

Dermot Holland

Born: 1915
President: 1980-1983
Died: 2006

Dermot Holland was one of only two pathologists elected as President of the College. He introduced a modern vision to the practice of Irish laboratory medicine and to the teaching of pathology. He was a general pathologist with a special interest in immunology.

Dermot was a clever, enterprising and ambitious young man who initially studied pharmacy. He then decided to study medicine and qualified from the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) in 1945. Following his internship in the Richmond Hospital he went to the United Kingdom to specialise in pathology. He was one of the first Irish pathology trainees to study in the prestigious Postgraduate School of Medicine at the Hammersmith Hospital in London. He subsequently trained at the equally prestigious Radcliffe Infirmary in Oxford. Following this, he was awarded a WHO scholarship and visited many centres of excellence in the United States. The knowledge and skills gained from these institutions were harnessed to further develop laboratory medicine in Ireland.

In 1948, he gained the MRCPI and then the FRCPath in 1963. In 1951, he was appointed as a lecturer in pathology in the RCSI. By this time, he had become a Fellow of the College of Physicians and was a research pathologist with the Medical Research Council of Ireland which was undertaking a national tuberculosis survey.

His first consultant appointment as a pathologist was to Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children in Crumlin from 1957 to 1968. He then transferred as a consultant pathologist to the Richmond Hospital. He was a keen researcher and published several papers including those on the investigation of staphylococcal infections and the control of hospital cross-infection. He also helped establish the Colman K Byrnes Research Centre in the Richmond Hospital. In 1963, he was appointed as Professor of Pathology in the RCSI and remained in that position until his retirement in 1983. During this time, he was elected Dean of the RCSI, a position in which he used his flair for administration and politics together with his persuasive skills.

As Professor of Pathology in RCSI he led an excellent academic department and recruited excellent teachers including Gerard Doyle and Patrick Fitzpatrick. Holland had the ability to make even the most difficult topic simple. He was an engaging and succinct lecturer and was always most gracious and understanding when interacting with medical students.



LIVES OF THE PRESIDENTS

Holland served the College of Physicians as Vice President and then President. His term as President saw the continuation of negotiations with Qatar and Kuwait for the recognition, and holding, of the College's Membership examination in those countries. Holland also oversaw the completion of the refurbishment of the basement areas in 6 Kildare Street, a project started by his predecessor. In May 1983 the final component, a lecture theatre, was opened by the Qatari Ambassador, whose Emir had subscribed to its building.

His influence and contribution to pathology and medicine were rewarded with Honorary Fellowships from the Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh, the American College of Pathology and the Faculty of Pathology in the Royal College of Physicians in Ireland.

Dermot Holland was witty and sociable and enjoyed the good company of colleagues and friends. He had numerous interests outside of pathology; these included golf, gardening, music and most of all his family.

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