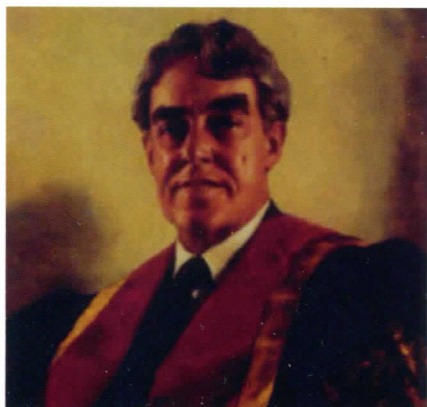


A LEADING PHYSICIAN ALLAN KERR GRANT AO, RFD, ED, MB BS, DUNIV (ADEL), MRACP FRACP, FRCP, FRCPE, FACP, MD (FLINDERS), 1924–2009



Allan Kerr Grant was the third son of Professor Kerr Grant (later knighted), the well-known Professor of Physics at the University of Adelaide from 1911 to 1948. He was educated at St Peter's College where he matriculated early, thus allowing him to have a further school year and the chance to take on the responsibilities of a senior student. Leaving school in 1941, he started medicine the next year and graduated MB BS in 1947. After completing his internship at the Royal Adelaide Hospital, he then spent two years training in gastroenterological units in London, followed by a further several years of work at the Royal Adelaide Hospital and the University of Adelaide.

He joined the staff of the newly developed Queen Elizabeth Hospital (TQEH) in 1959, and five years later he became the director of its Gastroenterology Unit, the first such unit in South Australia. To cap this, he was elected president of the Gastroenterological Society of Australia in 1969.

A staunch supporter of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians, he became its president in 1981 and, during his tenure in office, was a superb ambassador (with his wife, Mary) for Australian medicine overseas. He was also the medical director of SAPMEA (South Australian Postgraduate Medical Education Association).

In 1984, he retired from the staff of TQEH after the completion of 25 years' service, and this was a retirement much to the regret of all his associates, medical, nursing, clerical and others. However, this did not mean any reduction in work, as he quickly launched into positions at Flinders Medical Centre and Flinders University, while carrying on with commitments to the Medical Board of South Australia (he became a member in 1982) and SAPMEA.

It should be mentioned that work at Flinders was not new to Allan. Following the establishment of Flinders University in 1966, he had been involved, with the vice-chancellor, Professor Peter Karmel, in the planning and creation of the medical school, and was asked to participate in the teaching of students in the medical wards, once they had been established.

The training of students and young doctors was ever dear to his heart and he had long believed that juniors in hospital employment did not get the mentoring and continuing education necessary to ensure happy and successful careers. So it was a great satisfaction that the Medical Board, stimulated by Allan, approved the creation of a Council for Early Postgraduate Training in South Australia in 1995. This Council, which has been invaluable, has now become a statutory body answerable to the Minister for Health.

Allan gave much time over many years to the Citizen Military Forces (CMF), culminating in three months spent in South Vietnam (from December 1968 to March 1969) as the leader of the medical team supporting the Australian troops at Vung Tau.

It is not surprising, therefore, that during these years of outstanding service in so many fields he received substantial recognition—an Efficiency Decoration for military service (1970), the degree of Doctor of the University of Adelaide (1985) and the degree of MD Flinders (1996) for his work in postgraduate education, and the award of Officer of the General Division of the Order of Australia (1991) for his contribution to the nation.

Two years after graduation, while still in Adelaide, he married Mary Hone, a daughter of Dr Ray Hone, one of Adelaide's most respected physicians. They subsequently had three sons and a daughter, all now established with their families.

Life for Kero was a continuous study of the world and its inhabitants, so it is appropriate to talk of his extra-curricular pursuits. He was an enthusiastic player and supporter of university rugby, social tennis in the summer and periodic rounds of golf at Mount Lofty. He would readily admit failing to reach 'Blues' standards, but the enjoyment he got and the enjoyment he provided his fellow players was memorable and usually hilariously funny. His feat of hitting three successive balls off the 9th tee into a creek, the last drive associated with the loss of his driver on the follow-through, was *Guinness Book of World Records* material. In later years, fishing became his

great interest, and it didn't matter whether it was casting from the beaches or reefs of Robe, or from a boat in American River, Coffin Bay, or Ceduna.

Ornithology, combined with photography, also fascinated him. The Adelaide Ornithologists Club was the beneficiary of a lovely collection of his pictures of birds taken in Australia and in the UK. Botany, too, was a great interest and under Mary's guidance Allan became a successful propagator of plants at their home in Balhannah, and then Stirling.

The development of Alzheimer's disease, followed by its inexorable progress, was a cruel and tragic event for one previously so exuberant and generous. As a consequence, Allan spent the last period of his life in the War Veterans Home. To Mary and her four children, who bore the brunt of all these changes, we can only imagine the stresses that they suffered, but we can hope that they will take much solace from the memory of Allan's incredible medical achievements, his friendliness, and his great sense of fun. He will be missed by many.

Dr Hugh Douglas

Dr Hugh Douglas was a friend of Dr Allan Kerr Grant. This obituary is based on the eulogy given at his memorial service.

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Addendum

I am indebted to Dr Hugh Douglas and Allan's wife, Mary, for the above obituary for Allan. Allan was the President of the RACP from 1981 to 1983 and was one of the College's most outstanding presidents. During his tenure as President, he spent considerable time visiting all the states and New Zealand, engaging with the Fellows and trainees. He was a remarkable educator and a great mentor and I had the pleasure of being taught by Allan both as an undergraduate and as a physician trainee at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Adelaide in the 1960s. In his later years, as a member of the Medical Board of South Australia, he introduced an education program for interns, which was adopted Australia-wide.

Allan's interests extended well beyond medicine. As Mary indicated to me, 'Allan's bird photography was superb, he was the best propagator of rhododendrons in South Australia and he was an avid supporter of opera and ballet'.

Professor Napier (Nip) Thomson
President RACP 2006–2008