and was Assistant Master to Sir William Smylie (qv) in the Rotunda Hospital from 1894-1897. In 1886, he received the Licentiate of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland and a Licentiate in Midwifery from the Rotunda, and the following year received his Licentiate from the College of Physicians. This was followed by Membership in 1897 and Fellowship in 1898.

Wilson worked as gynaecologist to the Richmond Hospital and Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital. In 1911, he was appointed as the King's Professor in Midwifery at Trinity College, and held that post until his retirement, due to ill health, in 1936. During his time as Professor he was an external examiner in midwifery for the University of Durham and Queen's University Belfast. He also ran a private practice which was located at 81 Merrion Square.

He held the post of Honorary Secretary of the Royal Academy of Medicine in Ireland, he contributed papers on gynaecology to the Academy's *Transactions*, and published in the British Medical Journal on the complications of labour. He also held the post of Vice President of the obstetrics and gynaecology section of the annual meeting of the British Medical Association in London in 1910.

In 1922, he married Gladys Mary Smythe, elder daughter of Colonel W Lyster Smythe. He was elected President of the College on St. Luke's Day 1925, the last President elected on the biennial term of presidency. There is little recorded concerning his presidency which is in keeping with



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The Irish Times description of him as ‘fond of gardening, a very clever carpenter, a kindly rather shy, energetic, able man, with a sense of humour, tolerant to most things except insincerity.’¹

His obituary in *The Lancet* described him as ‘a rational man, who took little part in professional affairs. As a teacher, he was painstaking and courteous, and his skill as a surgeon won for him a good gynaecological practice. He was a charming companion, his friends found him kindly, humorous and tolerant’.²

Wilson died at the age of 76, following a lengthy illness and he is buried in Deans Grange cemetery in Dublin.

MPO’C

¹ Obituary, *The Irish Times*, 25 November 1941

² Obituary, *The Lancet*, 13 December 1941

