

Paul Francis Dorian Naylor, MB Chir (Cantab), MA, MD

11th July 1924 – 9th May 2009

Paul Naylor, Emeritus Professor of Dermatology at the University of London and former Senior Physician in the Department of Dermatology at St. Thomas' Hospital, died on 9th May 2009, at the age of 84.

Paul Naylor grew up in south Yorkshire, initially in Rotherham and later in the village of Laughton-en-le-Morthen on a small holding for which he retained a deep affection. Besides being a headmaster, his father was a singer and conductor, so it was probably from him that Paul inherited his life-long love of music.

It was a source of enormous family pride when Paul, like his brother, won a State Scholarship to Gonville and Caius College in 1942. At Cambridge, Paul excelled academically and in 1945 graduated with a double first class honours degree in medical sciences. Paul began his clinical studies at St. Thomas' Hospital Medical School, qualifying in 1948. One of his first appointments was at St. Thomas' Hospital as a House Physician to the Medical Unit under Professor EP Sharpey-Schafer.

From 1949 to 1951 Paul did his National Service as a Captain in the Royal Army Medical Corps and was posted to the Army Operational Research Group at Byfleet as a graded physiologist under Dr. John Butterfield, an outstanding physician and researcher who later became the Regius Professor of Physics at Cambridge.

Paul returned to St. Thomas' Hospital in 1951, first as an Assistant to the Department of Dermatology and Research Fellow at the Institute of Dermatology and, in 1955, as a Lecturer at the Medical School. He continued his research into blister formation, an interest first developed in the RAMC. His doctoral thesis, entitled 'The skin and friction', led to a Cambridge MD in 1954. This highly original work pioneered the application of physiology to skin problems and

was the forerunner of Paul's research into the biology of human skin.

Paul's research, and subsequently his career in clinical dermatology and teaching, led to successive academic appointments at St. Thomas' Hospital medical School, first as Research Senior Lecturer (1957) and then Reader (1967) and Professor of Dermatology (1975). Paul was encouraged in his early career at St. Thomas' Hospital by Professor Sharpey-Schafer, the legendary medical scientist who 'took medicine by the scruff of the neck and shook it into modern life'.

It was, however, Geoffrey Dowling who encouraged Paul's early interest in dermatology and in 1960 they jointly published three papers on the properties of keratin. With his colleagues Geoffrey Dowling, Hugh Wallace, George Wells, Ian Whimster, Martin Black and David McGibbon, Paul subsequently played a major part in establishing St. Thomas' as a leading centre in British dermatology, ultimately paving the way for the relocation of St. John's Institute of Dermatology there in 1990.

Paul established a special interest in the measurement of oxygen tension in tissues and to do this developed specialized electrodes and polarographic techniques, leading to a Polarographic Society Award in 1960. This work evolved into research on oxygen diffusion and the microcirculation of the skin, and yielded numerous publications, many involving complex mathematical analysis. Paul collaborated closely with Noel Evans, a medical physicist at the Hammersmith Hospital, with whom he formed a close friendship.

Paul enjoyed teaching clinical students and junior doctors and enlivened his talks with entertaining anecdotes. His teaching was lucid and could make complex topics seem deceptively simple. For 12 years, until he retired in 1983, Paul was Adviser



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in Clinical Studies and provided generations of students with support and advice which they treasured in their later careers.

Paul was well regarded as an administrator because of his dedication, integrity and humanity. In 1974 he worked with Hugh Wallace to coordinate a highly successful annual meeting of the British Association of Dermatologists attended by celebrated French colleagues, notably Robert Degos and Jean Civatte. At St. Thomas' Paul, from 1980-1983, was Chair of the Physicians Committee.

Paul married his wife Adrien in 1949. For 45 years, Paul and Adrien visited remote and beautiful corners of Switzerland, often twice in a year, their scrambles in search of rare Alpine plants giving them their happiest memories. Paul made his last trip to the beloved Alps less than two years before he died and never gave up hope of returning there one day.

Paul is survived by Adrien, his wife of 60 years, and a son and daughter, respectively a forensic pathologist and an Anglican priest.

Charles Naylor and Martin Black