

Physician and Lecturer

Leslie Everton Hurley
1893-1967

From the Australian Dictionary of Biography¹:

Written by Diane Langmore

Leslie Everton Hurley (1893-1967), physician, was born on 28th January 1893 at Everton, Victoria, fourth son of **Thomas Hurley** state school teacher, and his wife **Mary Elizabeth Scholes**, both Victorian born. Educated at various primary schools determined by his father's postings, he won scholarships to Wesley College, and to Queen's College, University of Melbourne.



Leslie Everton Hurley 1917. Source: family collection



Leslie Hurley (right) with his brother Leo, schoolboys at Wesley College, Melbourne. Source: family collection



Senior Anatomy Class, Melbourne University 1913, Les is 3rd from the left of the seated row. Source: Harry Brookes Allen Museum of Anatomy and Pathology, University of Melbourne

Like his elder brother Victor, Leslie Hurley gained exhibitions in completing his Leaving certificate. In 1911 he entered the University of Melbourne (M.B., B.S., 1917; M.D., 1919; M.S., 1920) where he competed in Queen's College's cricket, football and athletic teams, and won a Blue for lacrosse. On 11 September 1914 he enlisted in the A.I.F. He sailed for the Middle East next month and served at Gallipoli in April-July 1915 with the 2nd Field Ambulance.



Leslie Hurley at Gallipoli
Source: Claire Weston

Sent home to complete his medical course, he gained first-class honours in all subjects and won every exhibition in his final year. He was discharged from the A.I.F. on 16 May 1916. At All Saints Church of England, Clayton, on 15 October 1917 he married Margaret Muriel Atkinson, a nurse.



Leslie and Margaret Muriel Hurley (nee Atkinson). Source: family collection

Leslie and Muriel's wedding day 15 October 1917. Standing at back left to right: Mrs F. Kitchener, Thomas Hurley, Marie Hurley, May Hurley holding Jimmy Hurley, Mary Hurley, Mrs Atkinson, Rev Atkinson, Mr Kitchener, Nellie Young, Sister Baker. Seated left to right: Myrtle Hurley, Muriel, Leslie, Florence Hurley. At front left to right: Gwen Hurley, Leo Hurley, Elva Hurley. Source: Family collection



Following a residency at the (Royal) Melbourne Hospital, he became lecturer (from 1923 senior lecturer) in embryology and histology at the university. (Sir) Albert Coates, one of his students, wrote:

'Diagnosis based on a meticulous interrogation of the patient, the social and family background, painstaking physical examination and then, a resort to special investigation—this was to Leslie Hurley a sacred trust. With no empirical humbug perhaps less bedside manner than some affected, he was a pioneer in scientific medicine'.

From 1924 Hurley was also physician to out-patients at the (Royal) Melbourne Hospital. In 1933, as his practice as a consulting physician burgeoned, he resigned his university appointment. He was made physician to in-patients in 1935.

During and after World War II he was a part-time consultant to the R.A.A.F. practising in the air force hospitals at Laverton and Heidelberg and rising to group captain. While Victor was away, Leslie took over his consulting rooms in Parliament Place; on his return, they practised there together. In 1947-48 Leslie was Stewart lecturer in medicine at the university. He continued his



Les in his RAAF uniform. Source: Patricia Menzies

work at the R.M.H. until 1951; Coates predicted that his piercing voice and aphorisms would long be remembered in its corridors.

A devoted family man, Hurley had enjoyed camping holidays with his five daughters and two sons, and trout fishing with his wife. She died in 1945. At Scots Church, Melbourne, on 13 December 1947 he married with Presbyterian forms Olive Marion Johnson, a secretary. He had little interest in social activities outside the family but did play a weekly game of golf—with more enthusiasm than skill—until prevented by the onset of a long illness which forced him to give up his practice in 1966. Survived by his wife and by the children of his first marriage, he died on 23 May 1967 at Richmond and was cremated.

