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Frank Joseph Ayd

Founding father of psychopharmacology

Frank J Ayd, a psychiatrist, is credited with ushering in the use of the first major tranquiliser, chlorpromazine (Thorazine), to treat schizophrenia in the early 1950s. Ayd became one of the pre-eminent advocates of biopsychiatry when most academic psychiatrists embraced a psychoanalytic model of mental illness.

When Ayd first studied the use of chlorpromazine the only treatments available for schizophrenia were extreme, including measures such as lobotomy, insulin shock therapy, electroconvulsive therapy, and permanent institutionalisation. The advent of the use of chlorpromazine triggered a “momentous sea change in the practice of psychiatry,” says Robert T Rubin, professor of psychiatry at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Ayd did not start out wanting to be a psychiatrist. As a young man he hoped to become a paediatrician like his father. He was exposed to the medical world early. His grandfather, a family physician who ran a pharmacy from his office, sent the young boy off on bicycle errands to deliver medicines to patients in their homes.

Ayd entered a paediatric residency at the University of Maryland Medical School after graduating from Loyola College in Baltimore

in 1942. Just two years into his training, the US Navy called him to active duty. In a 1994 interview with Leo Hollister for the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology, Ayd relates what happened next: “In the incomprehensible way the navy does things I was assigned to surgery at Bethesda Naval Hospital.” But he had “no manual dexterity whatsoever and no interest in surgery.” After just three weeks of surgical training, he could bear it no longer. He told his commanding officer that there had been a terrible mistake. The officer told Ayd that the navy needed psychiatrists and reassigned him to the Veterans Administration hospital at Perry Point, Maryland.

Ayd was appalled by his new assignment, calling it a fate worse than death. “I had no real interest in psychiatry,” he said. None the less, Ayd decided that he could at least take care of the “physical aspects of things.” But on arriving at Perry Point, he became fascinated by the veterans he saw, some of whom were violent or heard voices. One of the first things he noticed about schizophrenic patients was that they appeared to have a strange absence of sensitivity to temperature or pain.

Even though patients had to walk three quarters of a mile each way from their ward to the dining hall to eat—sometimes during freezing weather—the attendants “had to fight these guys to put on a coat,” he observed. One patient “stuffed himself with newspaper and ignited it, and when I got there he was pretty badly burnt, but he was still sitting there, hallucinating and answering to voices. We never gave him any morphine. He didn’t need it.”

Another experience dramatically affected Ayd’s views on psychiatry. His father, diagnosed with manic depression, was treated with electroconvulsive therapy. The effect, said Ayd, was “dramatic.” His father recovered soon after treatment and, according to Ayd, didn’t require hospitalisation again. Ayd did allow, however, that the shock treatment “was a rather crude thing [that produced] a lot of memory impairment.”

Ayd received the first permit from the Food and Drug Administration to treat schizophrenic patients with chlorpromazine. The drug, he said, could make a change in a matter of hours in quite disturbed individuals: “They were still hallucinating and they were still deluded, but by God they were changed.”

He tested other drugs on his patients with greater and lesser degrees of success, and his experience led him to become, in his own words, “St John the Baptist in the wilderness preaching the gospel of psychopharmaceuticals and their potential value for people.”

Although Ayd was known for his aggressive testing and interest in promoting psychotropic medicines for patients, he was said to be equally aggressive in studying the worrying side effects of the psychiatric medicines. “I was very interested in adverse effects . . . for every blessing there can be smite; you can help and you can smite people with these drugs,” he said.

Well before widespread concerns were raised about the deinstitutionalisation of psychotic patients, Ayd worried that too many patients taking major tranquilisers were being released into the community without adequate support systems in place. His concerns were prescient; several decades later, Professor Rubin says that “poor planning” led to a massive deinstitutionalisation movement in the 1960s that is still having detrimental effects for a number of schizophrenic patients who, lacking adequate support, are now homeless and filling up prisons. “There’s a belief that the Los Angeles jail is the biggest mental hospital in the country,” said Rubin, who says that although the major tranquilisers have helped many patients hold down jobs and have stable family lives, they are not effective in many others.

Ayd played a key part in establishing the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology. He served as chief of psychiatry at Franklin Square Hospital in Baltimore from 1955 until 1962 and lectured in Europe at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome between 1962 and 1965. In addition to his hallmark book, *Lexicon of Psychiatry, Neurology and the Neurosciences*, he wrote over 400 articles and contributed to over 50 books. He retired in 2003 at the age of 83.

He is survived by his wife of 64 years, the former Rita Anne Corasaniti, 12 children, and 32 grandchildren.

Jeanne Lenzer

Frank Joseph Ayd, psychiatrist (b 1920; q University of Maryland Medical School 1945), d 17 March 2008.

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**Catherine Gilray Bailey
(née Simpson)**



Former general practitioner Poole (b 1919; q Glasgow 1944; BSc, DPH), d 18 April 2008.

