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STUDIES IN PARASITOLOGY

In memory of
CLARK P. READ

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Professor Clark Phares Read died unexpectedly in Houston, Texas, on December 23, 1973. He had been born the son of Helen and Clark Phares Read in Fort Worth, Texas, on February 4, 1921.

Clark Read served in the U. S. Navy and Marine Corps during 1940-1945. His university career was initiated at Tulane University in 1943, where he was assigned as a student in the old U. S. Navy V-12 program until 1945. He then attended the University of Texas Medical School until his resignation in 1946. Read's classmates and professors were shocked to hear of his resignation from medical school; but aided and abetted by Dean Chauncey Leake he opted for a research career, a fortuitous event for the field of parasitology. He had been introduced to research at Tulane by Professor Edward S. Hathaway, an exacting taskmaster to those of us who came to know him well. For a time it appeared as if the young scientist's choice of research career might not pan out. He had applied to work with Ernest Carroll Faust at Tulane, but was not accepted because Professor Faust already had too many graduate students. Read then applied to work under the direction of Asa C. Chandler at Rice Institute. Professor Chandler was very demanding of his students, and his new pupil developed rapidly under his direction. As Read himself admitted in 1959, he had found himself thriving under pressure. Since Clark had not formally completed a bachelor's degree, Professor Chandler required him to write and defend two master's theses. By 1950 he had earned the Ph.D. and left Rice to join the faculty of the University of California at Los Angeles, where he held the rank of Instructor of Zoology. Read earned the title of Assistant Professor in 1952. At U.C.L.A. he came under the influence of an outstanding scientist and formidable individual, Gordon Ball. Clark fondly remembered the association in 1959 by saying,

In my eyes Dr. Ball is a real giant of personal and scientific integrity. When I joined the faculty at U.C.L.A. as an instructor in 1950, Dr. Ball was Professor of Zoology. A lesser man than Gordon Ball would have expected a novice to assume a junior role in the scheme of things. However, Gordon will give you as much rope as you want. When you become entangled he will cut the rope and hand it back to you. We shared many experiences in
teaching and departmental duties and I profited immeasurably from the intangible assets of Professor Ball's personality.

In 1954 Read joined the faculty of the Johns Hopkins University in Pathobiology, which was headed by Frederik Bang, an individual for whom he came to have great affection. In 1959, already the author of at least sixty papers primarily dealing with biochemistry and physiology, and the mentor of sixteen Ph.D. candidates, he joined the then Rice Institute faculty as professor of biology—a post he held until his death.

The same year he arrived at Rice, Read was designated the first recipient of the Henry Baldwin Ward Medal of the American Society of Parasitologists. This medal is presented to young parasitologists who have demonstrated excellence in scholarly activities and original research.

National and international recognition of his work was followed by a Guggenheim fellowship, in 1960, to Cambridge University, where he was designated Research Fellow of Christ's College, and where he worked at the Molteno Institute. From 1961 to 1966 he was Chairman of the Zoology Department at the Marine Biological Laboratory at Woods Hole, Massachusetts, a laboratory to which he moved every possible summer thereafter to conduct research. Later he was appointed a Trustee (1966-1974) of the Marine Biological Laboratory. From 1961 to 1966 Read served as Chairman of the Study Section in Tropical Medicine and Parasitology, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases of the National Institutes of Health. In 1963 he was Carnegie Professor at the University of Hawaii. He also held a Career Professorship from the National Institutes of Health in 1966.

Professor Read served as Council Member at Large of the American Society of Parasitologists from 1960 to 1963, and served on the editorial boards of the American Journal of Hygiene, Experimental Parasitology, Journal of Comparative Biochemistry and Physiology, Parasitology, and Journal of Parasitology. He was also a member of the American Association of University Professors, the Society of General Physiologists, the American Society of Zoologists, the American Society of Parasitologists, the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, the Society of Protozoologists, the American Physiological Society, the Society of the Sigma Xi, and the Southwestern Association of Parasitologists; he was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine.

Elsewhere in this memorial volume, George Stewart has reviewed the scientific contributions of Professor Read in considerable detail. It may be said, however, that Clark Read's greatest contribution to the field of parasitology, besides the training of many excellent students who now hold positions of leadership in the field, was that of bringing methodologies and concepts from other fields into parasitology. He was one person, among a
handful of others, instrumental in bringing the physiological bases of parasitism to a level of sophistication acceptable to biochemists and physiologists alike. It was no easy task. For a time Read was greatly distressed by the grip of the old "autocrats" in which the American Society of Parasitologists found itself, and by the unwillingness of the traditional classicists to apply new concepts and techniques from other scientific fields to problems in parasitology. For a period of several years he failed to appear at national parasitology meetings. I once chided him about his absence from these meetings, arguing that if we did not work for change, it could not be expected to come about. He replied that he had tried, but the situation was simply hopeless. Clark Read understood and appreciated the traditional parasitology of the times and he published several excellent papers in systematics. I mention this because that difficult era was dominated by parasitologists who were traditional taxonomists. Read was not disdainful of taxonomy; he simply recognized that insufficient progress was being made and that more sophisticated techniques needed to be applied to problems in parasitology to keep our field abreast of other rapidly moving disciplines in biology. Read's decision to end his self-imposed exile from national meetings came a few years before his death, and was greatly influenced by the constant encouragement he received from his many former students, colleagues, and friends in the Southwestern Association of Parasitologists (SWAP). After the second meeting of SWAP held at Tulane University, he conveyed to me his great satisfaction at the high quality of the papers presented. He never failed to attend a SWAP meeting after the formation of the group, and was its president at the time of his death. His renewed interest in the national society was, in my opinion, sparked by the fact that he was no longer a lone voice far ahead of his time. Read constantly fought to improve the quality of work in our field, and in a 1963 publication he made the following appeal to parasitologists:

