



Jonathan Meakins, MD

A study on the effects of high altitude on human physiology served as the catalyst for Dr. Meakins' first book in 1925 titled, "Respiratory Function in Disease". Eleven years later, he published his most widely recognized textbook, with six editions, titled: "The Practice of Medicine". During World War I, Meakins studied gas poisoning and Soldier's Heart (now referred to as post-traumatic stress disorder) and, in World War II, he served as Deputy Director of Medical Services with the rank of Brigadier. As a prolific writer Dr. Meakins was responsible for more than 160 scientific publications. As a brilliant investigator and innovative leader, he was in charge of training of many prestigious men and women researchers, some of whom have become laureates of the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame.

Graduating in medicine from McGill University in 1904, Dr. Meakins studied at Johns Hopkins Medical School in Baltimore and later in New York City at Presbyterian Hospital. In 1910, at the age of 28, Dr. Meakins was appointed lecturer in Medicine and Pathology, and in 1912, director of Experimental Medicine at McGill University. He was appointed in 1919 the Christison professor of Therapeutics at the University of Edinburgh, where he became one of the first to administer and study insulin.

In 1924, he was recruited back to McGill where he assumed the titles of professor and chair of Medicine, physician-in-chief at Royal Victoria Hospital and, perhaps his greatest legacy, director of the McGill University Clinic. It was at the Clinic that Dr. Meakins demonstrated his pioneering spirit by initiating collaborations between basic medical scientists and clinicians. Less than two decades later he was named dean of the Faculty of Medicine.

A father of two, Dr. Meakins was an advocate of health insurance and an excellent administrator. Founding father and first president of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, he presided over numerous other organizations, such as the Canadian Medical Association, the American College of Physicians, and the Canadian Mental Health Association. His dedication to mental health as an acclaimed clinical scientist served as an inspiration to others and subsequently raised its awareness in the medical community.

Awarded the esteemed title of Commander of the Order of the British Empire, Dr. Meakins also received two honorary degrees and was named Master by the American College of Physicians. He was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada (1926) as well as multiple Royal Colleges in Britain and Canada. His many contributions to McGill University have been commemorated in The Meakins-Christie Laboratories.