

## In Memoriam to Aisling Butler, Jane Deasy, Eithne Walls

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### Appreciation

#### Aisling Butler MB, Jane Deasy MB, Eithne Walls MB

In June 2009, three of our colleagues, our trainees and our former students passed away in a tragic air accident off the coast of Brazil. Aisling Butler, Jane Deasy and Eithne Walls were returning from a holiday in Brazil when Air France Flight 447 tragically disappeared from the radar. The passing of a colleague is always a tragedy, but when there are three such deaths of young enthusiastic medical practitioners; it is particularly hard to come to terms with. These friends epitomised all that is best about our medical education system; three young individuals who were multi-faceted and multi-talented and yet who had come through a rigorous course of education and assessment to become medical practitioners; three young women who epitomised the broad dimensions of our medical students and graduates;—great students, great communicators, great personalities and very much loved by their colleagues, former classmates and patients. “Happy”, “fun-loving”, “hard-working” “ambitious” are phrases which have been used to describe each of them at various times. These graduates of the Trinity College Dublin class of 2007 represented the highest ideal of the medical education process not only as doctors, but as bright vivacious young women who epitomised all of the changes in Irish society and in Irish medicine in terms of opportunity and equality. The School of Medicine at Trinity College Dublin is extremely proud of these three graduates and greatly saddened by their untimely loss.

Ailing Butler from Roscrea in Tipperary, a star student at the Ursula Convent in Thurles, was planning a career in

radiology and is remembered both as someone who took everything in her stride and as a scintillating wit who kept everyone on their toes with her quick sense of humour. Eithne Walls from Ballygowan, Co. Down had studied in Bruce College in Belfast and danced her way around the world with Riverdance both before and during her medical studies. She had commenced training to be an ophthalmologist like her good friend Jane Deasy from Dublin. Eithne knew many both in medicine and the broader world—all greeted with her famous smile. Jane Deasy, following in her father’s surgical footsteps, was known as a loyal friend and colleague. Quietly determined, she was renowned for her sense of humour, her joie de vivre and her impeccable taste in shoes. All three of these impressive graduates had passed through medical school with a series of Honours in academic subjects and with a clear understanding of the important qualities of empathy and compassion in the practise of medicine. However, they are most remembered by all that knew them for their sense of enjoyment in life, for the laughter and joy they created and for the multi-faceted talents that had made them such a loyal group of friends.

These young women were supported by three devoted families who illustrate so vividly the importance of family support and love in the creation of a medical career. Our deepest sympathies go to all those they have left behind. As the French writer, Antoine de Saint Exupéry said, “It is such a secret place, the land of tears” and all of their families and of the class of 2007 will have their own private understanding of these words. The loss of these three lives is a profound tragedy, but we at Trinity College Dublin know that in honouring and respecting the memory of these extraordinary young women, we must and will use their achievements as a well of inspiration for our medical students, our future graduates and for the broad community of medicine.

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