

Ronald Brockless Allen



Ronnie Allen died peacefully on 15th August 2001, aged 80. To his widow, Cara, and his family we extend our condolences on the passing of an exceptional colleague.

He qualified at Leeds Dental School in 1944 and during his early years in practice in Essex he soon became interested in dental politics and actively involved in the affairs of the British Dental Association. He became a member of the Representative Board in 1954, at the young age of 33, where his enthusiasm and, more particularly, his ability were soon apparent; he was clearly destined for high office.

In 1960 he became a member of the Dental Rates Study Group and from 1964 to 1969 was Chairman of the General Dental Services Committee, where his skills of leadership, diplomacy and negotiation were very evident. He became a member of the Council in 1962 and in the next eleven years became firstly Vice Chairman and, subsequently in 1971, Chairman of the Council.

Thus by the time he became Secretary of

the Association in 1973 he was very much aware of what he was taking on. He was given the specific task of bringing the Association into the second half of the twentieth century and so, very soon after his appointment, he carried out a detailed analysis of the workings of BDA headquarters. This resulted in an updating of the terms and conditions of employment of the staff, a streamlining of the organisation to make it more cost-effective, and a restructuring of the autonomous committees thereby ensuring that more efficient and effective action could be taken when future issues, which subsequently included the Royal Commission on the National Health Service and the Nuffield Enquiry into Dental Education, arose.

His organisational ability was also seen to the full on the occasion of the Association's Centenary celebrations in 1980 at the Royal Festival Hall and the induction of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh as the Association's Centenary President.

Ronnie worked tirelessly for the Association, demonstrating a detailed grasp of the major issues of the day, a logical intellect and political acumen. He also developed extensive contacts in the professional, health and business worlds thereby providing the Association with a breadth of vision and the opportunity to set wheels turning. Furthermore, his command of at least three European languages was particularly advantageous at a time when, as the Chairman of Council, he was leading the UK delegation to the Dental Liaison Committee of the EEC. Subsequently, in 1973, he became Secretary of the Liaison Committee and was instrumental in bringing about important changes in the EEC Dental Directives including, perhaps most importantly, provision for the establishment of an advisory committee on education. In recognition of these services he was awarded the Silver

Seal of the City of Paris and other awards included, in 1977, the conferring of an honorary FDS by the Royal College of Surgeons of England.

As Chairman of Council, and then as Secretary, he played a major role in the arrangements for the 1974 FDI World Dental Congress in London, the last occasion on which this event has been held in the United Kingdom. It was this, together with his particular European and EEC interests, that encouraged him to become further involved in the FDI World Dental Federation and in its European Regional Organisation. His talents were soon recognised in this international arena and he became a member of the FDI Council in 1976 and a Vice-President of the FDI from 1980-84. He was President of the European Regional Organisation from 1980 to 1986, and the title of Honorary President was then created as further recognition of his exceptional contribution.

After his retirement as Secretary, he successfully stood for election to the General Dental Council, serving on the Council from 1984 to 1991. The enormous wealth of dental experience he had acquired enabled him to make a very significant contribution to the Council's deliberations during those years.

But it is as Secretary of this Association that Ronnie will most be remembered, combining an awesome array of professional and intellectual skills with a sense of humour which was seldom far from the surface. In January 1984, the Council of the British Dental Association held a Dinner to mark his retirement and to record its gratitude to a most distinguished and outstanding Secretary who had brought a new directness, sense of purpose and enthusiasm to the Association.

Peter Swiss
BDA President

CORRECTION TO OBITUARY

We regret that there was a typographical error in issue 4 of the *BDJ* (*BDJ* 2001; 191:222).

The author of the obituary for David Dury Hindley-Smith was incorrectly stated as P.R.W. The actual author was Norman Davies.

SUBMITTING AN OBITUARY

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