

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

WILLIAM WALTER GREULICH (1899 – 1986)

Dr. William Walter Greulich, Emeritus Professor of Anatomy, Stanford University Medical School, died at the aged of 87 on October 10, 1986. Dr. Greulich truly personified the familiar, descriptive combination of "gentleman and scholar." Those who knew him personally were inspired by his gentlemanly character. The world of medicine will always be aware of Greulich, the scholar.

His classic studies on human development defined by bone development in the hand and wrist culminated in his book published in I. D. Pyle entitled Radiographic Atlas of Skeletal Development of the Hand and Wrist. Published first in 1959 it has become, through its many editions, the standard reference for anatomists, pediatricians, radiologists, and other scientists interested in developmental, nutritional, traumatic, and environmental influences on human growth and development. It provided an invaluable basic standard for use in comparing radiograms of the hands and wrists of Japanese children surviving the atomic explosion over Hiroshima. Greulich conducted one of the first such studies.

William Greulich documented the fact that the maturation changes in the human skeleton are predictably associated with development of the reproductive and endocrine systems which, in turn, are responsible for the discernible external changes upon which estimation of bodily maturity are generally based.

His other research interests lay in the field of ovulation, twinning, and gonadal tumors. Together with Burford he was the first to record a specific endocrine-producing tumor in dogs.

Dr. Greulich's internationally-known work on heredity in human twinning was published as a monograph in 1984. It demonstrated that the capacity to produce fraternal twins is hereditary; whereas no such tendency exists in the capacity to produce identical twins.

The general world public is aware of one of the products of his studies of ovulation. He defined the use of "basal" body temperature as an index to time of ovulation in women.

In addition to his contributions to science, Greulich was known in political circles as a first order diplomatic science advisor. He served from 1952 to 1954 as science advisor to the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany. During the years 1961 to 1966 he was Senior Scientific Attache for the U.S. Embassy in London. Following this, Greulich became Special Deputy to the Director of National Institutes of Child Health and Human Development of the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland.

An appointment as a Teaching Assistant in Anatomy was Dr. Greulich's first Stanford appointment in 1931. After a five-year period on the faculty at Yale and four years as Professor of Anatomy at Western Reserve University, he returned to Stanford as Professor of Anatomy, to become executive head of the department in 1949.

He was the recipient of numerous prestigious honors and awards, including the Viking Fund Medal for outstanding achievement in physical anthropology. Students at the School of Medicine gave Dr. Greulich their highest award, honorary membership in Alpha Omega Alpha, in 1961 in recognition of his distinguished career as an anatomist and teacher.

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