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LESLIE WILLIAM SMITH, MBE

(1891 - 1979)

Les Smith was a pharmacist. In 1916, the year he married Vera Wheeler, he opened a pharmacy in the Sydney suburb of Canterbury. Their daughter, Dorothy, also became a pharmacist and she married John Fairfax, also a pharmacist, and, together with their father, they conducted the Canterbury business for over 50 years.

Les Smith was a member of the Pharmacy Board for 29 years and a member of the Committee of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia since its inception in 1928 and, in 1969, he was the Federal Director of Industrial Relations.

Bro. Leslie William Smith was made a mason on 15 August 1923 in Lodge Sydney Tarbolton No. 11, United Grand Lodge of New South Wales. He was passed a Fellowcraft on 12 December 1923 and raised a Master Mason on 12 March 1924.

He called off in February 1925.

In 1938, a number of brethren connected with the pharmaceutical industry decided to form Lodge Galen No. 660.

At the consecration of the Lodge in the Masonic Hall, Castlereagh Street, Sydney on 29 November 1938, Bro. Les Smith was invested as foundation Junior Warden. He served as Worshipful Master in 1941-42.

At the consecration, the Pro Grand Master, Most Wor.Bro. Dr. Frederick Maguire, CMG, DSO, VD., a distinguished soldier and surgeon said that the brethren, as the name of the lodge implied, represented the pharmacists, the legal successors to the apothecaries. The name of the lodge was an honoured one, and the high traditions of the profession to which the members belonged would be brought by them into Masonry.

Galen, Greek physician, was born in Pergamum in the capital of Mysia in Asia Minor about 130 A.D. He began to study medicine in 146, and two years later went to Smyrna to attend the lectures of Pelops, a celebrated physician. In search of knowledge he roamed through Greece, Cilicia, Phoenicia, Palestine, Crete and Cyprus, finally visiting the famous medical school at Alexandria. In 164 he settled in Rome where many eminent people attended his lectures and demonstrations.

Galen used an unsparing pen against various medical sects in Rome and thus provoked the hostility of his professional brethren. Later he left Rome for Pergamum, but was recalled by the Emperor Marcus Aurelius for service in the Germanic wars. This he managed to evade, returning to Rome to look after the youthful Commodus, heir to Marcus Aurelius. Little is known of the rest of his life. Apparently he was in Rome during the fire of 191, when many of his works were burnt, and he was still lecturing in the reign of Pertinax. He probably died in Sicily in 200 A.D.

He was the author of hundreds of philosophical and medical treatises. Only an insignificant fraction remains of his non-medical works. There are 191 surviving medical works, on anatomy and physiology of which 98 are really known to be genuine.



Bro. Leslie W. Smith,
M.B.E.

Galen may be regarded as the founder of experimental physiology, and, after Hippocrates, as the most distinguished physician of antiquity.

Bro. Les Smith was an honorary life member of the NSW Masonic Club.

He was awarded an MBE in June 1969 and he died on 25 September 1979.

G.H. CUMMING

REFERENCE: *The Masonic Club Journal* - August 1969
Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1954, Vol. 9