

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS

OBITUARY

HENRY F. HELMHOLZ 1882-1958

HENRY F. HELMHOLZ, M.D., of Rochester, Minnesota, ninth President of the American Academy of Pediatrics (1938-39) passed away at Rochester, Minnesota, on the evening of August 18, 1958. Dr. Helmholtz would have been 76 years old on August 24.

Born in Chicago, he attended the University of Wisconsin and graduated from Johns Hopkins Medical School in 1906. Following a fellowship in pathology Dr. Helmholtz studied pediatrics at the Universities of Berlin, Breslau and Vienna from 1907 to 1909. He returned to Chicago to marry Isabel C. Lindsay and to begin the practice of pediatrics. From 1909 to 1920 Henry Helmholtz practiced in Chicago, but in 1921 accepted an appointment as Head of the Section of Pediatrics at the Mayo Clinic.

Always an active and enthusiastic worker, Dr. Helmholtz during his interesting and fruitful career served in the following capacities: Medical Director of the Infant Welfare Society of Chicago (1911-21); member of the Otho S. A. Sprague Memorial Institute for Medical Research (1912-30); Attending Physician, Children's Memorial Hospital (1912-19) and Physician-in-Chief (1919-21); UNICEF Consultant for Europe 1948; Professor of Pediatrics, Mayo Foundation (1921-49); Chief Consultant, Mid-century White House Conference on Children and Youth (1950); and Health Chairman, National Congress of Parents and Teachers (1952-58).

Dr. Helmholtz was interested in and most active in societies and organizations that had to do with children. In addition to being one of the early organizers of the American Academy of Pediatrics, he served on the Executive Board and as President and as a member of several Academy committees. He was Chairman of the Section

on Pediatrics of the American Medical Association (1922-23); a member of the American Pediatric Society of which he was President in 1937; and was President of the Fifth International Congress of Paediatrics (1947). He was an Honorary Member of the Cuban, Mexican, Swedish and Brazilian Pediatric Societies.

In 1955 the following appreciation of Dr. Helmholtz appeared in *For the Welfare of Children* by Paul W. Beaven, M.D., Historian of the Academy, and it is especially appropriate now: "Henry Helmholtz has made many and important scientific contributions. He is best known for his interest in children. The social, cultural and economic forces surrounding their lives have been as important to him as the diseases to which they are prone.

"Some of the activities in which he has been identified bear witness to his breadth of approach. He was first active in the Infant Welfare Society of Chicago. He established at the Mayo Clinic the Rochester Child Health Institute. He was a participant in the White House Conferences of 1919, 1930, 1940 and 1950, and helped to shape the pattern of these great national events.

"For many years he has been a wise counselor to the Children's Bureau as a member of its Advisory Committee.

"Back of any movement for the betterment of child life in the past forty years you will probably find Henry Helmholtz, sometimes a leader but often as a quiet, unobtrusive worker, the true friend of children."

These words were written when Dr. Helmholtz was with us and they can well be repeated at this time as they are even more meaningful. He led a full and productive life and his contributions were many, even up to just a very short time before his death.

E. H. CHRISTOPHERSON, M.D.

PEDIATRICS, January 1959



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