

Victor Wynn

MD, FRCP, FRCPath

VICTOR WYNN, A PHYSICIAN, scholar and philanthropist who was one of the pioneers of the study of metabolism, died in London on 6 October 2006 of heart failure.

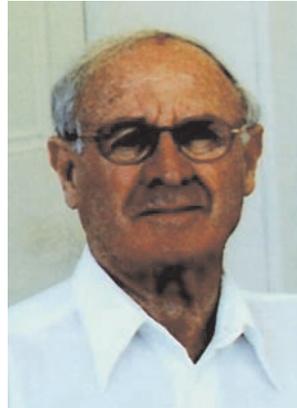
Born in Melbourne on 12 October 1920, Victor attended Wesley College and the University of Melbourne. After graduating in medicine in 1943, he spent 4 years as a Medical Officer in the Australian Army. He was appointed as a Research Fellow at the Department of Physiology, University of Melbourne, in 1948.

In 1950, Victor was awarded a Nuffield Fellowship to conduct research at St Mary's Hospital, London. He was appointed to the staff of St Mary's Hospital Medical School in 1953, then became Reader in Human Metabolism in 1960, Director of the Alexander Simpson Laboratory for Medical Research in 1965, and Professor of Human Metabolism in 1969. During this time, he led the establishment of quantitative clinical biochemistry on a large scale and integrated this with clinical research and patient care on an equally large scale.

Victor's interest in the management of surgical patients led to research into the new anabolic steroids. He demonstrated their potent and undesirable effects in relation to sugar and fat metabolism and was among the first to caution against their widespread use. His research also suggested major adverse effects of taking the contraceptive pill. He undertook large, detailed studies of the association between the pill and the risk of heart disease. International prominence followed, with several appearances on the BBC's David Frost program. The resulting public scare led the Health Secretary to accuse Victor of making "10 000 women pregnant in a single night".

He was also prescient in other areas. In the early 1970s, he was urging cardiologists to pay more attention to blood cholesterol levels; 25 years later, measuring blood lipids would become as critical in evaluating patients with heart disease as measuring electrolytes had been in monitoring surgical patients.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Victor increasingly devoted his energies to fundraising, setting up environments in which partner-



ships between clinical care and high quality laboratory measurement could be pursued more effectively. His department at St Mary's was the model, combining ward investigation, laboratory facilities, and data acquisition and computing facilities that were, at the time, on an unprecedented scale for medical school research. This concept was extended and enhanced on his retirement, in 1986, with the establishment of the Cavendish Clinic. The Clinic was affiliated with the UK National Heart and Lung Institute, renamed the Wynn Institute

and subsequently incorporated into the Faculty of Medicine of Imperial College, London.

Victor established two charities, the Heart Disease and Diabetes Research Trust and the Atherosclerosis Research Trust, which contributed over £15 million to research. They provided continuing support to Imperial College, London, and, in 2001, the financial base for a new centre, the Wynn Department of Metabolic Cardiology at the Baker Heart Research Institute, Melbourne. In May 2006, he was made a Fellow of Imperial College, London — the highest honour the College can bestow.

Victor had a driving, single-minded personality that was not thwarted by three decades of his own experience of heart disease, from which he began to suffer at the age of 55. He is survived by his wife Marianne, Emeritus Professor of German at the University of London, and daughter Nicola.

John R Rigg