# JOSEPH E. SMADEL

## 1907-1963

Joseph E. Smadel was born in Vincennes, Indiana, the son of physician Joseph William Smadel and former nurse Clara Greene Smadel. Dr. Smadel completed his undergraduate work at the University of Pennsylvania then was awarded a medical degree from the Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis in 1931. It was at Washington University that he met his future wife, Elizabeth Moore. In 1933, Dr. Smadel was a part of the virological team that first recognized an outbreak of St. Louis Encephalitis.

Dr. Smadel then moved on to New York City to work under Dr. Homer Swift and Dr. Thomas M. Rivers at the Rockefeller Institute. While at Rockefeller, Dr. Smadel took an interest in the new field of virology and he formed a professional and very productive long term association with Dr. Rivers with both of them publishing numerous articles together. Utilizing the "new" techniques of ultra-centrifugation and chemical fractionation Dr. Smadel made significant contributions to the understanding of myxomatosis, vital encephalitis, variola, vaccinia, and psittacosis.

With the outbreak of World War II, Dr. Smadel initially joined the U.S. Naval Reserve in December, 1940, and then later went on full time active duty with the U.S. Army's Medical Department Professional Service School (MDPSS) in August, 1942. The MDPSS officially became the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR) in 1953 after a number of intermediate name changes. Freshly commissioned Captain Smadel was then assigned as Chief Virologist with the First Medical General Laboratory in the European Theater with the mission to controlling the outbreak of typhus fever in the Mediterranean region in May of 1943. Following the Normandy invasion, he was assigned to an advanced field laboratory in France. Following the Allied victory in Europe, LTC Smadel became the Director of the Department Of Virus and Rickettsial Diseases with the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, a position he held after his return to civilian life.

In the 1950's, under Dr. Smadel's direction, WRAIR established itself as one of the première institutes for the study of infectious diseases. Research programs at WRAIR included the study of leptospirosis, plague, hemorrhagic fever, arboviral diseases, enteric diseases, cholera, and rickettsial diseases such as typhus. In 1956 Dr. Smadel left WRAIR to become the Associate Director of the National Institutes of Health. In 1963, he assumed a new position as Chief, Laboratory of Virology and Rickettsiology, Division of Biologics Standards, National Institutes of Health, until his death in 1963.

Perhaps Dr. Smadel's most personally satisfying professional achievement was the series of field studies in Kuala Lumpur in 1948 which established chloramphenicol as an effective treatment for typhus and typhoid fever. In 1962, he was awarded the Albert Lasker Clinical Medical Research Award, one of the highest recognitions given to scientists in the United States.

Dr. Smadel performed research because he "liked to do it," not for the purpose of special recognition or awards. His research was from bench to bedside as it created a bridge between the basic laboratory and the physician caring for infected patients.