

## ROBERT MARTIN COLES

Robert Martin Coles is a research psychiatrist at Harvard University with a special interest in the South, whose unparalleled ability to uncover and portray individual images in radically changing societies through the written word has helped all Americans to understand themselves better. Walker Percy has called him "a wise and gentle [physician], doctor to the worst of our ills."

Born in Boston, Dr. Coles was educated at Harvard University and the University of Chicago. Military service took him to Mississippi, where he first confronted the changing South and became interested in both parents and children, white and black, whose lives were caught up in the stresses of the desegregation crisis. Dr. Coles has been both the scientist who listened, recorded, and wrote what he heard, and also, in an understanding and effective way, participant and advocate as well. The impact of his books, in particular the three volumes of Children of Crisis, has been enduring. His works display at once the best qualities of physician, sociologist, and historian. Recently he has turned to an incisive literary criticism, producing books on Walker Percy and Flannery O'Connor.

Dr. Coles' books, some three score, have received numerous awards, including the Family Life Book Award of the Child Study Association of America, the Hofheimer Prize of the American Psychiatric Association, the Four Freedoms Award, and the Pulitzer Prize (for Volumes II and III of Children of Crisis). For his patience and compassion, for his humanity as well as for his labor as scientist and writer, the University of North Carolina now honors Dr. Coles.