

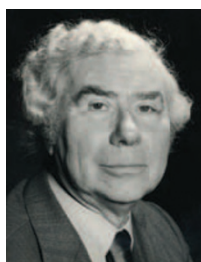
Obituaries

Obituaries should be submitted by email to Kate Maynard at k.maynard@nature.com.

All submitted obituaries should be approximately 350–450 words in length (apart from obituaries for past presidents of the BDA where the length should be 700–800 words).

Content of the obituary is down to the individual author, and the approval of the family should be given for the obituary prior to submission to the BDJ.

GEORGE NEIL JENKINS



Neil Jenkins, who died on 14 October 2007, was the first Professor of Oral Physiology in the UK. Born in Wallasey in 1914, at school he discovered a passion for science. He was among the first to study the newly-established degree in biochemistry at the University of Liverpool, before proceeding to Cambridge where he took his PhD.

As an officer of the local branch of the League of Nations Association in Liverpool, on nearby Hilbre Island he met another League of Nations Officer who later became his wife, Olive.

In 1945 Neil took up a lectureship in the Physiology Department at Newcastle Medical School, part of King's College in the University of Durham, with special responsibility for teaching dental students.

Neil taught physiology and biochemistry as well as a new series of lectures in oral physiology – a subject unknown in other universities at that time. He presented all sides of a disputed topic before presenting his own view of the subject, inspiring to the more able student who enjoyed the intellectual cut and thrust.

With the formation of the new University of Newcastle in 1963, a Department of Oral Physiology was created in the Dental School for Neil – now Professor Jenkins. His teaching load was reduced, but his research came into its own, and his PhD students and junior staff received the best possible supervision, many going on to be chairs in their own departments.

Neil was a superb 'ideas' man. He had a phenomenal memory for previous research, and was constantly looking to propose a new hypothesis to explain some unexpected research data.

He retired in 1980, but we knew that Neil would never truly retire, and he and Olive embarked on a series of visiting professorships around the world. Despite the blow of Olive's death in 1996, Neil continued to pursue his research ideas, as well as throwing his energy into his valuable contribution to humanism.

Neil was a man of great scholarship, who gave of his knowledge, advice and support without stint to those who had the good fortune to work under his leadership. His academic legacy is unsurpassed, if viewed in terms of the body of work from his own laboratories, summed with that of the 'Jenkins family' of former graduate students and colleagues. Globally, few can have contributed so much to the development and maturity of academic dentistry.

W. M. Edgar

MICHAEL JOHN WATTS



Mike Watts died on 17 August 2007 at his home in Sedgford, North Norfolk.

Educated at Colfe's Grammar School, Lewisham, he entered Guy's Hospital Dental School in 1954. Qualifying in 1960, he became a house surgeon at St Thomas Hospital. While a student he played rugby for Sidcup.

Mike then married Crystal and moved to Bury St Edmunds, joining a large old established practice. They adopted two

children, Joanna and Tim.

He became very involved in sport, playing golf, squash and particularly cricket, where he became very involved in the local club and also played for the Gents of Suffolk.

He was also very keen on motor sport, and at one time jointly held the record for 24 hours in a standard production car, which took place at Snetterton. This was eventually beaten by the great Roy Salvadori.

After his first marriage ended, Mike married Jill and worked in Saudi Arabia for three years.

On his return he eventually settled in Hunstanton and became a very enthusiastic and active member of the famous local golf club.

Sadly Jill died young, and Mike returned to work part-time in Bury St Edmunds for Suffolk PCT. This maintained his devotion to the principles of the NHS, where the patient always came first. He continued to work for Suffolk PCT until a month before he died, almost literally dying in harness.

Meeting Mike was always an unforgettable and often an exciting experience. This was testified to by the large congregation at his funeral. He leaves a son and daughter and two grandchildren.

Martin Lightfoot & Chris Winning