

Clarke, Maurice Vivian (1917-1989)

Maurice Clarke was born in Southampton, England, the son of Reginald Morley Clarke, a medical practitioner who served in the RAMC during the first world war and gained the diploma of the Royal College of Surgeons before returning to Australia. He was educated at Xavier College, Melbourne, and Newman College, Melbourne University. His clinical studies were undertaken at St Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne, and he held house posts there from 1941-42.

In 1942 he married Valerie St Maur Sheehann, daughter of William Sheehann, a civil servant, and there were two daughters of the marriage. That same year he enlisted in the Royal Australian Air Force as a medical officer and after the war continued in the RAAF Reserve, first as squadron leader and later as wing commander. He was the RAAF's consultant physician for a period of 20 years.

On return to civilian life he was appointed honorary physician to St Vincent's, 1949-75, and was awarded a Nuffield Dominion travelling fellowship which enabled him to come to the UK for postgraduate study. His major interest lay in cardiology and he worked for a year as a senior registrar in the cardiac department of the Brompton Hospital.

Back in Australia, he was first appointed honorary physician to St Vincent's and later senior physician to inpatients, a post he held until he retired. Maurice Clarke did not publish but he gave remarkable service to medicine in many other fields, in particular he served the Royal Australasian College of Physicians with great distinction. From 1963-74 he was a censor and from 1974-80 censor-in-chief; and vice-president from 1972-74. He was a member of council for eight years, and on the executive for six years.

For four years he was a member of the accreditation board and also served on many College committees including the then named South-East Asian Committee; he made a significant contribution to postgraduate education in advanced medicine in Singapore and Malaysia. He was a prominent member of the Victorian State Committee for a period of eighteen years and was also its chairman. The RACP was indeed Maurice Clarke's main interest and inspiration. His sense of purpose, dedication, integrity and humanity - which were the hallmark of his personal life and cardiological practice - were a source of strength to the College.

He served the Australian Medical Association, as a member of the Victorian State branch, from 1962-74; as a councillor of the federal body from 1967-77 and chairman of the Federal Assembly from 1972-77. On his retirement from the AMA his successor, Murray Maxwell, paid warm tribute to him and commented that the Assembly would be so much the poorer for his departure.

He was vice-president of the National Heart Foundation from 1965, and acting president 1973-74. He also chaired the pharmaceutical benefits advisory committee for the Commonwealth Department of Health for well over a decade. He was awarded the CBE in 1974 and elected a Fellow of the RCP in 1976 under Bye-law 39b.

Outside medicine his interests were many and varied; they included art, music, literature, fishing and gardening - and people.

CBE(1974) MB BS Melb(1940) MD(1947) MRACP(1947) FRACP(1953) FRCP(1976)

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Main source: Royal College of Physicians.



