

OBITUARY

William (BILL) Evan Davies AM RACP FAFRM 8 September 1940–14 May 2008

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Dr William Evan Davies (Bill) was born in Queensland, Australia in 1940. He graduated from the University of Queensland in medicine in 1964. In 1970, after his wife became a paraplegic in an accident, he went to Perth to investigate the facilities at Shenton Park. Sir George Bedbrook inspired Bill to 'revamp' the Spinal Injuries Unit at Princess Alexandra Hospital. He had training at the Austin Hospital, Melbourne; Stoke Mandeville Hospital, Aylesbury; Lodgemore in Sheffield; and the Robert Jones and Eliza Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital, Oswestry. The Spinal Injuries Unit, as we know it today, really started with Bill's return to Brisbane and appointment to Princess Alexandra Hospital in 1972. Sir Ludwig Guttmann sponsored his application to become a member of the International Spinal Cord Society in the

same year. He was appointed as physician in charge in 1973 and as director in 1974, position he held until 1987. In 1975, he received his Fellowship of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians. He made great efforts to convince the 'bureaucracy' to grasp the concept of a multidisciplinary team. He assembled great, hard-working and dedicated multidisciplinary teams around him. From 1975 to 1980, he was the consultant physician with the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Centre in Brisbane. He was a life member of the Paraplegic and Quadriplegic Welfare Association of Queensland. He was a founding fellow of the Australasian College of Rehabilitation Medicine. In 1980, he became the chairman of the Ministerial State Planning Committee for the International Year of the Disabled. As a direct result of this committee, dramatic changes in wheel chair access were instituted in Queensland and public awareness was improved. As a result of his efforts, in 1983, Bill was awarded the honour of Member of the General Division of the Order of Australia, for service to medicine and disabled people. His hard work, persistence and vision, along with that of many others saw the new Spinal Injuries Unit finally commissioned in 1985. In 1988, he handed over the reins of directorship to Vernon Hill, but continued as visiting medical officer. His intuitive sensitivity was fine-tuned by his personal experience, and few would have realized where his wisdom welled from. He was one of the original quiet achievers. In 1993, he received his Fellowship in the Australasian Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine. Over the years, his contribution to teaching, training and education has also been very substantial. He had retired in March 2008. Dr Bill Davies' contribution to the Spinal Injuries Unit, the Princess Alexandra Hospital, and to the care and rehabilitation of people with spinal-cord injury in Queensland over the past 35 years has been immense. His expertise, experience, dedication and friendship will be greatly missed.

Tim Geraghty
Queensland, Australia
E-mail: Timothy_Geraghty@health.qld.gov.au