

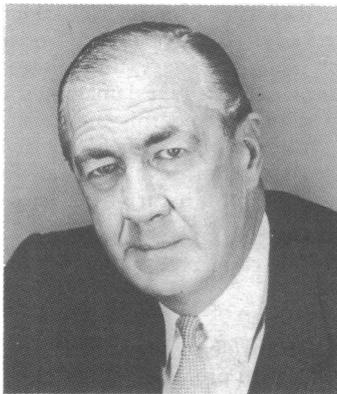
Gold Medal for Distinguished Merit

Presentation to Dr Stevenson at joint meeting

The BMA Council resolved on 31 March "That the Gold Medal of the Association be awarded to Dr Derek Stevenson, CBE, LL.D, for his outstanding and devoted service to the Association over the many years during which he has carried the burden of the Secretaryship with immense devotion and personal sacrifice." Dr Stevenson received the Gold Medal from Mr Barry O'Donnell at the Conjoint BMA/CMA/IMA Annual General and Scientific Meeting in Dublin on 28 June. Mr Walpole Lewin, Chairman of Council, read the following testimonial.

For special services rendered to the British Medical Association, the Council decided by unanimous vote to confer upon you the Medal in Gold for Distinguished Merit. Special services indeed: certainly no servant of the Association has devoted his talents, energies, and labours more single-mindedly to the well-being and the interests of our Association.

Born in 1911 at Wallington in the County of Surrey, you were educated at Epsom College, a school which has provided many distinguished members of the medical profession, and of which you are now a Governor. Trained in medicine at Guy's Hospital, you joined the Royal Army Medical Corps, which has historic links with the British Medical Association, in 1935. You served in the Far East, distinguishing yourself by your devotion to duty in an outbreak of cholera in Shanghai, and went to France on the outbreak of Hitler's war. Later you served in an important staff appointment at the War Office.



Dr Derek Stevenson

In 1946, once this country's enemies were safely defeated, you transferred your allegiance and your talents to the service of the British Medical Association, which was fortunate indeed in its acquisition.

In 1948 you were promoted to Deputy Secretary of the Association, and ten years later you were appointed Secretary. You have therefore been our chief executive for 18 years longer than any of your predecessors since the late Dr Alfred Cox, who held the office from 1912 to 1932.

The 30 years of your service on the staff of the Association have seen enormous changes in society, in medicine, and in our Association.

In this changing world you at once perceived, and strove to meet, our greatest need: communications. You introduced popular journalism into the BMA, and both in writing and speaking—often extemporaneously—to medical audiences you provided brilliant expositions of contemporary medical politics. Recognising that with these changes a new species of paramedical journalist would have great influence on the profession and on the community, you encouraged and befriended these pioneers. The Association and the profession have reaped a great reward from the excellent relations which you thus developed with the fourth estate. Last, but not least, with great natural flair you became the acknowledged spokesman of the medical profession on television and radio.

But your achievement as a communicator was by no means your only service to the profession. As a forceful and tireless negotiator, perhaps your greatest triumph came early in your career when, together with the Association's senior surviving gold medallist, you won the Danckwerts Award of 1951. Since then you have played a leading part in all the major negotiations with Government concerning doctors and the National Health Service: two royal commissions, the Porritt Committee, NHS reorganisation—the list is formidable.

You have striven for understanding and mutual support within our profession, both here and overseas. Today the relations between the Association and the royal colleges and faculties—despite the stresses imposed by political events—have never been closer and this is clear evidence of your well-spent years of service to the Joint Consultants Committee. You were the first Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Medical Association and you have filled the same office for the Standing Committee of Doctors of the European Community. Perhaps these posts could be regarded as consequential to the Secretaryship of this Association, but this could not be said of your election in 1969 to the chair of the Council of the World Medical Association: an honour which signalled the united trust of the leaders of our kindred associations throughout the free world.

In your travels to BMA meetings in the United Kingdom and overseas, and to Commonwealth and foreign associations, you have cemented good will among doctors all over the world. And in this context, no tribute to your work would be complete without acknowledging the self-sacrifice, support, and charm of your wife. The lady whom we all know affectionately as Pam has released you to that insatiable taskmistress, the British Medical Association, without grudging, and indeed with her own devoted support. This debt we can never discharge. We can only hope that your retirement will remedy the years of deprivation, and that you may both obtain greater happiness by the consciousness of a joint endeavour magnificently accomplished.

Your devotion to your work has been absolute. Your demands upon your colleagues at all levels have been gladly met, for all of them knew that you drove no one harder than you drove yourself.

Your service as Secretary of the Association has twice received public recognition: in 1964 the University of Manchester conferred upon you an Honorary Doctorate of Laws and in 1972 HM The Queen appointed you a Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

Derek Stevenson, we recognise you as an outstanding leader, a tireless champion of the medical profession, and a great Secretary. Let this gold medal serve as an outward and visible acknowledgment of our debt to your unremitting labours for the British Medical Association.