

Peter Hewson

August 1 1950 to March 16 2017

Written by Dr Rick Lowen incorporating aspects from Dr Mike South's eulogy speech in italics:



Peter Hewson joined our medical class in 1969 having excelled at school, cricket, golf. Unbeknown to many, Peter's dad had died the year before, placing considerable responsibility upon him to support his Mum Dorothy, brother Robert and sisters Jillianne & Anne. Peter was a deeply curious student who made his own considerable success in medical school

appear easy and low key. Hence the title "Prof" which he was affectionately called by some of his medical school mates. He possessed a warm and embracing personality that made those who befriended him feel special and appreciated.

Peter's love of bush exhibited itself during his intern year in Canberra where he ensconced himself in and renovated dilapidated shearers quarters on the Clare property outside Bungendore where he also used to horse-ride like he'd been born in the saddle. A short stint as rouseabout on a Captain Flat property punctuated Peter's resident years, prior to him commencing a paediatrics term in Townsville. Around this time Peter's relationship with the love of his life Cathy, (who he'd met at Canberra hospital) cemented, and he resolved to specialize in paediatrics as his career path.

A paediatric training appointment at the Royal Childrens Hospital followed, during which Peter & Cathy resided in Parkville. Upon completing paediatric fellowship, Peter took up a research position at Cambridge in the UK where he lived for 2 years between 1984-86. Peter's work there resulted in numerous sentinel research papers identifying the hallmarks of serious illness in infants. *That scholarship has since been incorporated into a simple 5-point checklist and, another more complex but predictive list now known as BabyCheck. Whilst the former is still taught to Melbourne University medical students and features in a Victorian green baby book given to parenting mums, the latter has been embraced in the UK where it's available as a mobile phone app. Peter's research also inspired further studies by WHO to roll out more innovative approaches for undeveloped countries, to assist identifying serious illness in infants earlier.*

Following the family's return to Australia in late 1986, Peter next moved to Geelong where he set up a private paediatric practice linked to ward and after hours clinical service at Geelong Hospital. Peter not only provided many years of service to Geelong Hospital as a Paediatric Consultant, but supported many others there as a lead clinician, teacher, mentor and researcher. One Geelong paediatric colleague commented in his eulogy to Peter that he *"was the most prominent researcher in regional paediatrics of his generation"*.

Combining all these facets of work while also completing his MD, bringing up a family and, running a small hobby farm at Gentle Annie (behind Lorne) was an extraordinary achievement. But Pete didn't do things in half measures. He also created a small private music festival at Gentle Annie long before the Falls festival began in Lorne and members of that group still meet annually in Melbourne to celebrate that special gift of musical merry-making.

Peter is survived by his wife Cathy, 2 daughters (Kellie & Sophie) and 3 grandchildren (Ruby, Louis & Remy). Peter's family and friends still miss him greatly. Peter's life was full and well spent but sadly, prematurely shortened by a neurological degenerative illness. Throughout the latter, Peter exhibited great courage, resilience and was an inspiration to us all. So rest in peace dear friend and colleague.

From Bruce Waxman RE Peter Hewson's Passing:

I was also at Caulfield Grammar with Peter and the eulogy says it all.

He was instrumental in recognizing in 1987 in the ED at RCH that my 6 week old son was very unwell, indeed he ended up in ICU with encephalitis, where he was looked after by Pam Cox's husband Peter MacDougall. So Peter Hewson's legacy lives on in Nicholas Waxman who is Director of Preforming Arts at Eltham College and a successful comedian/satirist with 'A Sunburnt History'

Thank you Peter!