

OBITUARIES

Gerald Westbury

Geoffrey Keen, H B Fairley, Douglas J Pearce

Former professor of surgery Royal Marsden Hospital (b 1927; q Westminster Medical School 1949; OBE, MB (Hons), FRCS, FRCP, Hon FRCSE), d 12 June 2014.

Gerald Westbury died suddenly. His early studies in London were frequently interrupted by diving under laboratory benches, when war time doodle bug engines cut out before exploding nearby. As an outstanding student he won the surgery prize at Westminster and gained honours in the London MB examination. After national service in the Royal Air Force he served as resident surgical officer at the Brompton Hospital and as registrar and senior registrar to Sir Stanford Cade at Westminster Hospital. His lifelong association with Sir Stanford, pre-eminent in the treatment of cancer, influenced his whole career. After a fellowship at Harvard Medical School he succeeded Cade as consultant surgeon at Westminster in 1960. In 1982 he became professor of surgery at the Royal Marsden Hospital and was dean of the Institute of Cancer Research from 1982 to 1989. A Hunterian professorship in 1963 was followed by the Honeyman Gillespie lecture in Edinburgh in 1965; the Gordon-Taylor, Semon, and Haddow lectures at the Royal Society of Medicine; and the Walker prize of the Royal College

of Surgeons in 1990. He was honorary consultant in surgery to the army from 1980 to 1992; president of the British Association of Surgical Oncology from 1989 to 1992; and examiner at the universities of London, Cambridge, Edinburgh, and Hong Kong.

Internationally recognised, he fostered the multidisciplinary management of cancer and maintained that as a surgeon he treated each patient through the eyes of a physician. On retirement he was made OBE. He was affectionately known as Charlie by his medical friends, having acquired this name from a fellow student. He remained a modest, warm hearted individual with a great sense of humour and a sparkling wit. With his Westminster student contemporaries he formed the 18 Club, which met annually for 65 years until 2013. In retirement he acted as a trustee for several charities and maintained his interests in music and bird watching. Predeceased by his wife, Hazel, in 2013, he leaves a brother, a retired radiologist; three daughters, one of whom is an oncologist; and eight grandchildren.

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