

O B I T U A R Y

Gerald Elledge McDaniel, M.D.

1898 - 1985

Dr. G. E. McDaniel, who retired as Director of the Division of Disease Control of the South Carolina State Board of Health, died at Columbia, SC, on July 22, 1985, at the age of 87. He was born on February 27, 1898, at Honea Path, SC, the son of Tobias Clarence and Lurana Elledge McDaniel.

Dr. McDaniel attended the Ekone School in rural Laurens County and the Wofford Fitting School for one year. He worked on his mother's farm for one year between high school and college. He graduated from Clemson University in 1920 with a B.S. in Agriculture and Education. He worked for two years as a high school vocational agriculture teacher and a third year as both a high school superintendent and a vocational agriculture teacher.

Dr. McDaniel received his M.D. degree from the Medical University of South Carolina in 1927. He then became County Health Officer in Marion, SC, for a year and three months. He then served as Resident Physician in a hospital in Greenville, SC, for eleven months and was in private practice for three months. On January 1, 1930, he became County Health Officer at Dillon, SC. He spent an academic year as a fellowship student at the Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health where he received the degree of Master of Public Health in 1933. For the next 16 months, he was Director of the Dillon-Marion Public Health District which was the first public health multi-county district in South Carolina. He spent the 1934 - 35 academic year at Johns Hopkins as a special student in Epidemiology and Communicable Diseases. He was appointed State Epidemiologist in 1935. His title was changed to Director of the Division of Preventable Diseases and Epidemiologist for the State Board of Health in 1936. His title was changed in 1951 to Director of the Division of Disease Control but essentially he held the same position from 1935 to his retirement on November 1, 1968.

In 1928, Dr. McDaniel was involved in suppressing an outbreak of malaria in the Brittons Neck area of Marion County. There were 20,601 cases of malaria with 375 deaths reported in South Carolina in 1928. In 1934 - 35, when Dr. McDaniel became State Epidemiologist, there were 1063 deaths from tuberculosis, 378 from malaria, 248 from typhoid fever, 324 from syphilis, and 65 from diphtheria. Five hundred and fifty-one animal heads tested positive for rabies that year. Dr. McDaniel led the fight against the endemic diseases of malaria and typhus fever and the epidemic diseases of poliomyelitis, influenza, measles, meningitis, and diphtheria. Malaria was conquered by drainage, entomological and epidemiologic research, larvicides, and residual spraying of insecticides beginning with DDT in 1944. Typhus fever was controlled by similar methods directed at rats and rat fleas.

Dr. McDaniel's appointment as Director of the Division of Disease Control in 1951 added the chronic diseases and problems of aging to his area of responsibility. This was appropriate as the battle against contagious diseases was approaching the final stages. Rabies control was intensified and 102,000 dogs and cats were vaccinated against rabies in 1952. In 1953 Dr. McDaniel reported that malaria and

typhus fever were vanishing and smallpox was gone. The residual spraying for malaria mosquitoes gradually shifted to space dusting and fogging for nuisance mosquitoes. The 1954 trial of Salk vaccine in Charleston County led to mass use of the Salk and Sabin vaccines in South Carolina. From 1954 to 1958, 1,730,094 doses of Salk vaccine were given and 1,700,000 persons (73% of the State's population) received the Sabin vaccine in its first year, 1963. In 1960, Dr. McDaniel reported there were no cases of malaria and only one of typhus fever that year. In 1962, there were no positive animal heads for rabies. In 1966, there was one case of polio, one case of diphtheria, nine cases of typhoid, but there were 71 cases of meningitis. There had been no locally contracted cases of malaria since 1953. In 1967, use of the measles vaccine was begun. In 1968, Dr. McDaniel reported there had been no animal rabies, except in bats, since 1963.

In 1964, there were 117 deaths from tuberculosis, 36 from syphilis, none from malaria, one from typhoid fever, and one from diphtheria in South Carolina. Comparison of these figures with the mortality from these diseases when Dr. McDaniel became State Epidemiologist is convincing evidence that the fight that he led against killer diseases prevented a tremendous amount of sickness and deaths in South Carolina. In 1971, Dr. McDaniel was presented the James A. Hayne award by the South Carolina Public Health Association for "Meritorious Achievement in Public Health." He was one of the two Honorary Members of the South Carolina Entomological Society.

After his retirement, Dr. McDaniel was quite active in promoting the welfare of senior citizens. He was President of the South Carolina Federation on Aging for a time.

"Dr. Mc," as his fellow workers respectfully called him, once said that "an inquisitive mind, unusual patience, dogged perseverance, and endurance are valuable assets to a good epidemiologist." South Carolina was blessed because Dr. G. E. McDaniel had all those traits in great abundance and used them for the benefit of its people.

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