

OBITUARIES

Laurence Read

Alan J Price

Consultant orthopaedic and trauma surgeon (b 1936; q St Bartholomew's Hospital Medical School, London, 1971; FRCS Eng), died from complications of renal cancer 14 May 2014.

Laurence Read ("Laurie") initially qualified as a teacher, a profession in which he remained until the age of 35, with the latter two years spent in Sierra Leone.

At 35 he was accepted as a mature medical student at St Bartholomew's Hospital. On qualifying he embarked on a clinical career in trauma and orthopaedics and was lecturer under Charles Galasko at Salford University.

In 1986 he was appointed consultant in trauma and orthopaedics at the Alexandra Hospital in Redditch, Worcestershire, where he helped set up the trauma and orthopaedic department in this new district general hospital. He spent the greater part of his orthopaedic career there.

He retired from the NHS and private practice at the age of 67, but his thirst for orthopaedics had not been satisfied. Under the auspices of an Italian charity, he worked in a mission hospital in Sierra Leone, treating many trauma cases. While there he visited his old school, which had been burnt down in the civil war, together with nearly all the books. He set about raising

money to rebuild the school, restock it, and arrange teaching for the teachers—ably assisted by his wife, Sue. The school now has 1860 students.

His passion for orthopaedics still not extinguished, he spent a further two years in Cambodia, employed by a charitable trust to treat orthopaedic trauma cases, being confronted by adolescents and adults with uncorrected club feet—walking on the dorsum of their feet, rendering them unemployable and unmarriageable. He set about surgically correcting them and putting their feet in anatomic positions whereby they could wear normal footwear. Some were able to get a job, and some get married.

Even in his last days, when his pleural effusions were being aspirated, Laurie was still teaching the medical students who came to observe the procedure.

The orthopaedic fraternity has lost a unique person from its ranks. Laurie will be remembered with great affection by those with whom he worked, those he taught, and those who were treated by him.

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