Professor Garry died on 16th April 1993 after a prolonged illness. He was born into a family with north-east Scotland connections at the beginning of this century. His father was a botanist and head science teacher at the Girls' High School of Glasgow. He received his main school education at Queens Park School, a typical Scottish traditional education.

He matriculated at the early age of 16 as a medical student at the University of Glasgow in 1917, during the carnage of the First World War, when the needs of the Country for medical practitioners were very great. He was an industrious, brilliant student and he graduated MB, ChB with Honours in 1922. He was awarded the Brunton Memorial Prize for the most distinguished student of his year.

After he qualified in medicine, he took a House Officer job in a general medical unit at the Western Infirmary, Glasgow, but he was impatient to embark upon his career as a physiologist and he soon went to work with Professor Cathcart as an Assistant in the Institute of Physiology at the University of Glasgow.

He was promoted to a lectureship and he spent a sabbatical year at Freiburg in Germany, before being appointed Head of Physiology at the Rowett Research Institute in Aberdeen in 1933.

Up to this point in his career, he had divided his time fairly equally between the responsibilities of teaching and of personal research. But he clearly was a dominie at heart, as he persuaded the then Principal of Aberdeen to allow him to undertake some part-time teaching, while engaging in his primarily research role at the Rowett.

He had settled down, working with the Director, John Boyd Orr (later Lord Boyd Orr), the great nutritionist, in a very close partnership when, quite unexpectedly - at least for Robert Garry - Sir James Irvine, the then Principal of the University of St Andrews, invited him to come to take up the Chair of Physiology in University College, Dundee. After great misgivings, he accepted and he embarked then upon an academic career in physiology for the rest of his working life.

After working in Dundee from 1935 until 1947, he was invited back to his alma mater the University of Glasgow where he worked as Professor of Physiology until 1970. Thus he had 47 years as a university teacher, during which he influenced many generations of medical students and postgraduates.

Robert Garry has had a wide involvement in public service, in relation to the funding of research through the Medical Research Council and the Scottish Advisory Committee for Medical Research (now the Clinical and Biomedical Research Committee of the Chief Scientist's Office at SHHD).

He was a valued adviser to the Ministry of Defence in human adaptation to adverse environmental conditions. He made many different types of contribution, but perhaps most important was his advice as member, and later as chairman, of the Flying Personnel Research Committee from 1951 to 1975, during the period when there were great advances in the stresses, to which airmen were subjected. His selection for these duties reflects his wide experience and knowledge of human physiology.

He served on the governing bodies of many important biological organisations, such as the Hannah Dairy Research Institute, the Hill Farming Research Organisation, the Glasgow College of Domestic Science and the Board of Management of Glasgow Western Hospitals. During this period he served also as editor of the Journal of Physiology, a public recognition by his peers of his brilliance, his fair-mindedness and academic attitude.

His own personal research was in the field of autonomic control of the alimentary tract. He adopted the classical techniques of ablation and stimulation and observing the consequences of these disturbances of the alimentary tract. These were not the days of high technology. His work was dependent upon skilful examination of the problem, logical deduction of the design of the experiment, careful dissection and observation and honest interpretation of the data that he collected. This work is the basis of our current understanding of gastro-intestinal mobility and to some extent also of secretion. His work has stood the test of time.

But Robert Garry was a gifted teacher. He was intensely interested in his students and in the teaching of them at an appropriate level. He could hold the attention of an unruly class of second-year medical students impatient to go off and play rugby or drink beer. He could stimulate the critical audience of his honours students in tutorials and he excelled in the supervision of the young research worker taking faltering steps to establish proper, hypothesis-driven research.

Robert Garry was a man of wide experience and interests. From 1936 until 1940, with the late Professor Peacock - also of University College, Dundee - he pioneered school broadcasting in science through the BBC. He even taught first aid to volunteer ambulance auxiliaries from his house in Windsor Street in the Second World War.

Professor Garry has made a very wide contribution to academic life, and of course this has been publicly recognised in many ways. He was given the degree of Doctor of Science by the University of Glasgow; he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh (1937) and of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow, and he was invested as an Officer of the Order of the British Empire.

On the personal recommendation of the newly appointed Chancellor of the University of Dundee, Sir James Black, he was awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws in 1992 on the occasion of the Installation of the Chancellor. He appreciated this honour greatly, particularly so since Sir James Black had started his career as a research assistant to Robert Garry.

J SWANSON BECK