

EL DR. WILLIAM BOWIE

El Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Historia, está de duelo: ha muerto uno de sus más conspicuos fundadores, el Doctor WILLIAM BOWIE, que con su prestigio le dió vida y con su infatigable labor contribuyó a su organización y al desarrollo de la magna tarea que la América le ha confiado.

El Dr. WILLIAM BOWIE fué uno de esos hombres, que por su gran cultura y superior inteligencia, nacieron para investigar, para interpretar los fenómenos que la Naturaleza nos presenta y que sólo cerebros privilegiados son capaces de comprender.

Tan grandes como eran su inteligencia y su saber, era su modestia; era uno de esos hombres que cautivan por su sencillez y se veneran por sus grandes cualidades.

Para mí fué un gran amigo y para el Instituto un sabio consejero.

La noticia de su muerte me anonadó; me parecía imposible que hombres como él pudieran morir.

La ciencia pierde a un formidable investigador, difícil de substituir, ya que sabios eminentes como él, sólo aparecen raras veces, como estrellas fugaces que iluminan el firmamento un instante; pero cuyos destellos sirven de guía a los hombres por los senderos del progreso, en su evolución indefinida que nadie puede detener, como no es posible detener la vida misma.

Los Estados Unidos pierden uno de sus más preclaros hijos; la América, uno de sus más ilustres sabios; y la Humanidad, un portentoso guía.

Los siguientes datos biográficos me fueron proporcionados por el Director de la Coast and Geodetic Survey de Wáshington, Dr. L. O. Colbert:

"Dr. WILLIAM BOWIE, U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, retired, died in Mt. Alto Hospital in Washington on Wednesday morning, August 28, 1940, after an illness of about three weeks.

Born in Anne Arundel County, MD., May 6, 1872, the son of Thomas John and Susanna (Anderson) Bowie, Dr. BOWIE received his early education in the public schools and at private academies. He received degrees at Trinity College (B. S. 1893, M. S. 1907, Sc. D. 1919); Lehigh University (C. E. 1895, Sc. D. 1922); University of Edinburgh, Scotland, (LL. D. 1936); and George Washington University (LL. D. 1937).

Entering the service of the Coast and Geodetic Survey on July 1, 1895, he served as a junior officer in the field and later as chief of party engaged on triangulation and base-line measurements in many states of the Union as well as in the Philippines, Puerto Rico and Alaska until his appointment as Chief of the Division of Geodesy in 1909. He rendered distinguished service in this position until his retirement December 31, 1936.

During the World War he was commissioned as Major in the Corps of Engineers, U. S. Army, and was assigned to the mapping division of the Office of the Chief of Engineers in Washington.

His brilliantly alert mind and thorough knowledge coupled with his untiring energy won for him a high place among the leading geodesists of his time. He was

widely recognized, both in this country and abroad, for his notable engineering and scientific attainments and for his many valuable contributions to the advancement of his profession.

His development of the theory of isostasy gained him international recognition. He was awarded the Elliott Cresson Medal in 1937 by the Franklin Institute of Philadelphia for his contributions to the science of geodesy. He was also awarded the Charles Lagrange Prize by the Royal Academy of Belgium, 1932; made an officer in the Order of Orange-Nassau by the Queen of the Netherlands in 1937, and received the decoration of the Cross of Grand Officer of the Order of St. Sava from Yugoslavia in 1939.

The first impression of the medal of the American Geophysical Union, known as the William Bowie Medal and established for award for distinguished attainment and outstanding contribution to the advancement of cooperative research in fundamental geophysics, was presented to Dr. BOWIE at the meeting of the Union in April 1939.

Dr. BOWIE was interested in many scientific societies and organizations to which he contributed much of his time. He was President, Washington Society of Engineers, 1914; President, Philosophical Society of Washington, 1926; President, Washington Academy of Sciences, 1930; Chairman, American Geophysical Union, 1919-1922 and again in 1929-1932; Chairman, Board of Surveys and Maps of the Federal Government, 1922-1924; Member, Committee on Surveying and Mapping, American Engineering Council; President, Society of American Military Engineers, 1938; Chairman, Division of Surveying and Mapping of the American Society of Civil Engineers since its organization in 1926; President, District

of Columbia Chapter of the Society of Sigma Xi, 1935-1936; Honorary President, Pan American Institute of Geography and History, 1929 to date; President, International Geodetic Association, 1919-1933; and President, International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics, 1933-1936.

He was appointed Executive Secretary of the Society of American Military Engineers in December, 1939, and served in that capacity, and as Editor of the Society's magazine until his death.

Dr. BOWIE is survived by his widow, Mrs. Elizabeth T. Bowie; a son, Clagett Bowie of Baltimore; and two brothers, John Bowie of Grassland, Md. and Major Edward Bowie of Berkeley, Calif.

Funeral services were held at St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Washington, D. C. at 1:30 p. m. Friday, August 30, 1940, followed by burial in Arlington National Cemetery".

Pedro C. SANCHEZ.