

Robert Frederick Warnock

BA, MBBChir, DOBstRCOG

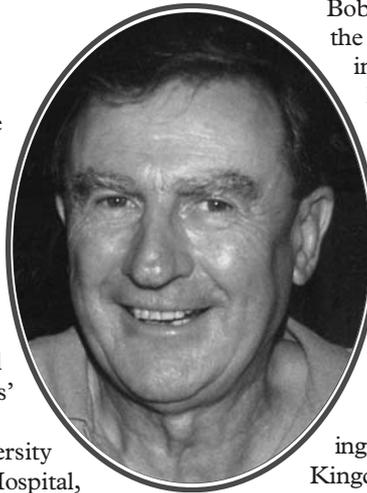
ROBERT WARNOCK, or “Doctor Bob” as he was known to his patients and friends, was an outstanding rural doctor for 3 decades in Far North Queensland.

Bob was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland, on 5 March 1927, the youngest son of a rural family doctor. He excelled at school at Campbell College, Belfast, where he was school captain, captain of the first XV football team, and captain of the Northern Ireland schoolboys’ hockey team.

He studied medicine at Cambridge University before doing his residency at St George’s Hospital, London. After a stint in the British Army, he migrated to Australia with his first wife, Valerie, and their three children in 1958.

After a short period in general practice in rural Victoria, Bob drove 3000 km to Babinda, north Queensland, to take up the role of Medical Superintendent of Babinda Hospital in 1958.

In Babinda, he developed a reputation as a compassionate, hardworking, supportive general practitioner. He was highly regarded in the disciplines of obstetrics and anaesthesia.



Bob moved to Cardwell in 1974, where he established the town’s first general practice and continued working until his early retirement in 1987 due to ill health.

Bob was a very active community member. In Babinda he was a Rotarian, President of the Kindergarten Committee and President of the Bowls Club. He was also involved in cricket, tennis and water sports. In Cardwell he was a member of the Cardwell Country Club, and his enduring commitment to lawn bowls was recognised with the award of the Royal Queensland Bowls Association’s Meritorious Medal in 1996 and a Commonwealth Medal in 2000.

In his retirement, Bob enjoyed gardening, spending time with his family, and travelling to the United Kingdom to visit former colleagues. He was also a member of Legacy and Probus.

Bob’s dedication to rural medicine was recently acknowledged with the announcement that the new Cardwell community health centre, soon to be officially opened, has been named “Cardwell’s Dr RF Warnock Community Health Centre”.

Bob died in Townsville on 4 May 2003, of prostate cancer. He is survived by his second wife, Enora, and children Roberta, Julian, Tim, Rowland and Jason.

Timothy Warnock

Jack Raymond Elliott

PhC, BSc, MBBS, FRANZCOG, FRCOG

ON 15 JANUARY 2004, Jack Elliott died peacefully of cardiac failure after a long and productive life during which he made enormous contributions to the discipline of obstetrics and gynaecology — primarily in Newcastle and the Hunter Valley, but also at a national level.

Jack was born in Nowra, NSW, on 12 February 1912. He did his Leaving Certificate in Nowra, but needed to attend Fort Street High School (in Sydney) for a year to matriculate to the University of Sydney. He graduated in pharmacy, science and finally medicine in 1940. He supported himself in those student years by working part-time or full-time, supplemented by playing professional rugby league. He also played district cricket and was awarded a university blue in rugby union.

Jack was commissioned as a captain in the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps and served throughout most of World War II, including service in Papua New Guinea. After the war, he resumed his medical career at the Royal Newcastle Hospital, where he embarked on a lifetime involvement in obstetrics and gynaecology. He set up the first specialist unit in the Hunter Valley at the Royal, training generations of residents and registrars, and became the trusted consultant for general practitioners throughout the region, holding appointments at most of the region’s hospitals.



Beginning in the 1950s, he implemented a remarkable series of new initiatives in obstetrics and gynaecology, including a dramatically increased role for midwives and rooming-in and demand-feeding for mothers. He embraced the principles of natural childbirth, encouraged fathers to attend antenatal classes — and eventually the labour ward (an idea considered very radical at the time!). He pioneered the use in Australia of magnesium sulfate to treat severe pre-eclampsia, advocated the increased use of caesarean section, and was one of the first to promote the use of vaginal hysterectomy rather than the older Manchester-type repair operation.

In the 1960s, Jack was one of the first consultants to develop country hospital clinics and operating sessions. He obtained his membership of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in 1953 and became heavily involved in the College, serving on the NSW committee and subsequently the Regional Council. He was a member of the inaugural Council of the Royal Australian College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in 1979.

Jack was an extremely modest man and, sadly, recorded little of his knowledge and wisdom in the literature. But his enduring legacy is the gratitude of thousands of mothers and the babies he delivered and the adoption by his trainees and colleagues of many of the initiatives that he began 50 years ago.

Alan D Hewson