

OBITUARIES



Catherine Provan Pike

William Pike, Elizabeth Mackenzie



Catherine Provan Pike was one of three daughters of Edward Cathcart, a distinguished professor of physiology at Glasgow University, and Gertrude Bostock, an early science graduate. She was educated at Laurel Bank School for Girls, and all the daughters graduated in medicine in Glasgow, where Catherine was president of the students' union. After qualifying she served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) at RAF Fighter Command Uxbridge.

She was demobilised in 1947 and worked at Winchester General Hospital, where she met her future, husband Andrew Hamilton Pike, a provincial commissioner in Tanganyika. They had been introduced by her cousin, Maurice Dorman, who was her husband's deputy at the time. While in Tanzania, Catherine helped establish a family planning organisation and raised a family of four boys. On her husband's retirement in 1959 the family returned to the UK and settled in the Guildford area, buying Blatchfeld, an Arts and Crafts house, which became a centre of great hospitality, Cordon Bleu cooking, tennis, and swimming, much appreciated by her family, friends, and colleagues. In the late 1960s Catherine was invited by Professor John Tighe to join the pathology department at St Thomas's Hospital as a senior registrar. It was here that her interest in the burgeoning field of cytopathology developed and led to her appointment as a consultant in cytopathology at St Luke's Hospital, Guildford, now the Royal Surrey Hospital, to establish a cytopathological service, including a cervical screening programme.

This led to pioneering work, especially in the use of fine needle aspiration for the early detection and diagnosis of breast tumours. In 1985 Catherine was awarded the medal of the Swedish Medical Academy for her screening work, which was also recognised by the Wellcome Trust in its *History of the*

Screening for Cervical Cancer in the UK from 1960. After she had retired, Professor Jocelyn Chamberlain sought her advice as a consultant adviser and troubleshooter, and she was coauthor of the national failsafe guidelines in cervical screening programmes.

She was an indomitable spirit and a woman of many parts; she never lost her interest in medicine and read *The BMJ* and the *Lancet* well into her mid-90s. Outside medicine she took on a new life as a local activist and was elected councillor for Waverley Borough Council where she was chair of the planning committee for some years, resisting applications for helipads and issuing licences for taxi drivers, bars, and restaurants. All her life she loved music, playing the piano when she was young, and she was a member of the Blackheath village choir from the 1960s until her death. She was great follower of opera and attended the Royal Opera House, but also, and most particularly, Wexford Opera Festival and Glyndebourne; as a member of both the latter she attended many productions each year. She was a patron of the arts and her lasting memorial was her leadership and involvement as chair of the Cranleigh arts centre from 1995 to 2004. During her tenure she helped raise more than £1m from grant applications to the Arts Council and the Foundation for Sports and the Arts. She was instrumental in the design and refurbishment of the centre, which reopened in 1998. Stephen Dennison, the current chairman in the foreword to her memorial concert, stated that "Catherine's chairmanship was momentous for the arts centre. Her relentless focus on the purpose of her task drove her forward—and others with her. She stepped down in 2004 and continued as a volunteer until very recently, her passion and support for the Centre undimmed."

Everybody who knew her was struck by enormous energy, passion, zest for life, and capacity for friendship. One of her sons, Michael, predeceased her. She leaves three sons, William, Jamie, and David; and 10 grandchildren.

Biography

Retired consultant cytopathologist Guildford (b 1920; q Glasgow 1943), died from bronchopneumonia after a road traffic accident on 16 January 2016.

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