IN MEMORIAM

ALLAN FREDERICK DWYER
1920–1975

Allan Dwyer died in Sydney on February 13, 1975, just nine months after the onset of the illness which caused the tragic end of an inspiring career.

His father was a general practitioner and his mother a warm, perceptive and capable woman. From Christian Brothers School at Lewisham he secured a scholarship in medicine and a bursary of residence at St John’s College in the University of Sydney. He graduated with honours in 1942 and became resident medical officer at St Vincent’s Hospital, Sydney.

After war service in Borneo with the Australian Army Medical Corps, he returned to general practice with his father and started as a clinical assistant in the orthopaedic department of St Vincent’s Hospital under the supervision of Dr Dennis J. Glissan. This association was to nurture and develop Allan’s life-long enthusiasm for orthopaedic surgery.

After obtaining the degrees of F.R.A.C.S. and M.S. in 1948, he rapidly began to show an outstanding ability for original thought and critical evaluation. His earlier work on the correction of severe deformity of the toes gave excellent results and won him countless grateful patients. His more recent work centred on such formidable problems as scoliosis, the improvement of the rate of spinal fusion by the use of direct electrical current stimulators, and fusion of the hip after failed arthroplasty. He lived to see his technique of anterior spinal correction become accepted throughout the world as one of the methods of treatment of scoliosis.

He undertook several lecture tours overseas and demonstrated his technique of correction of scoliosis at major centres in Mexico, the United States, Canada, South Africa and Israel. Many orthopaedic surgeons visiting Australia came to his hospital, the Mater at North Sydney, to learn his technique.

Despite international acclaim, he remained his modest self, untouched by ostentation; he placed no importance on wealth, social status or patronage. He was most appreciative of the award of the O.B.E. in 1974 and of the L. O. Betts Memorial Medal in 1971 for his original work on scoliosis. His interests outside medicine were diverse: he read widely and took a special interest in politics. For several years he was state president of the Democratic Labour Party.

He was also a deeply religious man, who, together with his family, found understanding, affection and support within the Catholic Church. During the last months of his illness he developed an equanimity that gave reassurance and ease to those most dear to him. For Allan, his wife and family were his greatest joy and devotion; he took pleasure in a completely happy, warm and loving family circle. To them we offer our deepest sympathy.

C. A. C.