



The Royal Australasian
College of Physicians

Media Release

Professor Priscilla Kincaid-Smith - remembering a medical icon

23, July 2015

The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) is deeply saddened by the passing of Past President, Professor Emeritus Priscilla Kincaid-Smith AC CBE FRACP on Saturday, 18 July 2015.

Professor Kincaid-Smith was the first female President of the RACP (1986-1988), and played a crucial role in the advancement of medicine in Australia.

A renowned specialist in kidney disease, she forged a career in Nephrology at a time when there were very few women in medicine.

RACP President, Laureate Professor Nick Talley said the passing of Professor Kincaid-Smith was a loss for medicine, the College, her family, friends, and the people whose lives she touched through her medical work.

“There were many firsts for Professor Kincaid-Smith; she was the first female Professor of the University of Melbourne, the first female President of this College, and the first female President of the World Medical Association,” Professor Talley said.

“With three children of her own, she laid the groundwork for generations of female medical practitioners to come, illustrating that women could have a family and a successful medical career.”

Professor Kincaid-Smith was born in South Africa, and graduated from Medicine in 1950 from the University of Witwatersrand.

In 1958, she moved to Australia where in the 1960s she famously established the causal link between headache powders and kidney damage and campaigned strongly against their use.

She also made substantial contributions to research on the link between the kidneys and high blood pressure.

In 1975, she was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire "for services to medicine" and in 1988, Professor Kincaid-Smith was awarded the Companion of the Order of Australia.

The prestigious ‘Professor Kincaid-Smith Oration’ was established in 1993 in recognition of her contributions to medicine and to the College, and is delivered at RACP Congress every year by an orator of international standing.

She also served on the Council of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians for twelve years.

Professor Talley said Professor Kincaid-Smith would be remembered as a medical icon for many generations to come.

“Our thoughts are with Professor Kincaid-Smith’s family at this time.”

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