Diane Langmore

1996



Leslie, Muriel and family. Back from left: Douglas, Muriel, Leslie, Jean and Mary. Front from left: Ron, Winifred (an Anglican nun), Dorothy and Claire. Photograph before 1945. Source: Claire Weston



Leslie relaxing, camping and fishing. Source: Katherine de Ravin

Hurleys and the Boyds in Murrumbeena

From his daughter Claire Weston (1927-2007):

Leslie's neighbours were the Boyd family of artists at 8 Wahroonga Crescent in Murrumbeena (a double-block the Boyd's called *Open Country*). Leslie would take their pottery in his car to *George's* department store in the city. He would also invite the Boyd children in to play his piano and his children and the Boyd children played back yard cricket together.

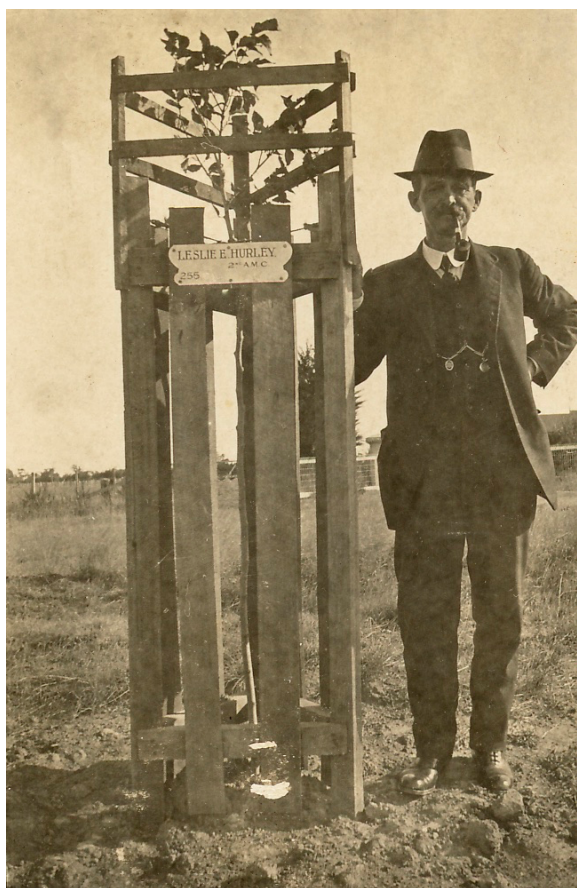
And from Joan McLaren, a nurse and family friend of Les:

Les was a lovely man, humble and generous and all the nurses loved him. He played billiards at home, was very slim and never dressed up. There is a ceramic sculpture of his daughter Mary by Merric Boyd.

Ballarat Avenue of Honour²

Between 1917 and 1919 the Ballarat Avenue of Honour was planted to commemorate Ballarat citizens who volunteered for active service abroad in World War 1. It was instigated by one of the directors of the clothing firm E. Lucas & Co., Mrs W. D. 'Tillie' Thompson. The employees, known as 'the Lucas Girls'³, planted almost all of the 3,912 trees, of eleven different species, along the avenue for over 22 kilometres. The women's names were recorded with that of each soldier commemorated. The cost of the trees, £2,000, was raised by the employees themselves by activities such as clothing exhibitions, souvenirs and a ladies' football match in 1918 (£320 raised).

As Thomas and Mary Hurley were living in Ballarat at the time, all four of their sons were commemorated. The tree for Les was an elm tree number 255 planted on June 4th 1917 by Miss E. Navin.



Left: Les's father Thomas Hurley at the tree number 255, Ballarat Avenue of Honour, planted to commemorate Les by Miss E. Navin of E. Lucas and Co. on June 9th 1919. Right: The tree today and detail showing the bronze plaque made in 1934. Photos: Euan McGillivray 2020

Ann Hurley

2020

hurleyskidmorehistory.com

Notes:

¹ Langmore, Diane - Hurley, *Leslie Everton (1893–1967)*, Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/hurley-leslie-everton-10708/text18791>

² Ballarat Avenue of Honour https://honouringouranzacs.com.au/page/avenue_of_honour
and https://bih.federation.edu.au/index.php/Ballarat_Avenue_of_Honour

³ The Lucas Girls <https://www.1wags.org.au/information/featured-stories/arch-of-victory-ballarat/>

Other resources:

Gregory, Alan - *The Ever Open Door, A History of the Royal Melbourne Hospital 1848-1998* (1998)

Weston, Claire (1927-2007) daughter of Leslie Hurley