

Latham, Leslie Scott (1879 – 1950)

Leslie Scott Latham was born on 13 June 1879 in Fitzroy, to Thomas and Janet Latham (nee Scott) of Ivanhoe. He was a brother of Sir John Latham, who became Chief Justice of Australia. He was educated at Scotch College and commenced a Bachelor of Arts at Melbourne University in 1897, residing at Ormond College. After completing his B.A. Leslie commenced studying Medicine, graduating MB. BS in 1904. He did his residency at the Melbourne Hospital then established a general practice in Ivanhoe. In 1907 he completed his Doctorate in Medicine. He joined the AAMC Reserves becoming an Honorary Major. On January 6, 1908, Leslie married Ida Harriet Wilson, daughter of Dr. J Wilson, Principal of Presbyterian Ladies College, then located in East Melbourne.

From 1908 Dr. Latham was Physician to Inpatients, St Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne. In 1915 he became a Member of Council, Victorian Branch, British Medical Association, a position he held for the next 23 years. He enlisted for service on 15 September 1916. He commenced work at the 14th AGH in Abbassia but suffered debilitating illnesses because of which he was invalided back to Australia arriving late September 1917.

He completed a Master of Arts degree in 1921, shortly before appointment as Chairman, Board of Stewart Lectures in Medicine, University of Melbourne, responsible for the instruction and examination in medicine in Victoria, a position he held for the next 15 years.

He was elected President of the Victorian Branch of the British Medical Association and Medical Society of Victoria in 1923.

From 1932 to 1949 he was Chief Medical Officer of the AMP Society. He was appointed Consultant Physician, St Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne in 1936. He was a Founding Fellow, Royal Australasian College of Physicians in 1938. He was a Member of RACP Council 1944-46, becoming Vice-President in 1947. At the same time, he was a Member of Council, University of Melbourne, becoming Deputy Chancellor 1947-1949. He was also Warden of the University Convocation, and a member of the Medical Board of Victoria. In 1948 he became President of RACP.

Dr Latham collapsed and died while playing tennis. He was aged 70.

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Sources: East Melbourne Historical Society; Encyclopedia of Australian Science & Innovation.

