

Robert Bruce Preble



Robert Bruce Preble was born in Chicago on March 14, 1866. He attended the Chicago Public Schools and graduated from the old West Division High School in 1885. He then entered the University of Michigan where he graduated with an A.B. degree in 1889. From the University of Michigan he came to Northwestern University Medical School, where he graduated in 1891. After graduating he was appointed to the house staff in Cook County Hospital. He was one of the group referred to as the "Class of Giants," which included such distinguished names as Abt, Halstead, Edwards, DeLee, Eisendrath, and others.

Leaving Cook County Hospital, Dr. Preble went to Vienna for two years, studying with the same group who were together at the County Hospital. Shortly after his return he was appointed to the Attending Staff at Cook County.

In 1895, Dr. Preble joined the teaching staff of Northwestern University and advanced through the various grades to be Professor of Medicine. He firmly refused to be chairman of the Department, despite all urging from his peers. He was also on the staffs of Wesley and Mercy Hospitals, and later went on to St. Luke's, where he was in charge of one of the medical services and where he did most of his teaching. In 1903 and 1904 he was president of the Chicago Medical Society. During the first World War, he served as Major and Lieutenant Colonel in the Medical Corps, most of the time in France, as chief of the Medical Service at the Hospital Center of Mars sur Alliers. He received a United States Army citation and was made a Knight of the Legion of Honor.

He was one of the founders of the Chicago Heart Association and served as its president. He was also a charter member of the Institute of Medicine. He was the author of various papers and a monograph entitled Pneumonia and Pneumococcus Infections. For a short time he wrote the section on the Diseases of the Circulatory System for the Year Book of Medicine.

NOTABLE FACT: While at lunch one day with Dr. James B. Herrick, he mentioned the need for a society of internal medicine. They shook hands on it, and the Society of Internal Medicine was started then and there.