

Ian Renwick McWhinney

English general practitioner recognised in Canada as the “father of family medicine”

Ian McWhinney, professor emeritus, Department of Family Medicine, School of Medicine and Dentistry, University of Western Ontario
(b 1926; q Cambridge/Barts 1949; MD, FRCGP, FCFP, FRP), died from pneumonia after a fall on 28 September 2012.

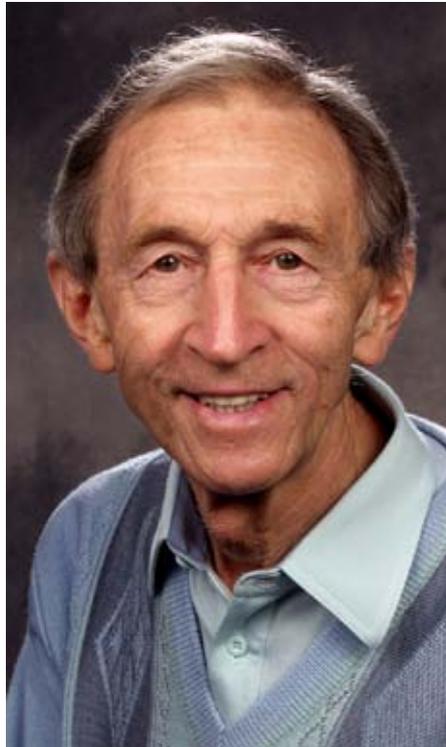
“If we could all just learn to listen, everything else would fall into place. Listening is the key to being patient centred.”¹

Ian McWhinney was a general practitioner born in Burnley, Lancashire, who emigrated to Canada in 1968 and became known as the founding father of family medicine in Canada. McWhinney’s *A Textbook of Family Medicine*,² which described and defined the principles and practices of family medicine as a separate and distinct field of practice, has been used worldwide in the medical education of family doctors.

Ian McWhinney was not a big man physically, and was quite frail in his later years, but he possessed a huge intellect and spirit. A student of history and literature, he was also a humble and thoughtful observer of the world, medicine, and human nature. It would be no exaggeration to say that his personal thoughts on general practice and patient care inspired physicians and students globally. When he died, tributes were paid to him from across Canada, as well as in Australia, the United States, Spain, Mexico, Panama, Ecuador, Japan, Turkey, Norway, the Netherlands, South Africa, and Argentina.

Articulating a body of knowledge

By the end of his life McWhinney had become known as a world renowned author, mentor, teacher, scholar, and philosopher. After qualifying he served in the Royal Army Medical Corps in Malaya. In 1954 he entered general practice in Stratford-upon-Avon, where he joined his father, a Scottish born general practitioner. After 14 years in full time general practice, McWhinney emigrated to London, Ontario, in Canada in 1968 to become the inaugural chair of family medicine at the University of Western Ontario. His early work involved challenges, but in time the new academic discipline of family medicine became more accepted. In a convocation address, given at Western on 7 June 2000, he said that he had experienced “great joy and fulfilment” working there, and added: “It was a courageous act for Western to create a chair of family medicine at that time . . . Creating a new academic unit in a university recognises



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the existence of a body of knowledge. At that time, the body of knowledge we now call family medicine had hardly begun to be articulated. There were many doubters and sceptics . . . The articulation of this knowledge has been one of our chief tasks, and working on this with my colleagues over the past 30 years has been a great experience.”

After stepping down from the chair in 1987, he continued to pursue his research interests as a member of Western’s Centre for Studies in Family Medicine. In 1987 he was appointed medical director of the palliative care service at Parkwood Hospital in London. He held this role for five years.

McWhinney received certification in family medicine in 1970 and became a fellow of the College of Family Physicians of Canada in 1981. He received life membership in 1996.

A humble and gentle man

“As one who was clearly recognised as the father of the discipline of family medicine—the

individual whose understanding and describing of the importance of patient centred care and the family physician-patient relationship led to the development of the specialty of family medicine in Canada—Ian McWhinney remained a humble and gentle man,” said Calvin Gutkin, chief executive officer of the College of Family Physicians of Canada. “When I visited with him shortly after his inauguration into the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame, while he was very proud of this acknowledgement, he told me that although he was overwhelmed by this recognition, he was most proud of the place that family medicine had established both in academic medicine and in the healthcare system in Canada. We owe that place to him.”

“Over and above his outstanding original thinking that led to major contributions to academic family medicine, Ian was a charming, unassuming, modest person whom everyone liked,” said Reginald Perkin, the college’s executive director from 1985 to 1996.

Nicholas Pimlott, scientific editor of *Canadian Family Physician* journal, said that McWhinney’s writings and example had been a touchstone throughout his own career in family medicine: “The longer I am in practice the more I find that his ideas and his reflections on what it means to be a generalist physician resonate with me. There was rigour, compassion, and humility in his writing that will live on now that he is gone.”

“Dr McWhinney was a very special man, with patience, wisdom, and a strong moral compass,” said Grant Russell, professor of general practice research in Victoria, Australia. “His view of family medicine and its role in alleviating suffering was ever present. For many of us that perspective has inestimably enriched and redirected our professional lives. Barely a week passes by without me quoting him or thinking of his view of the world.”

“Blessed with a fine mind, Ian had a philosophical disposition, a strong thirst for knowledge, and a deep desire to make a difference in the world,” said his family.³ “He touched many people—patients, colleagues, friends, and caregivers alike—with his unfailing kindness and compassion, his gentle nature, and his interest in everyone he met, qualities that remained with him until the end of his life.”

Barbara Kermode-Scott

kermodeb@gmail.com

References are in the version on bmj.com.