Because of the general subject of this monograph, an additional liberty will be taken in making a few remarks concerning the training of persons for research in the biochemical and biophysical aspects of parasitism. It has become apparent that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to furnish adequate training for research in biochemistry, as well as a thorough grounding in the morphology and biology of parasitic organisms. The training of students for a research career implies preparation in depth. Competent work in morphology requires a thorough grounding in morphology with sufficient biochemistry to appreciate progress in biology. Competent work in the biochemistry of parasitism requires training in chemistry, mathematics, and biochemistry with a sufficient background in parasitology to engender appreciation of the chemical problems of greatest biological importance. Several years ago, the world's senior citizen in the biochemistry of parasitism, Theodor von Brand, warned of the dangers of jumping on band wagons. We should take this warning seriously. Not all of us have taken it seriously. Our field has suffered from a spate of superficial studies in biochemistry and physiology. There is no
longer an excuse for the publication of papers in our field which do not meet the requirements of quality and rigorous scientific interpretation expected of papers published in such journals as The Journal of Biological Chemistry, The Biochemical Journal, The American Journal of Physiology, The Journal of General Physiology, and perhaps a half dozen other such journals. We must demand quality regardless of questions of quantity. An investigator in our field who publishes one good paper a year must stand above those who choose to publish three or more inferior papers in a similar period. We have been beset in the western world during the past 15 years with the problem of keeping up with the literature. I would contend that this problem would be considerably simplified if we placed a greater emphasis on quality and depreciated the emphasis on quantity. Growth of the field with which we are concerned requires such an emphasis. If we fail to impose this emphasis we shall follow the path of certain other underdeveloped areas of biology. We shall fail to attract competence and talent. We are at a very important and crucial point in the development of the experimental study of parasitism. We have inadequate communication with the well-developed areas of medical microbiology and plant pathology, as well as the highly sophisticated and complex areas of biochemistry, biophysics, and general physiology. Ours is a great responsibility. Those of us who are responsible for the training and guidance of others must accept this responsibility and work at discharging it in a competent fashion. If we fail to do so, others will do it for us. We will be abdicating our responsibilities and, in more crass terms, our meager claims to fame. There are some persons who have furnished us examples of rigor and quality in this field. I would point to the beautiful and sophisticated researches of von Brand, Fairbairn, Bueding, Saz, Campbell, Kmetec, Entner, Hutner, Nathan, and others in animal parasitology. We could learn much from the researches of Beck, Schneider, Braun, Bloch, Charniaux-Cotton, Sonneborn, Garber, Lewis, and others in those areas which superficially appear to be peripheral to our own. Ours is an exciting field with fantastic possibilities for good minds. We are dealing with some of the most complex systems in biology. We are concerned with the interactions of two steady states. We are concerned with the emergent properties, not readily predictable, of such interactions. We must enlist the talents of physicists, of mathematicians and most importantly, of competent biologists to attack these problems and to train our students. A course of action requires a renewed dedication to our interests.

Many scientists are content to work quietly in their laboratories. The same could never be said of Clark Read. His deeply ingrained sense of justice and constitutional rights of citizens led him to serve as Secretary and Chairman (1967-1970) of the Houston Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, and Vice President of the Texas Civil Liberties Union (1970-1972). From 1968 to 1972, he served as Chairman of the Free Lee Otis Johnson Committee. He also served as a member of the boards of the Martin Luther King Foundation and the Houston Council of Human Relations, and as a sponsor for the Fund of the Republic and for the United Farm Workers Seminar. His concern for the education of disadvantaged citizens led him to serve as a member of the Advisory Board for the Mexican-American Educational Committee and of the Desegregation Advisory Committee of the Houston Independent School District.

His other activities were varied, including service as the principal scientific advisor to Roberto Rossellini on a ten-hour television film titled “Science.”
He also served as principal scientific advisor on a United Nations film titled "Populations—What and Where."

How did all of these activities, honors, and responsibilities affect Read? He was a warm individual completely lacking in pretension. Until his death he retained the ability to laugh at himself. He was a generous person to all who were fortunate enough to know him. In later years he was an outstanding spokesman for academic freedom and the rights of young people everywhere. He loved life and a challenge.

Clark dearly loved his wife, Lee, and his children, Johanna Read Tobias, Victoria Read Miller, and Thomas Jefferson Read. Shortly before his death, he wrote me a long letter to tell me of his wife's most recent success of which he was very proud. Lee, the love of his life, had just received a law degree. Read admired her greatly and he wrote, "she is one of the most intelligent persons I have ever known."

The American Civil Liberties Union and Rice University have both established memorial funds in the memory of this Texas giant. There will never be another person quite like Clark Read, but upcoming young people everywhere can take a lesson on how to mold their lives from a man who remains a living memorial to distinction.

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