

ALAN L. HART

By Gülin Kirman

Alan L. Hart was born Alberta Lucille Hall on October 4, 1890. When he was just 2 years old, his father died due to typhoid, and his mother took him and relocated to her father's farm. Growing up, it was obvious that he was not interested in "girly" things. What was natural for Alan L. Hart was being a boy. He felt most comfortable in short hair and trousers. He hated domestic tasks which were traditionally attributed to women and preferred working with other men in the field as well as playing war games and sports with his peers. In 1911, Hart described his time on the farm as being happy and free to present himself the way he wanted to. In general, both his parents and grandparents accepted and supported Hart, although in some cases, his mother regarded his gender expression as "foolish".

When he was 12, Hart and his mom moved to Albany. To go to school, Hart had to present as a girl, which he hated. In school, he was bullied for his "weird" appearance and peculiar behavior, while during summer, he went back to his grandfather's farm and was able to present as a boy and hang out with other males his age.

During his school years, Hart had many female lovers and friends. In 1917, he graduated top of his class with a medical degree from the University of Oregon. However, he was quite disappointed that his certificate included his real name, Lucille Hart, which was a female name. Not only was he saddened because it was to a name he did not relate to, but also having a female name on his certificate would mean that his work opportunities would be restricted.

With the very few and underqualified jobs he could find, Hart started his medical career. During this time, he also started his research concerning sexuality and gender identity. A physician named Allen Gilbert provided Hart with professional help. With his help, Hart decided that he wanted to transition physically. Hart asked Gilbert for a surgery to stop his menstruation and fully eliminate the chances of getting pregnant. Although Gilbert was first reluctant, he, later on, went on to say that Hart was "extremely intelligent and not mentally ill but afflicted with a mysterious disorder for which I have no explanation." After his surgery, Hart legally changed his name and started hormone therapy. This procedure made Alan L. Hart the first trans men to go through surgical transition.

As a doctor, Hart conducted many types of research concerning tuberculosis. At the time, tuberculosis was said to be the biggest killer in America. Hart developed techniques that went on to be used by many until 1940, the introduction of antibiotics, and said techniques cut the tuberculosis death toll down to one-fiftieth. Hart also traveled and wrote in medical journals to educate others about tuberculosis. His methods and guidance saved many lives. Hart was also a writer. In his lifetime, he wrote four novels and short stories. Throughout his novels and stories, a slight resemblance between himself and his characters can be seen.

Throughout his life, Hart had to hide the fact that he was transgender due to discrimination and the restrictions he faced and would face if he was out. He lived in times where he did not know who to trust and did not feel safe. One of the many examples of difficulties he faced was when he was outed by a former classmate while working in a hospital in Oregon. This betrayal resulted in Hart and his wife moving and starting a completely new life. In his written will, Hart demanded all his personal letters and photographs to be destroyed so that any interpretation and reveal of his personal and emotional life could be prevented. His will was carried out by his wife, whom he had been married to for 37 years. Alan L. Hart saved many lives with his medical work on tuberculosis while inspiring many others with his courage. Despite his struggles as a trans man, he was able to be a highly successful doctor and writer while living his truth and being a devoted husband.

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