

Life & Times

Alastair Wright:

an appreciation



Alastair. With thanks to the College Archivist.

Born 19 March 1933; died 23 April 2019

Alastair Wright was the quintessential family doctor: caring, empathetic, and hugely respected by both patients and colleagues. Behind his gracious and unassuming manner there was a steely resolve and a formidable intellect that he developed and used to effect in later years.

His appointment as the fifth editor of the College journal in 1991 was a little unexpected when he was chosen in preference to more established academics. However, his performance exceeded expectations and he completed 9 very successful years in that role. He only accepted papers for publication that reached the highest scientific standards expected of an international journal.

He was supportive of authors whose worthwhile papers did not quite reach this level to ensure rejection was a positive experience.

Citation Reports that detail 'impact factor' and 'citations per paper' ranked the *BJGP* as 16th in 1999 (when Alastair left the role) out of 100 journals worldwide. But more recently, among all other journals of general practice and family medicine worldwide, the *BJGP* was ranked first in terms of both impact and immediacy in June 2019 (the *BJGP*'s impact factor for 2018 is 4.434, top of the primary care rankings, and giving the journal the highest impact in primary care research worldwide).

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This was Alastair's legacy and well deserved.

He graduated from Glasgow University in 1957 and was awarded his MD from there in 1981 for his thesis on 'Female Sterilisation — a View from General Practice'. He wrote extensively on depression and mental health issues, and was fluent in both written and spoken French. He was the recipient of the SEMA-Janssen prize for research in general practice in 1981.

An active member of the East Scotland Faculty and a Fellow of the College he was a GP in Glenrothes, Scotland, for over 31 years. He was chairman of the Clinical and Research Division of the College in 1990, and a member of the scientific committee of the joint Defeat Depression Campaign of the Royal College of Psychiatrists and the Royal College of General Practitioners from

1991 to 1998. He was the recipient of the Abercrombie Medal for special meritorious literature work in general practice in 2000. He was an honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists and received an MBE in 1994 for Services to Medicine.

He was a devoted husband to Barbara and their four children, Andrew, Kerr (a GP in New Zealand), Graham (a retired GP in Dunkeld), and Alison. Unashamedly he was attracted to everything in France and enjoyed the language, literature, food, and wine over many long and happy years.

Alastair's life fully reflected the College motto *Cum Scientia Caritas*. Intellectual rigour and a warm personality were the hallmarks of a life well lived and it was a privilege to have known him.

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Pictured at a College meeting. Members and Fellows Photographs. With thanks to the College Archivist.

