

# Life & Times

## Lotte Theresa Newman:

an appreciation



RCGP presidential portrait of Lotte Newman. With the kind permission of Sharon Messenger, College Archivist.

**Born 22 January 1929; died 26 April 2019**

On the 26th of April this year, our College said a final goodbye to one of our profession's giants.

Lotte Newman played a fundamental role in developing general practice, improving standards of care, and growing the RCGP. She was active in the North East Thames Faculty and became a College examiner in 1972, Secretary of the Board of Censors in 1981, and Vice-Chair of Council in 1988. In 1994, she became only the second ever female President of the College (1996 to 1998) — the first to be elected by a ballot of the entire College membership.

Lotte determined at the beginning of her presidency that she would lead an initiative to open up our College to members and their families, increase membership, and raise awareness of the College. She achieved all three and we can look back on her achievements with reflected pride.

Lotte was also a member of the General Medical Council and Medical Director of St John Ambulance. She promoted the College and British general practice across Europe through her work with Societas Internationalis Medicinæ Generalis (SIMG) and led the amalgamation of SIMG with WONCA, establishing the European Society of General Practice and Family Medicine. She also played a crucial role in establishing the *European Journal of General Practice*.

*“The College and the profession is what it is today because of the epoch-making leadership of Lotte Newman whose contributions were made while working at the ‘coalface’ of general practice and raising a family of four children.”*

Lotte championed women in medicine. Her 1991 James Mackenzie lecture ‘Second Among Equals’<sup>1</sup> captures the issues that female patients face in accessing health care and the challenges that so many women doctors experience in achieving their potential.

She was President of the Medical Women's Federation, which she rated as one of her proudest achievements, and she promoted flexible working patterns and supported women doctors to take up leadership roles. A notable development was the introduction of crèches at major College events.

Lotte Newman. With the kind permission of Sharon Messenger, College Archivist.



The College and the profession is what it is today because of the epoch-making leadership of Lotte Newman whose contributions were made while working at the ‘coalface’ of general practice and raising a family of four children. Her warm personality encouraged younger members to become more involved in our College.

Lotte famously introduced a members’ ‘hotline’ where GPs could ring her directly. She always took the time to ask about our wellbeing and our families, and took particular care to welcome new members to the Council, giving encouragement and advice on negotiating what can be an intimidating experience in the Council chamber.

She will be sadly missed. We and her family can perhaps take solace in all that has been achieved for women's health and women doctors through her influence, hard work, friendship, energy, and compassion.

Lotte brought honour to the medical profession through her visionary leadership.

**Jacky Hayden,**  
President, Academy of Medical Educators.

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### REFERENCE

1. Newman L. James Mackenzie Lecture 1991. Second among equals. *Br J Gen Pract* 1992; **42(355)**: 71–74.