

OBITUARIES

Keith Danford Roberts

George Watts

Former consultant cardiothoracic surgeon Birmingham (b 1923; q Birmingham 1945; FRCS Eng), d 27 June 2012.

In 1954 Keith Danford Roberts, already a highly competent, respected general and thoracic surgeon, was appointed to Birmingham Children's Hospital. He immediately showed his pioneering expertise in treating the previously uncharted problem of tracheo-oesophageal fistula in newborns. His results have never been surpassed anywhere in the world. He then turned to cardiothoracic problems in infants of all ages, with equally phenomenal results. He successfully separated conjoined twins long before the procedure became newsworthy—describing it as an “interesting problem.” Keith was a shy and modest man, and, although he wrote several scientific papers, he never sought publicity. Despite this his

fame spread, and there were many who came from all over the world to see his work at first hand.

Keith's father was a nonconformist minister. He would have been proud of the way in which Keith practised that fundamental principle of Christianity—compassion. For Keith, this was an overriding rule in his everyday concept of his whole life—as was shown by the number of his past patients and their relatives who regularly contacted him even years after his retirement to report their progress in life and to repeatedly offer their thanks for his skills and for his kindness.

Predeceased by his exceedingly beautiful wife Margaret, he leaves a devoted family.

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