

Obituaries

Obituaries should be submitted by email to Jonathan Coe at jonathan.coe@nature.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*.



**Enid Muriel
Spencer**

1930–2018

Muriel Spencer was born in Leicester but came to London at the age of four. She attended the Mary Datchelor Girls School in Camberwell before progressing to London University's Westfield College in Hampstead to study classics.

In her final year Muriel decided on librarianship as a career. After gaining her Bachelor of Arts degree with honours she worked for 15 months at the National Central Library, later part of the British Library. There followed a year's postgraduate study at University College London's School of Librarianship and Archives. Next came a month spent at the library of St Mary's Medical School followed by nine years at the Royal Society of Medicine.

At the end of 1965 Muriel joined the BDA at its old headquarters in Hill Street. She

immediately put her mark on the library. It was just in time to prepare for the move to Wimpole Street, badly needed as much of the library stock was stored in boxes in cupboards and in the cellar. Her vision and drive brought the BDA's library into the twentieth century, vastly increasing the stock of books and special packages while developing new services for members.

Muriel served on a number of committees. An important one was the British Library's Advisory Group for the Provision and Use of Medical Literature and the Board of the International Endodontic Journal. She contributed a chapter on dental literature to Lesley Morton's *The Use of Medical Literature*. In 1972 Muriel became secretary of the Lindsay Club (forerunner of the Lindsay Society), a post she occupied until 1980. Even then she stayed on the committee for a further year while Ronald Alban Cohen, the eminent dental historian, was still the chairman. During this time she became secretary of a working group chaired by Ronald which drew together the well-respected centenary history of the BDA.¹ In 1981 Muriel married Ronald Cohen,

retired from the BDA and went to live in Leamington Spa. In doing so she gained three stepchildren. In 1984 Muriel Cohen became the first female and first non-dentist chairman of the Lindsay Club, remaining until 1986.

In 1977 Muriel was awarded a well-deserved MBE in the New Year's Honours list for services to the BDA library. It was received on 23 March from Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother at an investiture at Buckingham Palace.

Muriel had many non-dental interests. Her Christian faith meant a lot to her and she was a committed Anglican. Music was also important and she sang in the City of London Choir. She was a member of the National Trust and Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and enjoyed visiting museums and art galleries. Muriel was predeceased by Ronald, who died in November 2001. She is survived by John Cohen and his sisters, Margaret Ann Cohen and Jennifer Susan Tallamy.

Stanley Gelbier

¹ Cohen R A. *The Advance of the Dental Profession: a Centenary History, 1880–1980*. London: BDA, 1979.



The BDA Benevolent Fund has been working for over 130 years to ensure that no dentist is unsupported in times of need or crisis. Our ultimate aim is to reach more people in need. We need dentists in all areas of the UK to help spread the word.

If you know someone who is finding it hard to cope, make sure they know about the BDA Benevolent Fund. If we can help, we will. Share, like and keep up to date with our efforts on our Facebook page: facebook.com/bdabenevolentfund/