



departments – the first of these, in 1990, Mollie was delighted to learn was in child psychiatry. At her funeral her son, after pointing out how her family losses during the First World War had influenced her life-long professional interest in childhood bereavement and loss, said; “In her retirement she set a wonderful example of how to manage one’s own old age. As waning capacities forced her to give up activities she always seemed to find new interests to replace old ones. When she gave up trying to keep abreast of child psychiatry she read avidly about the recent achievements of the geneticists. The arthritis forced her to give up playing the piano and . . . eventually bird watching. . . . But then she took up an Open University course in music . . . ! When problems with her eyes meant that she could no longer cope with prolonged concentration on television . . . she still enjoyed talking to her friends, she attended discussion groups on current affairs, she played bridge and enjoyed being taken to concerts in her wheelchair.”

Mollie Mackenzie’s professional life encompassed many of the important developments in our speciality – she was friends with many of the great figures who influenced the modern practice of child psychiatry and she, in turn, influenced many of the present senior figures in the speciality – but she remained a modest person who enjoyed living right up to the end, and took pleasure in her son’s achievements and those of her friends.

She is survived by her only child, Malcolm, now a social work service manager in the Child and Families Service of Kensington and Chelsea Social Services.

Dora Black

Peter Sylvester

Formerly Consultant Psychiatrist at St Lawrence’s Hospital, Caterham

Peter Sylvester was born at Hoyland Common, near Barnsley, Yorkshire, in 1918 to Joseph and Christiana. His father was the manager of a coke oven plant. Peter had two elder sisters, Eveline and Joyce and the abiding memory of his childhood was their obsession in keeping his knees and neck clean.

After attending the village school, Peter moved to King Edward VII Grammar

School, Sheffield. On leaving, he joined his father’s works, Newton Chambers in Sheffield, in the Chemical Laboratory, testing coal-tar products, but his future lay elsewhere. He decided to study Biology at Sheffield University and subsequently he chose to study Medicine: he qualified MRCS, LRCP in 1943.

At the outbreak of war he was excused military service owing to his medical studies, and, on qualifying, pursued one of his other ambitions, to ‘go to sea’, and he joined the Merchant Navy. His ship was detailed to assist in the invasion of North Africa, but the engine was sabotaged so he missed that experience. His travels took him to New York, where he worked as a ship’s doctor to a crew gathered for the purpose of bringing GIs to the UK. Unhappily, while in New York, he contracted pulmonary tuberculosis and returned home to be nursed by his family. It was 2 years before he was fit enough to resume duties and was eased back into his career with part-time sessions in a rheumatology clinic at a teaching hospital in Sheffield.

Later, Peter came to London as a house physician at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital for Children, East London, to study Paediatrics, where he gained his Diploma in Child Health in 1950. He then went on to study Neuropathology and Mental Handicap at the Fountain Hospital, Tooting, South London.

While at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital he had met Gwyneth, a state registered children’s nurse. They were married in 1951 in St Llonio’s church and moved on to Shepherds Bush, Liverpool, West Norwood and later Caterham, Surrey. There they brought up four sons, Roger, Julian, Gregory and Fabian, who now have families of their own – Peter was proud of his 10 grandchildren.

While at St Lawrence’s Hospital in Caterham, he set up a neuropathology department, resulting in the publication of some 70 scientific papers. A further number of chapters for medical books and other articles followed. The book *Anatomy and Physiology for Nurses*, written and illustrated by Peter and dedicated to his wife, is still in current use.

For 3 years Peter undertook duties as medical administrator of St Lawrence’s Hospital, responsible for the care of approximately 2500 patients, which he found exacting but rewarding. He also held posts at the Royal Society of

Medicine and the Royal College of Psychiatrists. On two occasions he won the region’s Annual Research Award and in 1973 was awarded the Burden Research Prize and Gold Medal from Stoke Park Hospital, Bristol, for his contributions to research. He was elected a fellow of the Royal College of Pathologists in 1976 and Fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists in 1981. The high spots of his career, he felt, were the honour of giving the Blake–Marsh lecture on ‘Down’s Syndrome and Nutrition’ and his research successes on ‘the Ageing Process in Down’s Syndrome’.

Peter became Deputy Editor of the *Journal of Mental Deficiency Research* and was honoured for his services to Croydon Health Care Authority by having a ‘Care in the Community’ centre named after him. He was delighted to be asked to accompany the British team of competitors to Special Olympics International in America as their medical advisor on two occasions, and his work was recognised personally, by the Kennedy family. The first adventure playground and riding school for the disabled was set up by him and St Lawrence’s Hospital was the first to instigate the return of those with mental handicaps back into the community.

On retirement to ‘Daleswood’, Llandinam, in 1983, Peter immersed himself in village life, becoming Chairman of the 15 annual exhibitions dealing with culture and heritage. He was a member of the re-established ‘Best kept Village’ group when Llandinam took the titles of ‘Best Kept Village’ and ‘Wales in Bloom’. He was the current President of the Severnside Painting Group, the present Chairman of the Llandinam branch of the Royal British Legion, the Chairman of the Caersws and Llandinam Scouts and was instrumental in the creation of the local drama group and gardening club.

In summarising Peter’s life, his intellectual distinction should be remembered, but also, his complete modesty. This has been the theme in so many kind letters and cards sent to his wife and family. At the funeral Peter was remembered as a loving husband and father, a true gentleman in every sense of the word and highly respected by all who knew him; remembered for his kind, gentle, unassuming manner; his charm and wit; and whose quiet wisdom and humour will be greatly missed.

Gwyneth Sylvester