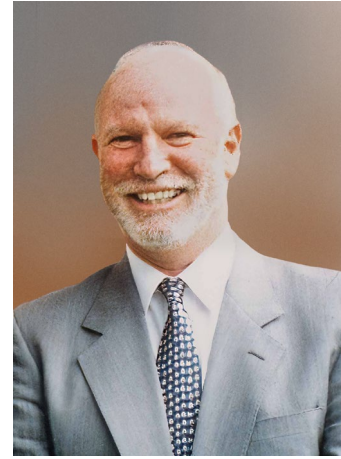




Neil Thompson

7 March 1940 – 30 October 2021



By Shane Prodger

Neil George Hugh Thompson was born at Royal Women's hospital in Sydney on 7 March 1940 to Edna and John Thompson.

Attending Bondi Public School, Neil was selected to go to Woollahra Opportunity School.

Neil then attended Sydney Boys High School, following in the footsteps of his father, John. His sporting prowess was vast, making the First 11 in cricket, first 15 in Rugby, the First Tennis team and also athletics. He graduated from high school with grades that allowed him to study Pharmacy at Sydney University.

After six months, Neil decided pharmacy was not for him and transferred to medicine. During his time at university, Neil continued to excel at sport. An excellent rugby player in the back row, Neil also played first-class cricket for Sydney University, retiring from the sport to concentrate on his studies.

Neil paid his way through university working on the Sydney railways, taking on painting jobs and taxi driving.

After graduating from medicine in 1965, Neil worked in Parramatta for two years. He then took on the position of ship's doctor on a small cargo ship sailing to England.

He went to England to further his medical knowledge and seek adventure.

During his time in the UK, Neil attained the Edinburgh Fellowship in Surgery in 1970 and the English Fellowship in 1971.

Neil met and married his English rose, Elaine, and they, with baby son Stephen, arrived back in Australia in 1971.

On completion of his Fellowship with the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons in 1975, general surgeon and great friend Dr David Thomas implored Neil to move to Lismore, Northern NSW. Here Neil would become the first resident orthopaedic surgeon and practice full-time.

For five years, Neil was the sole orthopaedic surgeon, on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Neil loved being a doctor. He loved helping. He loved the camaraderie that he felt with his medical colleagues at the Lismore Base Hospital and in private practice at St Vincent's Hospital. He deeply cared for his patients.

In 1978, he was awarded the Australia Commendation for Brave Conduct and the Silver Medal of the Royal Humane Society for rescuing a young man whilst travelling in Tasmania.

Neil retired over 20 years ago; however, he remained an active part of the local medical community.

More recently, one of Neil's general surgery colleagues, Dr Austin Curtin, thought it would be a great idea if a senior local doctor penned a history of medical practitioners in the local



Northern NSW area. Neil rose to the challenge and, after several years and countless hours of fact-finding, in 2014 published *Sawbones, Saddle Bags and Soothing Balms – Medical Practitioners in the Richmond Valley 1866-1986*. One of my dear possessions is a copy of this book with a personal note, signed by Neil in his last weeks.

Neil Thompson passed away on the 30 October 2021, leaving his wife Elaine, with whom he was married for over 50 years, his loving children Stephen, Eve and Alison, and six cherished grandchildren.

Neil was one of the pioneers of orthopaedic surgery in Australia and will be missed by all who knew him.