Dr. William Osler, MD, FRS, FRCP (Lond.)

CMA President, 1884
McGill University, 1872
Internal medicine

When Sir William Osler died, CMAJ opined that he was as well known in Canada, his native country, as the prime minister. In the US, the National Library of Medicine says he was often described as “‘the father of modern medicine’ for the central role he played in revolutionizing medical education via the internship and residency system at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, where medicine was taught ‘at the bedside.’ He was equally renowned as a superb diagnostician and as a prolific author of medical and historical works, including his landmark textbook, The Principles and Practice of Medicine.” CMAJ, which described that book as the “most valuable single-volume textbook in medicine ever written,” summed up his contributions to his profession this way: “As a clinical teacher, Osler was at his best. Not only was he an acute diagnostician and a clear expositor, but he treated his hospital patients most kindly, as human beings and not as mere cases. His example was one which made a great impression on his students, and the Osler tradition of gentleness and sympathy with patients was handed on.” Dr. Osler died in England in 1919.