

Obituary: Michael Edward John Hackett (1931–1991)

John E. Bowen, F.R.C.S.

London, England

Mike Hackett, who died early this year at the age of 59, was without doubt one of the most colorful personalities of the so-called "3rd Generation" of British plastic surgeons. The world of plastic surgery, both in Britain and abroad, will be a greyer place with his passing. He was a man of HUGE personality who was larger than life in every way. His whole life was characterized by immense energy and enthusiasm, both in work and play, which in his early years was directed towards burns research. Latterly, he campaigned vigorously to improve the teaching programs in aesthetic surgery for plastic surgery trainees.

Michael Edward John Hackett was born on 6 August 1931 and after school in the North of England and serving two years as a lieutenant in the King's Own Royal Regiment, he entered St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London as a medical student in 1951. During his time at St. Bart's, he will perhaps be remembered more for his exploits on the rugby field than for his diligence as a student as he was a first class, though naturally exuberant, player. Unfortunately, a head injury sustained in a match against Guy's effectively put an end to his playing career.

He qualified for MB, BS in 1957 and became a FRCS in 1961. Because of family connections with the island, he then went to Fiji and spent several years as a surgeon in the North-West area, based at Lavtaka. During this time he practiced general surgery in the old sense, taking on everything that passed through the hospital doors, and because of

his exposure to trauma and reconstructive surgery, decided to pursue a career in plastic surgery. Percy Jayes was then on the staff at Barts, having taken over from Sir Archibald McIndoe, and he helped Mike to get his first job in the specialty. He returned to England in 1968 as Registrar to John Watson and Raoul Sandon and in 1969, he was appointed Senior Registrar at the Queen Victoria Hospital.

In 1973, he was appointed Consultant Plastic Surgeon to the London Hospital and his enormous drive was invaluable in setting up the North-West Regional Plastic Surgery Unit at St. Andrew's Hospital, Billericay.

In spite of a heavy workload in the National Health Service, he built up a substantial private practice and he became increasingly aware of the inadequate teaching that trainees received in cosmetic surgery. He had many ideas on how this could be improved and he was a founding member of the British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons, one of the main functions of which is to hold instructional courses in aesthetic surgery. It is a sad loss that he should die in the year that he came President of this association and the outstanding attendance at the Spring Meeting that he organized was a tribute to his endeavours. He was also President of the newly-formed European Association of Plastic Surgeons and President-elect of the Plastic Surgery Section of the Royal Society of Medicine.

Mike is survived by his wife, Heather, and his mother, Cass.