

ABOUT

DALLAS B. PHEMISTER, MD

Dr. Phemister earned his medical degree from Rush Medical College in 1904 and went on to practice in Chicago, where he became a leading figure in early orthopedic surgery. In 1925, he was appointed the first full professor and Chair of Surgery at the University of Chicago, a position he held until 1947.

His deep interest in the musculoskeletal system guided his groundbreaking research in bone physiology and grafting techniques. His legacy lives on through the Phemister Graft and the Phemister Triad, a diagnostic hallmark of tuberculous arthritis—both named in his honor. A true pioneer, Dr. Phemister helped shape orthopedic surgery in the years before it was formally recognized as a distinct surgical specialty.

He also held prominent national leadership roles, serving as president of both the American Surgical Association and the American College of Surgeons. In 1951, he was elected the inaugural leader of the Orthopaedic Research Society. Tragically, he passed away from appendicitis at the age of 69, just as he was preparing to assume this important role.

