

## Nathaniel Barry

**Born:** c.1725  
**President:** 1767-1768, 1772-1773, 1775-1776  
**Died:** 1785

Nathaniel Barry was born in Cork around 1725, eldest son of Sir Edward Barry (qv) who was also a President of the College. He entered Trinity College in 1739 or 1740 and graduated with a BA in 1744 and MB in 1748. He subsequently studied in Reims and received the MD there. In October 1751, he was also awarded an MD from Trinity College. He was elected a Fellow of the College of Physicians in 1758, the same year that he married Catherine Jones in Cork. He was made an Honorary Fellow of the College in 1782.

He was jointly appointed with his father as Physician to the Forces in Ireland in 1749/50 aged only 25, and he retained this position to the end of his life. In 1749, he was also appointed the first King's Professor of Chirurgery and Midwifery in Trinity College. This may seem an unusual appointment for someone who was a physician; however, at this time all appointments to the School of Physic in Trinity College were made with the authority and agreement of the College of Physicians. Whilst it is thought that Barry did deliver lectures in surgery there is no written record of him having much role in the teaching of midwifery or obstetrics. However, anthropological analysis of over 200 predominantly eighteenth-century skeletons excavated in 1999 at the site of the old Physicians Garden, which was behind the anatomy house that had been built in 1711, showed that most of the remains were female. This, it has been argued, may have been indicative of an interest in obstetrics teaching at that time.

Barry was apparently much respected by his peers and the famous Dublin physician and politician Charles Lucas addressed one of his clinical accounts of the benefits of taking the waters at the Bath spa to Barry. There is a story, perhaps apocryphal, that Barry treated the future Duke of Wellington, Arthur Wellesley, as a child. He succeeded to his father's baronetcy in 1776 and died in his home on Leinster Street in 1785.

A contemporary poem by John Gilbourne records,

'The God-like Barry high in learning soars,  
His prudent skill the sick to health restores:  
He teaches midwives how to trace their Clews  
Thro' maze labrynths and how to use  
Their instruments he shows Chirurgeons bold;



# LIVES OF THE PRESIDENTS



All this in College by the sage is told.<sup>1</sup>

JAH

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<sup>1</sup> John Gilbourne, *The Medical Review. A Poem* (Dublin, 1775)



**HERITAGE  
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