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Janice Irene Kibirige



General practitioner Middlesbrough (b 1957; q Newcastle 1981), died from carcinoma of the pancreas on 9 June 2012.

Janice Irene Kibirige (née Gough) took a full time position at the Endeavour practice in Teesside in 2006 and increasingly adopted a leading role in teaching final year students, developing sexual health services, and overseeing the practice's management of terminal care. Just recently she developed an innovative sexual health service and became its medical director. Away from the practice Janice was a committed family member, possibly most obviously on the rugby field; she was married to Mohammed, a consultant paediatrician. She leaves Mohammed and their five children.

John Canning

Cite this as: BMJ 2012;345:e7103

David Alexander Lyell



General practitioner South Croydon (b 1955; q St Mary's Hospital Medical School 1979), died from stomach cancer on 30 September 2011.

David Alexander Lyell ("Dai") trained as a general practitioner in Farnborough, Kent, and then became a partner in the Farley Road Medical Practice, in South Croydon, where he practised for 28 years. His IT skills were exploited by Croydon Primary Care Trust and beyond; the surgery rebuild was aided and broadcast by BBC Two; and he received a *Health Service Journal* award for diagnostics in the community. In addition he was a founding director of Croydon Doctors-

on-call (Croydoc, now renamed Patient Care 24) and also the crowd doctor and relief team doctor for Crystal Palace Football Club. He leaves his wife, Julia; a daughter; and twin sons.

Ian Wilson

Cite this as: BMJ 2012;345:e7096

Alastair Hugh McDonald



Former consultant cardiologist (b 1937, q Edinburgh 1962; FRCP Edin, FRCP Lon), d 19 July 2012.

Alastair Hugh McDonald trained in cardiology in Edinburgh and at the National Heart Hospital before moving to the London Hospital in 1968. Consultant cardiologist in the cardiac department and later clinical director of cardiac services, he was also a senior lecturer at the London Hospital Medical College and subsequently subdean for clinical medicine. He chaired the North East Thames Regional Postgraduate Committee, the medical council of the Royal London Hospital, and the clinical ethics committee at the Royal Hospitals Trust. Other posts included civil consultant in cardiology to the Royal Navy and non-executive director with Lambeth, Southwark, and Lewisham Health Authority and chair of North West London Hospitals NHS. He leaves his wife, Susan; three daughters; and eight grandchildren.

Peter S Freedman

Cite this as: BMJ 2012;345:e6469

Robert Matthew Hay McMinn

Professor of human anatomy (b 1923; q Glasgow 1947; PhD, MD, FRCS Eng), d 11 July 2012.

In 1977 Robert Matthew Hay McMinn ("Bob") published *A Colour Atlas of Human Anatomy*, in collaboration with the photographer Ralph Hutchings, which showed life sized colour photographs of actual dissections of real bodies. Two more atlases appeared during the next



few years. Bob started his career as demonstrator in anatomy at Glasgow University in 1950. After moving to London in 1960 he became professor of anatomy at King's College and in 1970, Sir William Collins professor of human and comparative anatomy, and conservator of the anatomical museum, at the Royal College of Surgeons of England. His main research interests were tissue repair and wound healing, and the association between skin disease and the alimentary tract, on which he published widely. He lectured both undergraduate and postgraduate students and was an examiner for the primary FRCS examination, both in the UK and overseas. He was active in the anatomical community and served in various organisations. Predeceased by his wife, Margaret, in 2011, he leaves two children and two grandchildren.

Marion Philip

Cite this as: BMJ 2012;345:e7102

Joseph Joel Rivlin



Medical osteopath Liverpool (b 1921; q Liverpool 1943; MRCS, MLCOM, MSc), died from prostatic carcinoma on 5 September 2012.

On qualifying, Joseph Joel Rivlin ("Joe") joined the army and served in India, Kenya, and the Seychelles. After the war he trained as a pathologist, but in 1949 he became a partner in his father in law's practice in Bootle. In 1963-6 he served as an elected councillor in Bootle, sitting on the health, children's, and other committees. Having trained as a medical osteopath in the early 1970s, he left general practice in 1974 to become a full time medical osteopath

in Liverpool, eventually retiring in 1991. He occupied his retirement by involving himself with the Liverpool Medical Institution, taking a degree in the history of medicine, and striving to maintain his golf handicap. His wife predeceased him in 2003; he leaves two children and three grandchildren.

Conrad M Harris

Cite this as: BMJ 2012;345:e7106

George Russell



Emeritus professor of child health University of Aberdeen (b 1936; q Aberdeen 1959; FRCP Lond, FRCP Ed, FRCPCH), d 1 June 2012.

George Russell pioneered developments in neonatal intensive care and introduced innovations in ventilation techniques for premature babies, as well as high energy feeds to lower morbidity of premature and sick newborn babies. He carried out research to define the relations between maternal gestational diabetes, hypoglycaemia, and neonatal morbidity. His specialist services for children in the northeast of Scotland included a clinic for children with epilepsy and a service for children with metabolic diseases. His research into childhood headache was influential in persuading the International Headache Society to include abdominal migraine and cyclical vomiting syndrome as variants of childhood migraine in the second edition of the *International Classification of Headache Disorders* in 2004. He did research into asthma and emerging new treatments, and raised funds to establish a paediatric respiratory laboratory in Aberdeen, as well as setting up a service for children with cystic fibrosis. In 2009 the British Paediatric Respiratory Society awarded him its lifetime achievement award. George leaves his wife, Gillian; four children; and three grandchildren.

Ishaq Abu-Arafah

Cite this as: BMJ 2012;345:e7109