

# OBITUARIES



## Julius Benjamin Richmond

US surgeon general who founded the head start programme for disadvantaged children

Julius Richmond worked in the US Office of Economic Opportunity during the Lyndon Johnson administration and later was US surgeon general during the Carter administration. In the first of these posts he inaugurated the head start programme for underprivileged children. In the second he increased public awareness of disease prevention. He authored a 1979 report on the risks of smoking and fought for stronger warnings on cigarette packets. It was said of him—by former US senator Joseph Califano—that “There may have been more famous surgeons general, but there was none more dedicated, tenacious, or courageous.” He was also professor of child health and preventive medicine at Chicago, Syracuse, and Harvard Universities.

Richmond was born in Chicago, of Russian Jewish origins. He got his BS and MS degrees at Illinois university at Urbana-Champaign,

followed by his MD at the University of Illinois Medical School, qualifying in 1939. He spent 18 months as rotating intern at Cook County Hospital, then one of America’s top teaching hospitals, where his monthly pay would have been \$12.50. He then did paediatric residencies at Cook and the municipal contagious disease hospitals.

He joined the army air force and spent the rest of the second world war as a flight surgeon. In 1946 he returned to Illinois as a professor in paediatrics; he was active in child welfare organisations and the Chicago psychoanalytic institute. In 1953 he moved to the State University of New York at Syracuse. A year later he was recruited by Sargent Shriver to the Kennedy Foundation, where he founded Head Start.

A paediatrician by training, Richmond turned his interests to health policy in 1954, when a landmark case at the US supreme court put an end to racial segregation in schools and insisted on equal access to education. His research had shown that all children developed at much the same pace for their first year but thereafter poverty and lack of educational opportunity impaired their emotional and intellectual development. He showed that poverty made it harder for children to learn and increased their risk of economic failure.

Sargent Shriver, a politician and head of the Kennedy Foundation, had noted Richmond’s work, and when Lyndon Johnson became president and made Shriver head of the newly founded Office of Economic Opportunity, Shriver recruited him. In 1965 Richmond founded the head start project, an enrichment programme for preschool children. A year later he added neighbourhood child health centres. During that year he visited a child development facility in Mississippi that was under attack because it mainly served black children. He noted that his entourage was followed from town to town by a group of rednecks. The building, which he described as “a wonderful little black church,” had to be guarded at night by armed volunteers and was burned down the day after his visit.

In 1967 he returned to academic life, first at Syracuse university, in New York as dean of medicine. In 1971 he moved to Harvard and Boston Children’s Hospital as professor

of child psychiatry and human development (1971-3), and of preventive and social medicine (1971-9).

When Jimmy Carter became president in 1977 his health secretary, Joseph Califano, brought Richmond back to Washington as his assistant secretary. Richmond asked for, and got, the title of surgeon general. His work, however, was restricted by its small budget. The two worked together on the anti-smoking campaign. Richmond wasn’t, said Califano, sensitive about what people would think of him, and he cared passionately about public health.

His time as surgeon general, from 1977 to 1981, was made worse by the lifting of price controls on health providers, which hugely increased costs for Medicare and Medicaid. Neighbourhood health centres, now renamed community health centres, had been scaled down. However, under the Carter administration and Richmond’s tenure, Congress passed a 1978 act that reauthorised a broad array of health services, including migrant health centres, children’s services, and public health and primary care projects.

Richmond stepped down in 1981 and returned to Harvard as professor of health policy (1981-8) and as John D MacArthur professor of management and as director of the health policy research division. From 1987 to 1993 he chaired the steering committee of the National Academy of Science’s forum on the future of children and families.

He also directed the Judge Baker guidance centre in Boston, from 1971 to 1977; it is a non-profit organisation working with Boston’s juvenile courts.

He formally retired in 1988, aged 72, but continued writing, teaching, and research. He was an expert witness in several class-action smoking lawsuits, including one by flight attendants.

His first wife, Rhee Chidekel, died in 1985. He later married Jean Rabow, who survives him along with his two sons, Barry and Charles. He died at home in Chestnut Hill, near Boston, from cancer.

### Caroline Richmond

Julius Benjamin Richmond, director, health policy research division, Harvard Medical School (b 16 September 1916; q University of Illinois College of Medicine, 1939), died from cancer on 27 July 2008.  
*Cite this as: BMJ 2008;337:a1615*

**Ian Blacker**

Former consultant anaesthetist Bradford Teaching Hospitals Trust (b 1942; q Leeds 1966; DObstRCOG, FRCA), died from gastric cancer on 22 April 2008.

After house officer posts in Leeds and Bradford, Ian Blacker became a general practitioner in Keswick for three years. He then trained in anaesthesia, firstly in Lancaster and then in Leeds. He was appointed consultant anaesthetist in Bradford in 1975. He became the lead for obstetric anaesthesia and developed a lifelong interest and expertise in anaesthesia for ear, nose, and throat surgery. Many staff requested Ian as their anaesthetist, and he was a gifted teacher. A confirmed Francophile, he spoke the language fluently and toured the country regularly by caravan. He leaves a wife, Margaret, and three children.

