

OBITUARIES

Tom Rosser

Sally Rosser

Former consultant cardiothoracic surgeon (b 1918; q Cardiff University 1944; FRCS), died from ischaemic heart disease on 14 August 2014.

Tom Rosser pursued his career when cardiac surgery was an emerging specialty. He worked towards modernising surgical techniques, including open heart surgery at Sully Hospital and later at the University Hospital of Wales. Tom, the son of a miner, gained a scholarship to Cardiff medical school, followed by national service with the Australian 9th division in Borneo, where he treated prisoners of war and indigenous people, travelling by dug-out canoe around a territory the size of Wales.

On his return, Tom started his surgical training at Morriston Hospital, moving to the Brompton Hospital and returning to a consultant post at Newport and Sully hospitals, where he practised and developed cardiac surgery, conducting research into cardiac surgical techniques. He was also responsible for the surgical treatment of patients with tuberculosis, many of whom spent up to two years as inpatients. Rehabilitated patients often spoke of his compassion and cheerfulness, which helped them to endure the prolonged hospitalisation and treatment. He moved to the University Hospital of Wales as the senior consultant cardiac surgeon in 1971.

Tom was member of Pete's club, a cohort of international cardiac surgeons who met twice a year to share clinical advances and challenges in an open and honest way, an innovative approach for the time. He was keen to promote others and encouraged excellence; a succession of surgical trainees, including Czech and Kurdish surgeons, benefited from his tutelage and encouragement.

Tom was a talented sportsman, a keen cricketer and scrum half, playing for Cardiff Medical and the Welsh Academical rugby teams, with some of the greats of the time, including Jack Matthews and Blethyn Williams, who remained lifelong friends.

Tom and his wife, Barbara, retired to Pembrokeshire in 1982, where he indulged his hobbies of birdwatching, fishing, shooting, and sailing. He had more than 30 years of enjoyable retirement, being visited by friends and colleagues and maintaining his curiosity, humour, and intellectual rigour until the end.

He was predeceased by his son, k Michael, a newly qualified doctor, in 1986. He leaves his wife, Barbara; and his daughter, Sally, a GP in Wiltshire.

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