

Prof. Wallace Sayre, 66, Dies; Authority on City Government

Holder of Chair at Columbia Was Conferring With Mayor at City Hall When Stricken

By PAUL L. MONTGOMERY

Prof. Wallace S. Sayre of Columbia University, a leading authority on city government, collapsed and died yesterday morning while talking with Mayor Lindsay at City Hall. He was 66 years old.

Dr. Sayre, co-author of the classic "Governing New York City," was in private conversation with the Mayor when he apparently suffered a heart attack. Mr. Lindsay said he had asked the professor to his office to discuss a proposed appointment to the city charter revision commission recently authorized by the State Legislature.

Efforts to revive Dr. Sayre by Detective Patrick Mascia, one of the Mayor's bodyguards, and Dr. Michael McGarvey of the Health and Hospitals Corporation were unavailing. He was pronounced dead at 10:10 A.M. at Beekman Downtown Hospital.

"Our city is significantly diminished by Professor Sayre's passing," the Mayor said.

In his life, Wallace Stanley Sayre combined enough careers for four other men.

Giant in Profession

One of the nation's leaders in his disciplines of public administration and political science, he held public posts beginning in the La Guardia Administration and there was hardly a civic committee on governmental reform that did not include his name. In addition, he was a devoted teacher whose former students populate his field.

"We've all benefited from him," said Dr. Herbert Kaufman of the Brookings Institution, the other author of the book on governing the city. "But even if he hadn't set a word to paper he still would be a giant in the profession. We're not going to see another like him for a long, long time."

Professor Sayre was neither a theoretician nor a statistician, though he knew their literature. His special talent was a wise, practical grasp of political realities as they affected public administration.

"He talked less than the rest of us," said Prof. Herbert Deane, chairman of Columbia's political science department. "But his three sentences were worth somebody else's half-hour. He was most at home in the business of politics, unlike many political scientists these days."

Dr. Sayre was a small-town boy, born near Point Pleasant, W. Va., on June 24, 1905. He attended Marshall College, then got master's and doctoral degrees at New York University. His 1930 dissertation was on the La Follette family of Wisconsin.



The New York Times

Prof. Wallace S. Sayre

While teaching at N.Y.U. and speaking frequently on reform before civic groups, he caught the attention of Mayor Fiorello H. La Guardia. From 1938 to 1942 Dr. Sayre was a commissioner of the Civil Service Commission. Mr. La Guardia ousted him and a colleague, Paul J. Kern, for having criticized the political overtones of appointments.

From 1942 to 1946 Dr. Sayre held posts at the Office of Price Administration, ending as director of personnel.

Dr. Sayre was a former member of the executive committee of the Citizens Union, a member of the board of directors of the Regional Plan Association, and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Book in The Campaign

Among his 10 books and numerous articles, "Governing New York City," published in 1960, became best known. The 815-page work considered the city as a competing system of groups and politicians seeking rewards. It is often cited by officials.

"I'll have to bone up on my Sayre and Kaufman," Mr. Lindsay often said when he was campaigning in 1965.

Dr. Sayre taught at N.Y.U., Cornell and City College before moving to Columbia in 1954. At his death he was Eaton Professor of Public Administration.

Dr. Sayre, who lived at 448 Riverside Drive, is survived by his widow, the former Kathryn McKnight; two daughters, Alison and Linda; his mother, Mrs. Alford Sayre of Charleston, W. Va.; three brothers, Howard and Roland of Charleston and N. Dale of Westport, Conn., and four sisters, Mrs. Opal Gunnoe, Mrs. Denver Casto and Mrs. James Massie of Charleston and Mrs. Hubert Rance of Glencoe, Ill.

No funeral service is planned. There will be a memorial service at noon on June 1 in the auditorium of the International Affairs Building at Columbia.