

Obituary

Dr Bob Moffitt

Bob Moffitt, who died on 3 February at the age of 82, had been a partner at the King Street practice in Lancaster and was the first medical officer at Lancaster University. A foundation member of the Royal College of General Practitioners, he went on to become a fellow by election. He was one of the first trainers of young general practitioners in Lancaster. He played squash and golf, and was a keen fell walker. Late in life he came to love alpine skiing.

He was born in Berlin. His father, who came from Alnwick, worked for an English import/export firm and his mother was German. In 1933, the family moved to England to live in North Harrow. At the age of six, Bob had to move quickly from speaking German to speaking English. From these roots, he retained a love of the German language and in later years was an active member of the Lancaster German circle. He had a successful education which saw him with a place at Cambridge reading Modern Languages at the age of 17. National Service in the RAF Education Branch came after his degree and an RAF medical officer inspired Bob to read medicine. He became a medical student at the age of 23 at St Mary's Hospital in London.

On deciding to become a general practitioner, Bob, with his wife Judy, looked at many practices but he decided to accept an offer to join the long-established King Street practice in Lancaster, which had strong ties with the Royal Lancaster Infirmary. He was appointed clinical assistant to the Eye Department and obtained the Diploma in Ophthalmology (DO). His appointment to the new university was very special to him and he loved being part of the growing university and a member of Lonsdale College.

Bob had a studious appearance and he was a studious person. When well established in practice he took the membership examination (MRCP) of the Royal College of Physicians and

passed. Even later in his life, he tested his knowledge of general practice by sitting the examination for membership (MRCGP) of the Royal College of General Practitioners and passed. He deliberately did not prepare for this examination as he wished to prove his skills as a trainer in general practice. Later, as mentioned, he was elected a fellow (FRCGP). He was

a good teacher and, indeed, a skilled trainer of younger doctors. Several of his registrars joined local practices and all speak highly of his dedicated teaching and his lovely sense of humour.

Bob had some knowledge and Judy had no knowledge of the Lakeland Fells when they came to Lancaster, but soon they were fell walking in a big way in that they climbed all the peaks described by Wainwright in his guides. Their two young children did many of the walks with them. Bob was a dinghy sailor and liked the sailing at Salcombe. He excelled at squash and on taking up golf he won the doctor's George Cup three times. The love of alpine skiing came in his middle fifties.

Bob and Judy were married for 50 years. They met when Judy was a secretary on the surgical unit at St Mary's Hospital. Judy cared for Bob through serious heart disease requiring surgery; and latterly through the cruel problems of Parkinson's disease. Sympathy goes to Judy, the children, Andrew and Jane, and the six grandchildren on the loss of a fine man and an exceptional doctor.

This obituary has been compiled from personal knowledge but much information came from Judy and the family, former partners Drs Ian McClellan and David Coltman, those of Bob's former registrars who live locally, Dr John Carne, and from the university through Dr Colin Adams and Mrs Jean Jefferies. Many others, including Reverend Alan Coles, offered memories of Dr Moffitt's aura of calm when working and of his professional kindness.

John Chippendale