**Margaret Blacker, Carolyn Evans, Keith Budd**

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2008;337:a1480

**Hugh John Adolphus Coni**

General practitioner Petersfield, Hampshire (b 1967; q Charing Cross and Westminster, London, 1990; BSc, DObstRCOG, MRCGP), d 12 August 2008.

Halfway into his first house job, Hugh John Adolphus Coni was found to have a pre-sacral Ewing's sarcoma, explaining the backache he had had since the age of 17. He

resumed his career after treatment, doing house jobs in Norwich and Bournemouth and working in Australia, with an interlude sailing round the Whitsunday Islands. He trained as a general practitioner in Hampshire and became a much respected partner in Petersfield. His disease recurred early in 2006 after 15 years of remission and developed rapidly despite aggressive chemotherapy and surgery, which he bore with extreme stoicism, largely for the sake of his family. He leaves a wife, Liz, and twin sons.

**Nicholas Coni, Andrew Douglas**

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2008;337:a1475

**John Stanley Cox**

Former general practitioner Portsmouth (b 1926; q St Bartholomew's Hospital, London, 1950; DRCOG, MRCGP), d 27 June 2008.

John Stanley Cox was a trainee in Eastbourne and then joined a practice in Copnor, Portsmouth, for 20 years. He chaired the local medical committee, was vice chairman of the Portsmouth Executive Council, and chairman of the Portsmouth branch of the BMA, as well as being president of Portsmouth Round Table and a magistrate. In 1974 he and his wife, Molly, emigrated to Canada, and joined a practice in Regina. They returned to Portsmouth several years later, and John joined a group practice in Kingston, Portsmouth, until retirement in 1990. He was also a trainer in general practice and president of Portsmouth and Southsea Rotary Club. He leaves Molly, two daughters, and four grandchildren.

**John Owen**

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2008;337:a1479

**Roger Patrick Doherty**

Former consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist St Bernard's Hospital, Gibraltar (b 1932; q St Bartholomew's Hospital, London, 1956; FACS, FRCOG), d 15 June 2008. Roger Patrick Doherty served as medical officer to the 8th Destroyer Squadron in the Far East before training in obstetrics for military



families. After duty at the Royal Naval Hospital Gibraltar he joined the aircraft carrier HMS *Eagle* for surgical duties when changes in naval policy no longer allowed a specialist career. He was then consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist at Princess Margaret's Hospital, Bahamas, for many years before returning to Gibraltar. In 1983 he was BMA Welsh Secretary in Cardiff before moving to the Medical Defence Union in London and finally retiring to Portsmouth. Predeceased by his wife, Helen, in 1994, he leaves two children.

**David Elliott**

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2008;337:a1468

**Janet Mary Marks**

Former consultant dermatologist Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle upon Tyne, and senior lecturer University of Newcastle upon Tyne (b 1926, q Oxford/Middlesex Hospital 1952; MA, DM, FRCP), died from chronic respiratory disease on 20 April 2008.

After registrar training, Janet Mary Marks joined me as MRC research associate in St John's Hospital. She then moved to Newcastle as lecturer, subsequently becoming senior lecturer/consultant, retiring in 1986. She published many joint papers and a book on the systemic effects of skin disease. In 1966, with Alec Watson and me, she discovered the coeliac syndrome of dermatitis herpetiformis, and was honoured by the award of both Parkes-Weber and

Archibald Gray medals. Later, she set up the Newcastle Psoriasis Treatment Unit. Janet never married and leaves a brother and sister.

**Sam Shuster**

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2008;337:a1462

**Raymond John Vale**

Former consultant anaesthetist Guy's Hospital and Chelsea Hospital for Women, London (b 1925; q Guy's Hospital 1948; DA, FFA RCS, FRCPEd), d 23 April 2008.

After house officer posts, Raymond John Vale spent two years of national service in Singapore as an army major medical specialist. Returning to Guy's as an anaesthetic registrar, he joined the staff in 1959, soon afterwards also being appointed consultant to the Chelsea Hospital for Women. Interested in cardiac and paediatric anaesthesia, he worked with the pioneers of open heart surgery, published many papers on temperature homoeostasis during anaesthesia, and developed a mattress to maintain body temperature during prolonged anaesthesia. On retirement in 1986 he worked as a locum consultant anaesthetist at North Devon District Hospital until he was 70. He leaves a wife, Joyce; three children; and nine grandchildren.

**Justin Vale**

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2008;337:a1389

**ADVICE**

We will be pleased to receive obituary notices of around 250 words. In most cases we will be able to publish only about 100 words in the printed journal, but we can run a fuller version on our website. We will take responsibility for shortening. We do not send proofs. Please give a contact telephone number and, where possible, supply the obituary by email to [obituaries@bmj.com](mailto:obituaries@bmj.com)