

Obituary

BENJAMIN NEIL ADSETT

M.B., B.S., F.R.A.C.G.P.

Ben Adsett was born on 1 March 1918 and died suddenly on 18 October 1975. He graduated M.B., B.S. in 1940, the first official graduate from the Medical School of the University of Queensland. After service in the Army, he spent his life either actively engaged in general practice in Brisbane, or closely involved in programmes for its progress in Australia.

He was a Foundation Member of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, a Foundation Fellow in 1963, and a member of College Council during 1956–1966. In 1967 he passed the first formal examination for the Diploma of the College.

His great and continuing interest was in medical education. As chairman of the Education Committee of the Queensland Faculty, he was a member of the Medical Education Committee of Council from 1958 to 1965. He made a very significant contribution to the development of the educational programmes of the College for training in and for general practice. At all times he was positive, realistic, and practical in his approach to problems. In line with these educational interests, he was also a Divisional Surgeon of the St John Ambulance Brigade. His service was recognised by the award of Serving Brother.

In 1964 the breadth of his interest in the future of Australian general practice resulted in his appointment as a Nuffield Travelling Fellow in General Practice. With his wife he visited many practices in North America and Britain. He was a keen observer, with a down-to-earth approach, and this journey widened his horizon. He made many friends abroad with whom he kept in contact and re-visited them some years later.

A review of the North American scene written by him on 24 June 1964 before leaving there for Britain, when read today, with the benefit of hind-sight, foretold in large measure many trends now obvious to all of us.

In 1967 Ben left general practice to become the Queensland Postgraduate Fellow in General Practice. In this role he made personal contact with his colleagues acting as advisor and a stimulus for their better continuing education. His aim was the improvement of standards of service. He

did much to break down the professional isolation in which most practitioners worked in those days. I had a very close association with him during this period and when the story of these Fellows is written, Ben Adsett's work will receive its full recognition.

For the next seven years he was Director of the Postgraduate Committee in Medicine of the University of Queensland. This appointment brought him in touch with all branches of the profession. Our great loss is that Ben can no longer share with us the benefit of his wide experience in the educational field. The more we become united as a profession, the more we will pay silent tribute to his memory.

To me, Ben Adsett was always a reluctant politician. It took many years to persuade him to become President of the Queensland Branch of the A.M.A. I can do no better than to quote the words of that Council: ". . . we honour a colleague who has devoted much of his life to the service of the community and his profession and has adorned in no small measure its image and prestige".

Ben's last contribution to Australian general practice was to act as Interim Director of the Family Medicine Programme in Queensland. It was his task to establish the broad lines of the programme, as a prelude to the appointment of a full-time director. I know from the success of the programme how well and soundly it was based.

For many of us, our memory of Ben will always centre on his family. We have shared the hospitality of his home on so many occasions. It was always a stimulating experience during which discussion ranged widely and freely and to good purpose. My personal memory is my last day spent with them on a never to be forgotten journey to Tamborine.

Many friends mourn Ben's passing and we all express our sympathy to his wife, Joyce, Christine and Helen, Geoffrey and Donald, both doctors. We assure them that Ben made a permanent contribution to the welfare of many patients and people.

C. JUNGFER