

Noel Stephen Blake (1937–2009)

Jerry Kelleher

Received: 23 March 2010 / Accepted: 26 March 2010
© Springer-Verlag 2010

Dr. Noel Blake, who died recently at age 71, served for more than 30 years as consultant radiologist at Our Lady's Children's Hospital and at St. Luke's Hospital in Dublin. He was a highly respected figure in the wider field of European paediatric radiology.

Noel was born in Dublin, graduated in medicine from the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland in 1962 and subsequently pursued training in diagnostic radiology in London. He worked at the Middlesex Hospital and then at the Westminster Hospital during the period 1967–1971. His postgraduate qualifications included DMRD in 1968, FRCR (London) in 1971 and FFR, RCSI in 1975.

While working at Our Lady's Children's Hospital, Noel was instrumental in developing the specialty of paediatric radiology, in conjunction with his colleague Dr. Paddy McCann. He introduced many new imaging techniques, the most important being diagnostic ultrasound. He was director of the radiology section from 1985 to 1990.

A keen teacher, Noel was very involved in research. In addition to more than 20 original papers in scientific journals, he co-wrote a textbook on technical aspects of imaging children with Catherine Gyll (1986) and contributed chapters to three paediatric surgical textbooks. His colleagues in Irish radiology recognised his outstanding contributions by electing him secretary of the Faculty of Radiologists and later, president of the Radiological Society of Ireland. However his proudest achievement in radiology was his election as president of the European Society of Paediatric Radiologists,

when Dublin hosted the international meeting of the organisation in 1989.

Beyond medicine, Noel was a man of many talents. A keen jazz fan and pianist, he was also a very competitive golfer, snooker and tennis player. He was an enthusiastic sailor and competed out of the Royal St. George Yacht Club in Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin, aided and abetted by his sister Zita and brother Kevin in their boat "Kelema".

But above all, Noel was a devoted family man. He met and married his first wife, Ann, whilst training in London, and together with their three children Emma, Conor and Paul they settled happily in Killiney. Noel and his children were devastated by Ann's untimely death in 1997. Noel



This obituary was modified from an appreciation published in the *Irish Medical News* on 14 September 2009 and is published by kind permission of the editor, Priscilla Lynch.

J. Kelleher (✉)
Our Lady's Children's Hospital,
Crumlin,
Dublin 12, Ireland
e-mail: jerry.kelleher@olchc.ie

subsequently met and married Maria, and they enjoyed a period of great happiness together. Maria was an inspiration and support for Noel during his final illness.

Those of us who were lucky enough to have worked with Noel have many fond memories. The first and most important was his unfailing good humour. No matter how

difficult the day at the coalface, Noel never deviated from his belief in good manners and courtesy to all. He was a dedicated and hardworking professional, but believed that life was for living. He will be sorely missed by those near and dear to him and by his very wide and disparate circle of friends.