

William Gordon Lennox

(1884–1960)



The leading figure in American epileptology from the 1930s until his death, William Lennox was the president of the ILAE from 1935 to 1946, and the editor of *Epilepsia* from 1945 to 1950. His major book, *Epilepsy and Related Disorders*, written in his characteristic alliterative style, was completed days before his death in 1960. He founded the Seizure Unit in Boston and led in clinical and electroencephalographic research. He wrote extensively on absence epilepsy, on EEG and on epilepsy genetics. The Lennox–Gastaut syndrome was named after him. Although Lennox was a tireless campaigner for the alleviation of the social problems of epilepsy, he was also a champion of The Eugenics Movement. He gave, in 1938, a notorious lecture recommending both sterilisation and euthanasia for ‘the congenitally mindless and for the incurable sick who wish to die’. Rightwing in his thinking, he was a strong advocate of the ‘survival of the fittest’ and an enemy of social welfare. He died from a stroke while speaking at a dinner at the Harvard Club in his honour.

