

FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF BIORHEOLOGY

POISEUILLE AWARD CEREMONY FOR A. L. COPLEY

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PRESENTATION ADDRESS

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Mesdames et Messieurs: Ladies and Gentlemen: Meine Damen Herren

It is for me a great honour to be invited to present the Poiseuille Gold Medal of our Society to my old friend, AL COPLEY. Professor COPLEY was rightly chosen by an overwhelming majority of our members to be the third recipient of this medal.

ALFRED LEWIN COPLEY was born in 1910 near Dresden in Germany and studied in a number of German universities, including Heidelberg, where he studied Philosophy, and also took his M.D. in 1935. It is good to learn that this famous university has acknowledged the world-wide distinction of its alumnus by bestowing on him the degree of Doctor of Medicine, *Honoris Causa*, this year. This is a great honour, well deserved.

As a result of his active opposition to the Nazi party in Germany, he was obliged to leave his native country and he first went to Switzerland, where he took a doctorate in Medicine at the University of Basel, as well as studying Physical Chemistry, Neurology and other subjects under various distinguished teachers (he was an assistant of ROBERT BING in Basal (1936–1937)). Later he moved to the United States and became a citizen of that country.

As a young man he wrote a play and was much interested in the stage; in fact, he might well have made this his career. In travelling around with a Repertory Company, he found that many of the casts came to him for personal counsel. This led him to feel, rightly, that he would make a good psychiatrist. However, his interest moved from psychiatry to neurology and I am told by a mutual friend that he had started on a most successful career as a clinical neurologist. (He was much influenced by V. VON WEIZSÄCKER and ROBERT BING.) However, his later inclination lay in a different direction and he made his career in scientific research.

Some time about 1942 or 1943, I first came across his papers on rheology of blood, which much impressed me, and I invited him to come to a Symposium to be held in Oxford; but, because of the war situation, he was unable to accept. He had been in touch with Professor EUGENE C. BINGHAM (popularly named the “Founder of Modern Rheology”) who worked, among many other systems, on blood and there was a possibility that they might have worked together, but this did not materialize.

COPLEY introduced the name “*Biorheology*” at the I. International Congress on Rheology in Holland in 1948 and it was there that we first met. I had been interested by a paper he had written on the forces needed to pull hair out of the scalp, in relation to baldness. It was at this Congress that we immediately became friends. He worked for 5 years in Paris and I visited him there on several occasions.

In 1957, he came to London and worked for nearly 3 years at the Charing Cross Hospital.

Although I had worked before that in other fields of biorheology, it was AL who introduced me to the problems of blood flow and coagulation.

After 3 years of pleasant and fruitful co-operation, I was indeed sad when he felt that it was time for him to return to his own country. I had spent many happy evenings with him and his wife and their daughter in their flat in London.

We all know that "A. L. COPLEY" has an *alter ego*; he is also "ALCOPLEY", the painter. (He chose this "*nom de plume*" to avoid confusion with the other painter called "Copley".) We also know that he married NINA TRYGGVADOTTIR, the very distinguished Icelandic artist, a lady whose charm and kindness made her beloved by all who knew her. Her premature death was a great blow, not only to the world of art, but to her many friends in our Society. This is not the place to pay tribute to AL's work as an artist; his paintings are to be found all over the world and he also finds time to be co-Editor of the Journal *Leonardo*. Indeed, although AL has been one of my closest friends for many years, there is one puzzle about him that I have never solved; how does he find time to sleep and eat? I know that, although he is appreciative of good cuisine, he eats very fast and I suspect that he must sleep very little!

I need not say very much here about his distinguished researches on blood and blood vessels: these are already known to you all. Perhaps his most useful contribution to the promotion of further research has been his explanation for the fact that blood starts to clot on contact with all surfaces except (other than in pathological conditions) the vessel wall. His theory of the existence of a fibrin-like "endoendothelial layer" on the vessel wall, by the mere fact of its being controversial (like all original ideas) has led to much further research. He also introduced the term "hemorheology" (in Britain "haemo-").

On the strength of his researches alone, he would be a strong candidate for our Medal but he also has another claim. He has played, I think it would be fair to say, not *a* leading role, but *the* leading role in the organization of our Science and our Society. In his modest way he has tried to insist that he shared this role with me, but I feel that he has done far more than I have. He is co-Editor in chief of our official journal, founder and co-Editor in chief of the new journal *Thrombosis Research*, and is also on the editorial Board of *Rheologica Acta*. Each year he finds time to come to Oxford, both to discuss the affairs of *Biorheology* with me and also to visit the Headquarters of our publishers, the Pergamon Press. He has also undertaken the editing of the Proceedings of many congresses.

I know also that when help is needed in the organization of conferences and congresses concerned with Biorheology, he is ready to fly to any part of the world to lend a hand, at very short notice if need be. His help is always appreciated, partly because of his remarkable powers of organization and his memory for detail and partly because of that trait in his character which would have made him such a good psychiatrist: kindness, sympathy and understanding.

In a few moments, you will see him wearing the Poiseuille Gold Medal, bearing the portrait of that great Frenchman, which was designed by his dear wife.

Mais, avant de faire la présentation officielle, je ne peux pas oublier que nous sommes en France, et je voudrais terminer avec quelques mots en français, par longue tradition, la langue internationale européenne. AL COPLEY, qui a travaillé en France, en Allemagne, en Suisse et en Angleterre, ainsi qu'aux Etats Unis, n'aura aucune difficulté de suivre mes quelques mots en français.

Alors, avec le plus grand plaisir du monde, je vous offre, mon très cher ami, AL, la médaille Poiseuille si richement méritée.



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Presentation of the Poiseuille Gold Medal Award to Professor A. L. Copley by Dr. G. W. Scott Blair. The third person is Professor G. V. F. Seaman, Chairman of the Award Ceremony. (Photo.—CINE WOLFF, Lyon.)