

Obituary

Obituaries should be submitted by email to Jadene Doak at jadene.doak@springernature.com

All submitted obituaries should be 400 words maximum in length (apart from obituaries for past presidents of the BDA where the length should be 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*.



John W. Craig
1943–2021

John Walker Craig (BDS, DGDP(UK), FDS(RCSEd), FFGDP(UK)) died on 21 September 2021 at the age of 77. His funeral took place on 28 September.

John passed away after a massive stroke in 2018 left him seriously weakened. He was always grateful to the people who cared for him over a long period of incapacity. He was a proud man, with much to be proud about, and his illness was very hard for him to bear, but he remained stoic throughout.

John was first and foremost a family man. He was happily married to Irene for over 50 years; their children are Malcolm, who is married to Jaqui, and Lesley, who is married to Peter. Lesley's two children, Hamish and Sam, are the grandsons to whom John was devoted.

John never did anything by halves; expert status was always his goal, and he would never rest until he reached it. He was a keen astronomer, an opera aficionado and a widely travelled climber (Scotland, the Alps, the Pyrenees and the Himalayas). He was known to his friends as 'the only wee banjo player in Scotland' and his golf was a major interest as he grew a little older. His golf club, Glenbervie, was a favourite place, where he was able to relax and think of something other than dentistry.

John loved books, he loved to talk politics, he enjoyed a glass of wine and he was a keen historian; indeed, he was a long-standing

member of the BDA's historical arm, the Lindsay Society. He had one long-standing ambition – to appear on *University Challenge*. He achieved that in 2002 when he captained the BDA team in the Professionals version of the show. The BDA team managed to beat the Doctors team but then lost to HM Inspector of Taxes. It is not surprising that the Tax Inspectors' team went on to win the series.

John graduated from Glasgow Dental School in 1966 and went back to work in his hometown of Rutherglen for a couple of years before moving on to Airdrie, and then finally, he established a practice in Falkirk where he stayed until his retirement from practice in 2002. John was always a general dental practitioner and he never lost touch with the reality of daily practice, no matter how far up the academic or political ladders he rose. He was respected by all his professional friends and colleagues in Scotland and the rest of the UK.

John's lifelong membership of the BDA glittered with important jobs, key positions and elections to a variety of committees and boards. His starting point was Scotland, but before too long, his ambition pulled him south to BDA Headquarters in London. BDA Council in the late 1990s and the Executive Board (of which he was Deputy Chairman in 2000–2003) were all the better for his presence.

He reached his peak at the BDA in 2005 when he became their President. This position was well deserved and beautifully handled. Ever the professional, this job suited John down to the ground and he performed it impeccably.

The work of the more home-based groups such as Local Dental Committees and General Dental Services Committees were

important to John because they were his bedrock and the foundation on which his professional knowledge was built.

His interest in postgraduate education occupied more of his time from the 1990s onwards. He was a great believer that experience should be shared, and he was at one time Chairman of the Scottish Vocational Training Committee, having been a trainer himself on three occasions. He took part in several working groups around the turn of the century as professional training was going through something of a revolution.

The Faculty of General Dental Practitioners and the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh both recognised John's contribution to the dental profession by electing him to Fellowship. These are rare honours and give some sense of John's influence and the respect with which he was regarded by his colleagues.

It would take too long to go over every single aspect of John's career but the thing that stands out from looking at his detailed CV is not just the heights that he reached in all that he did, but the breadth of his involvement and influence; this was a rare individual.

John was a wonderful friend to me and my family. I loved his company, and he was always willing to offer sound advice when problems arose. He knew that the higher up the tree you climb, the more intractable the problems you are expected to solve become. Very few people can do the big jobs alone; John knew how to help and how to work through possible solutions until that important lightbulb moment finally arrived. In that sense alone, John was irreplaceable. He will surely be missed.

John Renshaw