



Emeritus Professor Monty Losowsky MD FRCP

Colleagues will be sorry to learn of the death, on 8 May 2020, of Emeritus Professor Monty Losowsky, former Professor of Medicine and former Dean of Medicine. The following obituary has been contributed by his former colleagues, Professor Peter Howdle and Bill Mathie, and Monty's son, Andrew.

Monty Seymour Losowsky was born in the East End of London in 1931, the son of immigrant parents. He was brought up in the straitened circumstances of those days. His mother had had no formal education and had to work hard to support the family financially. His early education was fragmented by his experience as an evacuee – he attended fourteen different secondary schools during the six years of World War II – but nonetheless he excelled academically, being selected by the Coopers' Company School as an outstanding student for formal indentureship as a cooper, following which he was granted the freedom of the City of London.

He was awarded a place at the University of Leeds School of Medicine and qualified MBChB with honours in 1955. After graduation he worked as a House Officer at Leeds General Infirmary under Professor Sir Ronald Tunbridge, then moved to be Medical Registrar at St Margaret's Hospital, Epping from 1957-59, achieving his Membership of the Royal College of Physicians in 1958. By this stage he had developed an interest in gastroenterology and liver disease, which was a relatively new specialty in those days. With great foresight he then went to work as an "Assistant Externe" at a specialist liver unit at the Hôpital St Antoine, Paris, in 1960. He was awarded his MD by the University of Leeds in 1961, based on his clinical and laboratory studies of liver disease. Continuing his academic career, in 1961, he became a research fellow at Harvard University, based in the world renowned liver unit at Boston City Hospital.

Monty was strongly committed, however, to the principles of the National Health Service, and he left Boston for Leeds in 1962, seeking to contribute to the UK's publicly-funded healthcare system. He initially worked in the University Department of Medicine at Leeds General Infirmary with Professor Tunbridge as lecturer, senior lecturer and then reader in medicine. Here he established a clinical research ward for the study of gastrointestinal and liver diseases. At this stage government policy was to expand medical education and in the late 1960s he saw the potential for the development of St James's Hospital as a teaching hospital, something he was to work tirelessly to achieve with distinguished colleagues such as Eric Jackson (physician), John Fitton (orthopaedic surgeon), David Feather (surgeon) and Geoffrey Giles (surgeon). Monty became Professor of Medicine and FRCP in 1969, and was appointed to develop academic departments at St James's. Thus in 1970 St James's was established as a university teaching hospital. It was to become the largest teaching hospital in Europe, and the subject of the long-running TV series 'Jimmy's,' on which he occasionally appeared.

With the founding of the University Department of Medicine at St James's, Monty established a comprehensive gastroenterology service of great clinical significance for the hospital. During the 1970s and 1980s there were very few specialist services in district hospitals and

patients were referred from all around the North of England. Subsequently many trainee doctors went on to become consultant gastroenterologists in the region. It was a time of academic expansion and the department was responsible not only for medical student education at St James's but also for developing its research potential with dedicated laboratories and technical and scientific staff. An important corollary was the establishment of a University Department of Surgery, led by Professor Geoffrey Giles, who had complementary clinical and research interests.

Monty's research and teaching interests were broad and prolific, including gastroenterology, hepatology, but also haematology, nutrition, Factor XIII deficiency, and the history of medicine. He was author or editor of nine books, over 30 chapters in medical textbooks, and at least 350 peer-reviewed papers on a wide range of topics. He was a member of the General Medical Council, an Examiner for Membership of the Royal College of Physicians as well as an external examiner in medical final examinations for ten universities in the UK and he supervised and examined for dozens of MD and PhD theses. He served on many boards of professional bodies and advised a number of government committees on matters of medical education and research. He was the President of the British Society of Gastroenterology (1993-94).

One of his most significant contributions to medicine in Leeds must be the key part he played, along with the late Professor Geoffrey Giles, in introducing liver transplantation in 1986, a highly significant breakthrough that they achieved through gruelling and meticulous hard work. He also made a seminal contribution to the elucidation of the understanding and mechanism of the rare deficiency of Factor XIII, one of the coagulation factors in blood.

A strong supporter of patient advocacy groups, he had a long term involvement with the British Liver Trust and he was instrumental in supporting the founding of the Coeliac Society (later Coeliac UK), as its first and long-standing medical adviser. This was one of the world's first patient-run advocacy groups.

From 1989 to 1994 Monty was the Dean of Medicine. It was the start of a period of rapid expansion of UK Higher Education, and under his keen eye and quietly determined leadership, the School consolidated its administrative, financial and academic positions, enabling it to adapt and expand, to cement its reputation for medical education excellence, and to develop its research capabilities. He also, during this period, made regular appearances in local and national news bulletins.

Monty retired in 1996, and was proud to pass the leadership of his department on to one who had been a previous student, trainee and colleague. Alongside his continued work with learned societies and national bodies, he turned his indefatigable energies to the role of Executive Chairman of the newly established award-winning Thackray Medical Museum at St James's University Hospital. Once permission to open in a Grade 2 listed site had been obtained, for which he was a strong advocate, he guided the academic development of the museum. His outstanding academic contribution continued with the introduction of an annual programme of monthly lectures given by visiting academics and distinguished clinicians. Some of the lectures have since been published in a book entitled, 'Getting Better: Stories from the History of Medicine'. The Museum now has a very strong schools educational programme and many thousands of objects, books and catalogues amongst its impressive resources. Monty had recently become the Museum's Life President.

During his varied career, Monty Losowsky made huge contributions as a physician, a scholar, an educator, a leader, and a mentor. He never lost his enthusiasm and commitment to St James's and it was appropriate that during his final illness he was cared for in the gastroenterology ward at St James's by consultants who had benefitted previously from his training. His dedication to his adopted city was recognised in 2014 when he was given The

Leeds Award, one of the city's highest honours, by the Lord Mayor of Leeds, Councillor David Congreve.

The University expresses its sympathy to Monty's wife, Barbara, his daughter Kate and son Andrew. He will be remembered by the University with gratitude and great respect.