

Dr Kalman Laszlo Keczkes Von Ganocz

18 January 1932 – 17 June 2009

We remember him as an exceptional physician - a kind, courteous and generous man who enjoyed the company of his family, colleagues and friends.

Dr Keczkes was born in Budapest in 1932 into a Hungarian aristocratic family. He was proud of his heritage and would often speak of the different life he led growing up in 1930s Hungary.

He was a strong Catholic from a young age at a time when religious views were not tolerated in Communist countries. In 1948, at the age of 16, he was expelled from every school in Hungary because he would not denounce his religion.

However this did not deter him. Fortunately, his father was a leading physicist and he refused to continue working unless his son Kalman was reinstated in his school to continue his education.

In 1951, Kalman met Veronica whom he later married. This was also to be the start of a career in medicine. He studied medicine for 5 years at Budapest University. He never finished his course as it was interrupted by the growing feeling of social unrest in Hungary which, on 23 October 1956, led to a peaceful rally by the University students against Soviet rule.

As the students marched through the streets of Budapest, they were joined by the general population until a crowd of thousands faced Hungary's Parliament building waving the Hungarian flag with the Communist emblem cut out of it.

A student delegation tried to voice its views from Budapest's radio station but they were detained by the State Secret Police. When the delegation's release was demanded

by the demonstrators outside, they were fired upon by the Secret Police inside the building.

The news of this spread quickly and violence erupted throughout the capital. The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 had begun.

On 4 November 1956, a large Soviet force of tanks and infantry invaded Budapest and other regions of the country. Clearly, civilian resistance could not continue for long against such a force.

Kalman played an active role in the frontline during the Hungarian uprising. He escaped injury and death though more than 20,000 Hungarians had been killed and 200,000 had been forced to flee the country. Kalman and Veronica were amongst those that escaped and arrived in England from Calais to Dover in 1956. To stay in Hungary, would have meant certain death at the hands of the Secret Police.

Kalman and Veronica got married in Scotland in 1957 and Kalman resumed his medical degree course at Glasgow University, qualifying in 1959.

Kalman gained membership of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh in 1962 and went on to become a fellow ten years later. He did his specialist training under the supervision of the late Dr Ferguson at Stobhill Hospital, the late Dr Alan Lyell at the Royal Infirmary in Glasgow and the late Professor Frain Bell in Dundee. He often spoke of the kind and respectful attitude of the Scottish people in whose company he felt at home.



Dr Kalman Laszlo Keczkes Von Ganocz

In 1966 he was appointed a Consultant Dermatologist in Hull. This was a challenging role as he was the first full-time dermatologist in the area and had to design his own department in the newly built Hull Royal Infirmary.

He was president of the North of England Dermatological Society during 1985-86.

In 1992, after the collapse of communism, he was appointed a visiting Professor of Medicine at Budapest University.

He published extensively on contact dermatitis and skin cancer and remained very active in national and international medical circles until his retirement from the health service in 1997.

He leaves his wife Veronica, daughter Rosemary, sons Richard, Roger and Ronald and two grand children.

Shermaz Walton