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U. Pharmacologist Cited

Tatum Research Benefits Millions

(This is another in a series of "profiles" of University of Wisconsin faculty members retiring this year.—EDITOR'S NOTE.)

Millions of lives, rescued from disease, addiction and poisoning, stand today in living evidence of the research gifts of Dr. Arthur L. Tatum of the University of Wisconsin.

But as the 70-year-old professor and chairman of the Department of Pharmacology terminates his long and brilliant career in retirement, few of the myriad lives he has touched—the rescued drug addicts, the cured syphilitics, the victims of drug poisoning brought back to life—will recognize his contributions.

In that respect Dr. Tatum is himself a victim—a victim of the anonymity of the laboratory research worker. For it was in the realm of the test tube and the experimental animal that the questioning, probing scientist brought new hope to the more unfortunate of mankind.

Dr. Tatum's sphere of influence extends far beyond the laboratory finding. In nearly a half-century of teaching, the friendly, quiet-spoken pharmacologist, physiologist, and chemist has left his mark on hundreds of students, many of them famous today.

Dr. Tatum was born in Wall Lake, Iowa, in 1884. Twenty-one years later he graduated from Penn College, Oskaloosa, Iowa, with a bachelor of science degree. Chemistry was then his chosen field and for the next two years he was a fellow in chemistry at the University of Iowa while he earned his master of science degree.

From 1907 to 1910 he served as instructor in chemistry at the University of Colorado. In 1913 he received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago, and the following year was graduated in medicine from Rush Medical College.

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During the next three years he served first as instructor in physiology at the University of Pennsylvania and then as professor of physiology at the University of South Dakota. In 1918 he joined the faculty of the University of Chicago as assistant professor of pharmacology and later was raised to the status of associate professor.

He came to the University of Wisconsin in 1928 with the rank of professor and the following year he assumed chairmanship of the Department of Pharmacology.

Dr. A. L. Tatum

Forty-two years ago Dr. Tatum faced his group of students and was launched on a career of guiding young minds. Today his students, reflect in the positions they hold, much of the sound scientific foundation he laid for them; a large number of them hold highly responsible posts. It is probable that Dr. Tatum has turned out more professors of pharmacology, and for that matter, departmental heads, than any other pharmacology department in the country.

Inextricably interwoven with those 42 years of teaching are 40 years of research. In that time many knotty scientific problems have engaged his energy, his time, and his mind; more than 175 publications bear witness to this.

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Early in his research career Dr. Tatum investigated conditions involving malfunction of the thyroid gland. Next he turned to a study of hypotic drugs. He was particularly interested in the treatment of narcotic poisoning. As a result of this research Dr. Tatum developed the use of a drug called picrotoxin to combat the frequently fatal effects of overdoses of barbiturates (sleeping pills).

This study led him into an investigation of chronic drug poisoning and drug addiction. During this research Dr. Tatum clarified the differences between drugs that stimulate, such cocaine, and drugs that depress, such as morphine, and their chemical equivalents. He also made observations which today are the bases for [illegible] poisoning.