



Ancel Keys

November 23, 2004

Keys, Ancel - PhD. Died at the age of 100 On Nov. 20th at home in Minneapolis. He is survived by his wife of over 65 years, Margaret Haney Keys; daughter Carrie D'Andrea (Julian) of Bloomington, MN; and son Dr. Henry Keys (Marjorie) of Voorheesville; son-in-law, Harvey McClain of Mpls.; 8 grandchildren; and 6 great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by his youngest daughter, Martha Keys. Dr. Keys was born in Colorado Springs to Carrie Chaney Keys (sister of the silent screen actor Lon Chaney) and Benjamin Keys and raised in the San Francisco Bay area. He graduated from the University of California at Berkeley and received PhD degrees from the University of California and Cambridge University in 1930 and 1938 respectively. After faculty appointments at Harvard and the Mayo Clinic, he moved to the University of Minnesota where he founded the Laboratory of Physiological Hygiene. He was the founder of a new field of quantitative human biology, combining research in physiology, nutrition and epidemiology. Commissioned by the Government in World War II to study performance during stress and nutritional deficiency, he developed the emergency K-ration (K for Keys) that was used extensively by U.S. troops during the war and afterward. His pioneering research on semi-starvation culminated in a classic 2 volume monograph, *The Biology of Human Starvation*. He was the first to develop a method to predict the effect of diet changes on blood cholesterol of individuals and populations, and was the originator of the so called 'cholesterol hypothesis' of coronary heart disease. After his picture appeared

on the cover of Time magazine in 1961, he was dubbed Mr. Cholesterol by the popular press. He was one of the founders of the then new field of cardiovascular disease epidemiology, and trained a large coterie of young scientists and physicians from all over the world. He became a leading social force, organizing international experts into scientific councils that importantly influenced NIH and WHO research policy and direction on the prevention of heart attack and stroke. His work had a major impact on the thinking of the medical profession and the scientific community. He has had a great influence on the public's food choices and eating patterns, particularly with the cookbooks he wrote with his wife, Margaret. Eat Well and Stay Well was on the New York Times best seller list for many months in 1960. He championed the Mediterranean diet for its health benefits. He retired from the University at age 68, as was mandated at the time. He continued to work on his research in Minneapolis and at their home, 'Minnelea', in Italy, and published many important papers in his later years. His last paper, 'Longevity and Body Size of Men in Middle Age: Twenty-Five Year Survival in the Seven Countries Study', was published in March, 2000., when he was 96 years old. He received numerous honors, awards and honorary degrees from around the world. He was a top candidate for a Nobel Prize, but that honor eluded him. The University of Minnesota held The First International Ancel Keys Symposium on Nutrition and Health September 12-13, 2004, in Minneapolis, focusing on the international obesity epidemic. Ancel and Margaret Keys were able to attend the opening session of this symposium. The Keys family requests in lieu of flowers, donations be made in support of the Ancel Keys Symposium Fund, payable to the University of Minnesota Medical Foundation, P.O. Box 6401, St. Paul, MN 55164-0001. There will be a memorial service held on Saturday, Dec. 4, 11AM, with visitation 1 hr. prior at: Washburn-McReavy Edina Chapel 952-920-3996.