Eldred Wright Walls, MD, FRCS, FRCSE, FRSE - Obituary

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Eldred Wright Walls, MD, FRCS, FRCSE, FRSE

The distinguished anatomist Professor Eldred W. Walls died in Edinburgh on 24 March 2008, aged 95.

Eldred undertook medical training at the University of Glasgow before moving to Cardiff and subsequently to the Middlesex Hospital Medical School as a Reader in Anatomy in 1947. In 1949 he took up the S.A. Courtauld Chair of Anatomy at the Middlesex before serving as Dean of the Medical School from 1967 to 1974. He retired in
1974, but continued to play an active role in Anatomical and Surgical training right up until his death. In his final years post-retirement, he contributed to teaching postgraduate students at the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh and undergraduate medical students at the University of Edinburgh. An active member of the Anatomical Society of Great Britain and Ireland since 1936, Eldred served as Treasurer from 1955 to 1963 and as President from 1963 to 1965. Many eminent anatomists and clinicians currently or previously filling leading academic and clinical posts around the globe have been inspired at one point or another by Eldred, thereby leaving a bequest that is impossible to overestimate.

We fondly remember his later years, teaching anatomy classes to undergraduate medical students in Edinburgh right up until the year before he died. His broad knowledge of anatomy, boundless enthusiasm, razor-sharp mind and friendly demeanour made students hang on to his every word. His approach to teaching students in the dissection room never failed to create a sense of wonderment, where ladies (‘my dears’ as he affectionately called them) were asked to be seated in a line with the gentlemen standing behind. From there he would deliver a treatise on the subject in hand, of which any Shakespearean actor would surely be envious. Eldred’s warm humanity and humility meant he always found time to encourage and motivate students and colleagues alike, an attribute that endeared him to all who had the fortune to come into contact with him.

He is survived by two children, Andrew and Gwyneth.

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