

## **ANNE WYLIE STAFFORD (1932 - 2007)**

The University of Sydney initiated studies towards the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the early 1950's. Within the next decade a number of distinguished scientists who have had an association with ASCEPT since its inception in 1967 were awarded the degree in the Department of Pharmacology headed by Roland Thorp. Among these were Mike Rand (1957), Anne Stafford (1959), Bruce Cobbin (1960) and Jo (Pennefather) O'Neil (1961).

Anne Stafford's PhD thesis was entitled "The relationship between chemical structure and pharmacological action in a series of semi-synthetic derivatives of digitoxigenin and digoxigenin". Her interest in the pharmacology of cardiac glycosides paralleled that of Mike Rand, and their collaboration resulted in a number of publications. Mike and Anne later married.

In 1957 Anne and Mike left Sydney for the UK, where Mike had been offered an appointment as Departmental Demonstrator by Professor J.H. Burn in the Department of Pharmacology at Oxford, and Anne, as a Charles Gilbert Heydon Travelling Fellow of the University of Sydney, undertook further research at the Oxford University Nuffield Institute for Medical Research. In 1960, Mike and Anne moved to London where Mike took up a Wellcome Research Fellowship, and later, an academic staff position in the Department of Pharmacology at the London University School of Pharmacy, while Anne obtained a staff position in the Department of Pharmacology at the London Hospital Medical School. During their time in Oxford and London both Mike and Anne became well known figures in pharmacological and physiological circles, publishing widely and presenting their results in meetings of learned societies. It was during their time in London that Mike, in conjunction with Bill Bowman and Geoff West, academic colleagues at the School of Pharmacy, commenced writing the *Textbook of Pharmacology*, the first edition of which was published in 1968. Anne played a major role in the preparation of this text, her incisive mind, broad knowledge and well-known attention to detail being invaluable in the critical reading of the text and the proofs. Anne was similarly involved in the 2nd edition of the book (1980), a major revision authored by Mike Rand and Bill Bowman that was considered internationally to be a major textbook of pharmacology.

Late in 1965, Anne and Mike Rand returned to Australia, Mike to take up the Chair of Pharmacology at the University of Melbourne and Anne to fill the position of Dean (Pharmacology) and foundation Head of a newly created School of Pharmaceutical Biology at the Victorian College of Pharmacy (VCP). The appointment of a woman to such a post raised a degree of disquiet in some quarters, enough, in those non-PC days, to induce a male journalist to ask "What would happen if you became pregnant?" Anne's reply (with customary wit) "Well, I would probably have a baby" sufficed to arrest any further probing!

When Anne arrived at the College it was envisaged that over time, she would be responsible for employing staff for the newly created School of Pharmaceutical Biology. This School would be responsible for the teaching of biology, physiology, biochemistry and pharmacology to pharmacy students. Prior to this time, the

pharmacological and the bulk of the physiological components in the course had been taught by external lecturers, largely contracted from the University of Melbourne. On her arrival, Anne's existing departmental staff consisted of Dorothy Newman, who taught biology, Mal Hutson, an "all-purpose" demonstrator who also acted as a purchasing and budgeting officer for the new department, and Tony Kerr, a technician. Starting with this small but very willing and enthusiastic crew, Anne, with a personal research, teaching and administrative load that could only be classified as Herculean, gradually took on new staff and, with her encouragement and their help saw through to fruition a well structured course for undergraduate pharmacy students and the firm establishment of a research base within the School. Among the pharmacology staff that Anne introduced to the department during her tenure, Michael Nott and Sandra Webb (Student Demonstrators), Amanda Clark, Bob Miller and Roy Goldie (Full-time Demonstrators), and Jean Cornish and Fred Mitchelson (Lecturing staff) would be known to ASCEPT members.

Anne's marriage to Mike Rand was dissolved in 1970, and in 1972 she resigned from her position at the Victorian College of Pharmacy and returned to the UK, where she later married Professor Bill Bowman, then Head of the Department of Physiology and Pharmacology at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow. After her marriage to Bill, Anne became what she regarded as a "part-time" pharmacologist, collaborating in research at Strathclyde, doing part-time research into NANC transmission with John Gillespie's group at the University of Glasgow, being a joint author of a small *Dictionary of Pharmacology* with Bill and his daughter Alison, and helping with the prospective 3rd edition of the Bowman and Rand *Textbook of Pharmacology* (a project left uncompleted following Mike's death in 2002). In her "spare" time, she read widely, painted, took up spinning and weaving, rode horses, learnt some Gaelic, tramped around Scotland (falling in love with the place), and kept abreast of developments in pharmacology.

When Bill retired from Strathclyde, he and Anne sold their house in Hamilton and moved into "Moorshiel", their holiday house at Rockcliffe on the Scottish coast overlooking a tidal estuary where the Waters of Urr flow into the Solway Firth. Bill and Anne shared their happiness and pleasure at "Moorshiel" with friends and colleagues from every part of the globe. Together they enjoyed good food, drink and company, and much laughter, discussion and debate embracing art, music, science, literature, politics, history etc, and, of course, pharmacology.

In late August of this year, Anne, after a long illness, died in her sleep in this home that she loved.

Despite her very obvious love of Scotland and all things Scottish, Anne always retained deep Aussie roots and attitudes (and even her Passport!), facts keenly appreciated by her Scottish friends and colleagues as well as her family members. At her funeral, a local friend George Stewart was the organist, and as people left the Church he played as a tribute to Anne a classically constructed piece that he had composed using "Waltzing Matilda" as its theme. Outside the Church, Bill Dryden (Professor of Pharmacology at the University of Alberta and an old friend and

colleague of Bill and Anne), played on the pipes a Lament for Anne based on “The Flowers of the Forest” and “Australian Ladies”.

Vale Anne Stafford

**Colin Raper**