

In Memoriam: Gordon Hamilton Fairley 1930–1975

GORDON HAMILTON FAIRLEY, professor of medical oncology at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London, was killed by a terrorist bomb in London on October 23, 1975. He was 45 years old. The son of Sir Neil Hamilton Fairley, an eminent research worker in tropical diseases, Gordon Fairley was born and received his early education in Australia. After completing his preclinical studies at Magdalen College, Oxford, and qualifying in medicine at St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London in 1954, he pursued training in hematology under Professor J. V. Dacie at the Royal Postgraduate Medical School and subsequently returned to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, where, as a Leverhulme Research Scholar of the Royal College of Physicians, he continued research with particular emphasis on immunohematology under the direction of Sir Ronald Bodley Scott. His interests in leukemia were extended to exploring the roles of combination programs of chemotherapy as well as immunotherapy in myeloproliferative disorders when, in 1968, he assumed the additional responsibilities of director of the Clinical Research Unit of the Institute of Cancer Research and Royal Marsden Hospital at Sutton in Surrey. He returned full time to St. Bartholomew's Hospital in 1970 as director of the newly created Medical Oncology Research Unit, and in 1972 he was named, as Imperial Cancer Fund Professor of Medical Oncology, to the first chair of medical oncology to be established in England. His enthusiasm and ability to attract persons of high caliber to his group soon created a medical oncology research unit of international repute, especially for its work concerning chemotherapy of leukemias and lymphomas. Always foremost a physician, he was also a teacher and clinical research worker of high attainment and his efforts were of major importance in achieving recognition in England of oncology as a modern multidisciplinary medical specialty.

In addition to his many activities in England, Fairley found time to be involved with teaching and research on a truly international scope and during the past decade established strong links with colleagues of similar interests throughout the world. In 1972 he founded and chaired the Tumor Immunology Group of the European Organization for Research in the Treatment of Cancer. He also served as chairman of an international symposium on non-Hodgkin's lymphomata held in London in 1973, the proceedings of which were published this year as a supplement to the *British Journal of Cancer*. As Guest Editor, he organized those issues of *Seminars in Hematology* in 1974 which addressed themselves to leukemias and lymphomas. At the invitation of the Commonwealth Government, in 1973 he acted as Visiting Professor to the Repatriation Hospitals in Australia, and in 1974 he was a member of the British Cancer Delegation that visited China. For a number of years he acted as an advisor and consultant to the Division of Cancer Therapy at the National Institutes of Health, and less than two months before his death participated in a conference on lymphomas held at Arlie, Va. There, as at so many previous meetings and conferences, his authoritative experience, ability to select the important from the trivial, and cogent manner of presentation were major contributions.

Gordon Fairley's extraordinary personal qualities of kindness, charm, and enthusiasm had an effect on all those he met. He cared, and he took pains, in his uniquely gracious and totally unpretentious manner, to show it. Throughout his life, his family came first. He was deeply involved with his patients and at his death they wrote in the hundreds to his family. And he cared for his colleagues. His former students will remember his concern and loyalty to them. As one wrote, "Gordon always generated excitement and when you were with him he made you feel clever, confident, better than you really were." His friends will remember his involvement with them and the warmth and hospitality of the Fairley family, and that in spite of an often incredibly busy and hectic schedule he found time to seek them out during his travels. He brought a feeling of excitement and importance to whatever he did, whether it was sailing his boat or attending a medical conference, and to whomever he met.

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