

## Out of Hours

# Sir Michael Drury:

an appreciation

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**PROFESSOR SIR MICHAEL DRURY  
KT, OBE, FRCP, FRCGP, FRACGP  
1926–2014**

Professor Sir Michael Drury, who died on 11 June, was a GP in Bromsgrove, Worcestershire for 38 years, the first professor of general practice at the University of Birmingham and President of the Royal College of General Practitioners from 1985–1988. He was a towering figure in general practice; unassuming, approachable, patient, a superb listener, unflappable, and interested, all combined with a wonderful wit and sense of humour.

He graduated in 1949 with Honours from the University of Birmingham. After National Service he returned to Bromsgrove, his home town, in 1953 and started in general practice. Throughout his entire academic career Michael remained at heart a local GP in Bromsgrove, serving patients who would never have realised that their compassionate, caring, and dedicated family doctor was such an international force for the better training of future doctors and the maturation of primary care as a major academic discipline.

He became involved with the newly-established Royal College of General Practitioners in the Midlands and, later, nationally. He was a passionate advocate of the importance of the multidisciplinary team in general practice, and he established the first bespoke training courses for them. In 1973 he was appointed as a part-time

senior clinical lecturer in general practice at Birmingham, where his teaching was innovative and influenced the curricula of all UK medical schools. He was one of the first people to recognise the importance of teaching and assessing communication skills. In 1981 he became one of the first professors in general practice, pursuing his academic vision of holistic generalist medicine at the heart of caring, cost-effective general practice. He retired in 1991.

As President of the RCGP he had to deal with a dispute with the Chief Examiner, which led to Michael being the only President to exercise the ultimate power of the presidency by requesting the Chair of Council's resignation. In doing so he brought to an end the problem and was thought by many to have played a key role in preserving the College. He was recognised in 1989 with a knighthood for services to medicine. He was hugely influential in helping our discipline move from the second-rank career choice in medicine to equal status to the specialties.

He was a colossus without pretension, a visionary without expectation, a truly exceptional role model and an inspirational leader. To be in his company was to be rendered helpless with laughter much of the time. In retirement he was Chair of Age Concern and the Muscular Dystrophy Campaign. He leaves his wife Joan, children Mark, Linda, Simon, and James, and five grandchildren.

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