

## Timothy George Calvert Murrell AM CLJ MD MB BS FRACGP DTM&H

TIMOTHY MURRELL was the Foundation Professor of Community Medicine at the University of Adelaide, a position he held from 1975 to 1994. A seventh-generation Australian, born in Adelaide on 8 April 1933, he was educated at St Peter's College and the University of Adelaide Medical School, graduating in 1958.

After a year as Resident Medical Officer at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Adelaide, Tim worked with the Commonwealth Department of Territories from 1960 to 1964 as a District Medical Officer. Stationed in New Guinea at Goroka, Wabag and Kundiawa, he investigated the aetiology and epidemiology of pigbel, a gangrenous intestinal disease that predominantly affected children in the highlands. His survey, case work and reports led to measures that significantly reduced mortality from the effects of the disease and ultimately enabled the development of a vaccine. This formed the substance of his MD thesis in 1966.

From 1965 to 1966, Tim was a lecturer at the University of Adelaide Faculty of Medicine, after which he spent two years studying under an Australian Nuffield Fellowship at the General Practice Research Unit at Guy's Hospital, London. On returning to Adelaide, he pioneered teaching general practices as well as general practice teaching units



in Highbury and at Modbury Hospital. He introduced community medicine to the undergraduate curriculum, integrating general practice with public health and the teaching of doctor-patient communication.

Tim regarded himself as a "human ecologist". Accordingly, his publications on sudden infant death syndrome, multiple sclerosis, Dupuytren's contracture and breast cancer stemmed from his lateral thinking on observations of his general practice patients. In 1978, he received the WHO Staff Society Medal for his pioneering work on pigbel, and in 1992 was awarded a Visiting Fellowship at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. His publications, career and personal papers can be viewed in the manuscript section of the National Library of Australia, Canberra ("Papers of Timothy Murrell, MS 9304").

Tim was very involved with his extended family, as well as various charities, schools, sports and gardening. He was thrilled to learn that he was to be made a Member of the Order of Australia in the 2002 Queen's Birthday Honours List, only to die suddenly from the sequelae of a heart attack on 15 August, a few weeks before the ceremony. Tim is survived by his wife Patricia and children David, George, Thomas and Melinda.

**Dedee Blackburn Murrell  
and Robert Moorhead**