After qualifying, Catherine Gilray Bailey (née Simpson) (“Ray”) was called up to the Royal Army Medical Corps. As Captain C G Simpson, she was always greeted with, “Good God, you’re a woman” and a hasty rearrangement of billeting. On demobilisation, she was reputedly the first woman in industrial medicine as medical officer to the Austin Motor Company and GKN (Guest, Keen and Nettlefolds). On the death of her husband, John, in 1965, she returned to medicine as a locum before joining a practice in Poole until she retired because of ill health. She also served on the Wessex regional committee of the Medical Women’s Federation, as well as numerous other local committees. She leaves two sons and six grandchildren.

Mark Bailey

Ronald Duncan Thomson Cape

Former professor of geriatric medicine University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada (b 1921; q Edinburgh 1944; FRCPed, FRCP, FACP), died from pneumonia following an infected shoulder on 9 November 2007.

After service in the Royal Air Force and a research appointment in Vancouver, Ronald Duncan Thomson Cape became senior medical registrar at Selly Oak Hospital, Birmingham, where he was appointed consultant geriatrician in 1957. In 1975 he moved to Canada on appointment as professor and chief of geriatric medicine at the University of

Western Ontario. His department became a major influence in the development of the specialty in Canada. On retirement in 1987 he moved to Australia, where his two sons had settled. He leaves a wife, Pat; two sons; and six grandchildren.

Donald Portsmouth

Joseph Erulkar

Former consultant in child and adolescent psychiatry Royal Manchester Children’s Hospital (b 1917; q Newcastle 1943; FRCP, FRCPsych, DCH), died from myocardial fibrosis on 21 February 2008.

Joseph Erulkar trained in psychiatry at the Maudsley and Bethlem Royal Hospitals in the 1950s. His first consultant post was at Booth Hall Hospital, Manchester, in 1960. In 1968 he was invited to set up a new department of child and adolescent psychiatry at the Royal Manchester Children’s Hospital. As both departments were part of the university’s psychiatry department, he played a large part in training consultants in the subspecialty. He retired in 1983 but continued in an honorary capacity and in providing medicolegal assessments until well into his 70s. Predeceased by his wife, Hazel, in 1974, he shared a home with his former colleague and friend Pat Ainsworth and her family for nearly 30 years.

Patricia Ainsworth

Derrick Foskett

Former consultant in respiratory medicine Reading Group of Hospitals (b 1914; q Cambridge 1938; MA, FRCP), d 30 November 2007.

Derrick Foskett was born in India, the son of a medical missionary who later became a general practitioner in Yorkshire. During the second world war he was captured on his first patrol in the desert with the Royal Army Medical Corps, escaping from a prison camp in Italy for five months before being retaken by the Germans. After the war he worked for the World Health Organization treating tuberculosis in Tunisia, and then

at Peppard Chest Hospital, South Oxfordshire. After it closed, he became chest physician at Battle Hospital, Reading. After retirement he continued to do insurance work in London until well into his 70s. Predeceased by his wife, Joan, in 1992, he leaves three children.

Joan Thomas

Eddy Holt

Kenneth Gerald Powell Mackenzie



Former general practitioner Probus, Cornwall (b 1924; q Cambridge/Guy’s 1951; MA, DCH), d 30 March 2008.

The son of a provost of Lewis, Kenneth Gerald Powell Mackenzie (“Gerald,” “Jock,” or “Dr Mac”) was resident medical officer at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital and then registrar at the National Heart Hospital. He worked in general practice at Bawtry in Yorkshire and at Probus in Cornwall. He was a keen musician, oarsman, fisherman, and antiquary. A contestant of the Mastermind competition, he was chairman of the Mastermind Contestants Association and set questions for the quiz. He leaves a wife, Doreen, and three children.

Christopher Gardner-Thorpe

David Gerald Milton-Thompson



Former medical missionary China, Kenya, and Uganda (b 1917; q

Cambridge/The London 1942; OBE), died from peritonitis on 7 January 2008.

After national service in the navy, during which he was mentioned in dispatches, David Gerald Milton-Thompson went as a medical missionary to China, where he met his wife, Beatrice (“Bea”). Soon afterwards, because of the communist takeover, they were compelled to leave. David then began a 30 year commitment to Kaloleni Mission Hospital, Kenya, during which he was made OBE and ordained an Anglican clergyman. On returning to England, he became an honorary curate in Essex. In 1985 he was invited to be medical superintendent of Mengo, an erstwhile mission hospital in Kampala, Uganda. He spent his last years in Sevenoaks, assisting in the work of its parish church. Predeceased by Bea, he leaves two sons and five grandchildren.

John Billingham

Michael William Wellesley Wood

Former consultant physician Clatterbridge Hospital, Wirral, Merseyside (b 1915; q Cambridge/St Mary’s Hospital 1940; MD, FRCP), died from urinary tract infection, septicaemia, and *Clostridium difficile* on 12 May 2007.

After house officer appointments, Michael William Wellesley Wood served in the Royal Air Force and then as medical registrar at St Mary’s and West Middlesex Hospitals. He was appointed consultant physician to Clatterbridge Hospital in 1952, establishing a modern medical clinic with special interest in diabetes in a hospital emerging from the second world war. He served on all hospital committees and was an examiner for the Royal College of Physicians and for PLAB in Iraq. In retirement he wrote articles on fishing under the pen name Mark Wellesley. Predeceased by his first wife, Molly, he leaves his second wife, Joanna; two daughters from his first marriage; and three grandchildren.

John O’Shea