



## Pierre Masson, MD

Dr. Pierre Masson was best known for his pioneering work involving brain tumours, the nervous system and histological techniques, which became the standard in pathology. He was the first to describe the concept of neurocrine secretion which would eventually lead to the modern field of neuroendocrinology. Masson became one of the most distinguished histopathologists of his generation and was a Canadian scientist with a significant international reputation.

Deciding on a medical career at a young age, Dr. Pierre Masson received his MD from the University of Paris in 1909. He continued his studies at the Pasteur Institute in Paris between 1909 and 1914 and by the end of World War I, his reputation as a histopathologist was so great that, despite his youthful age and inexperience, he was offered the Chair of Pathology at the University of Strasbourg.

In 1923, he was the first to describe the concept of neurocrine secretion, which led to modern neuroendocrinology. By 1927, Dr. Masson was invited by the Université de Montréal to be Chair of the Department of Pathology, a position he held until his retirement in 1954.

His reputation was based on a major textbook on human tumours he completed in 1923, the original histopathological methods he had developed, and his many important scientific articles, which totaled over 120. He was best known for his pioneering investigations of tumours of the brain and nervous system and for his histological techniques, such as the trichrome stain, which became the standard in all pathology laboratories. Of particular importance was his work with the nervous system of the neuro-nevi, nerve lesions of the appendix and studies of specific types of brain tumours.

Once in Montreal, Dr. Masson developed a new curriculum for the teaching of pathology at the Université de Montréal, and reorganized the pathology laboratories at the Notre-Dame, Hôtel-Dieu and Ste-Justine hospitals. Recognized the world over, Professor Masson was the mentor of numerous young graduates who, upon his recommendation, were accepted in leading medical schools in North America and Europe. He remained a modest man, completely devoted to histological research and the pursuit of improving, inventing and performing his laboratory techniques, publishing novel findings, and preparing and classifying his personal histological collection, which remains a virtual gold mine of pathological information.

Dr. Masson died in 1959. He was a great teacher and left a highly respected legacy of scientific originality, which contributed new interpretations and descriptions of lesions and tumours based on remarkably precise histological sections that were the admiration of all who saw them.