

On the morning of July 22nd, 2011, Dr. Robert Arthur Hugh Kinch died at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal. He was 91 years old, and his long life had a profound impact on those who loved him, those who worked with him, those he taught and those he healed.

Dr. Kinch was born in Kut-El-Amara, Iraq, the son of a British Royal Navy Captain. His early youth was spent in Mumbai, India, and he then matriculated at The Cranbrook School in Kent, England. He studied medicine during the WWII German “Blitz” of London at the Middlesex Hospital Medical School and Queen Charlotte’s Maternity Hospital. He then enlisted and served as a Surgeon Lieutenant in the British Royal Navy. He saw action in the North Atlantic, South Pacific and on D-Day.

Dr. Kinch immigrated to Canada in 1949 and launched his medical career in Toronto as a practicing ob/gyn. In 1957, he and his family moved to London, Ontario, where he became the Head of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Western Ontario. In 1968, Dr. Kinch moved to Montreal as a McGill University Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology and ultimately became Chief of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Montreal General Hospital and the Royal Victoria Hospital. In 1979, he was appointed Professor and Chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology of McGill University.

Dr. Kinch was recognized as an international leader in Obstetrics and Gynecology and as a true pioneer in women’s health. He had 78 peer review publications delving into a range of clinical topics from premenstrual syndrome to preeclampsia. He also published in the area of family planning and studied translational endocrinology. He remained devoted to teaching until he was

86. He trained thousands of medical students, residents and fellows. Many of his students achieved success in academic medicine and among his graduates are the Chairs of the Departments of Obstetrics and Gynecology of eight Canadian universities.

Dr. Kinch was a wonderful human being. Everyone who met him could not fail to be engaged by his warmth, his energy, optimism, and compassion. Here are some excerpted quotes from former colleagues, students and patients that reflect his many qualities:

“From the time that he came to Western as the Head of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the age of 38, he inspired many students to go into the specialty, some of whom might not have done so if it were not for his leadership. In addition to his busy professional life, he was well-informed about painting and supported young Canadian artists such as Jack Chambers before they became national figures.”

“Dr. Kinch missed a delivery when I was a junior resident at the Montreal General Hospital. Instead of scolding me, he told the patient that he was my mentor and she was lucky to be delivered by his best student. He made me blush but I beamed with pride.”

“In the residency program, he was a wonderful mentor and role model. He taught with compassion and sensitivity, knowledge and humility and a deep love of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. He was often in my thoughts and I will never forget his kindness and encouragement. He made each and every one of us better doctors and better human beings. He will be greatly missed.”

“I was fortunate to have the experience of working as his assistant during his appointment for 5 years as Chairman of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Royal Victoria Hospital in 1980. It was my first real employment after graduation from McGill. He was an exceptional person; a real gentleman and I have such fond memories of him. He taught me my first administrative skills, including impeccable English, which I have taken with me over the last 30 years. He was a boss, but a true friend. I feel lucky to have crossed his path and will never forget such a kind human being.”

“Dr. Kinch was my inspiration and my quiet guide. He intuited all our needs as trainees, and met them: leading by his example of compassion, generosity, intelligence and kindness. When he offered me a staff position on finishing my studies when I was a mere second year resident, I knew immediately that he saw my insecurity, and that this was his treatment for my lack of self confidence! I know how exceptional it was to work in such an environment of respect and appreciation for women.”

“Embedded in Dr Kinch's compassion and enthusiasm, was a vision. And he fulfilled that vision through his investment in his teaching and the creation of opportunities to learn firsthand. He launched many of us on a career that fulfilled his vision. A man easy to love but difficult to emulate, he was a great soul that lives on in my heart.”

“Dr. Kinch was my gynecologist during his last few years at the Royal Victoria Hospital. I truly loved him because he was so caring and sincere. After his heart attack, he called me personally to tell me that he could not be my doctor anymore because the hospital wouldn't let him practice anymore. Who among the doctors would do that? I would like to extend my deepest sympathy to his family and I would like to tell them how lucky they were to have him for 91 years and that I truly missed him as my doctor. What an exceptional human being. I will remember him forever.”

Dr. Kinch is survived by his loving wife Kathy Keebler and children: Martin (Miro), Richard (Anne), Cynthia, Jenepher (Larry), Shelagh (Marc), Robin (Greg), by his stepdaughters: the late Danielle (Kim), Nicole (Mark) and Michelle (Pete), by his grandchildren: Abigail, Jeffrey, Shannon, Leigh, William, Elisabeth, David, Matthew, Juliana, Alexi, Natasha, Graeham, Amelia and Juliette and by his great-grandsons Hugo, Rainer, Michael and Nolan.

Submitted by Dr. Robert Casper, FRCS(C)

Dr Robert A. H. Kinch

DR. ROBERT A. H. KINCH,
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On the morning of July 22nd, 2011, Dr. Robert Arthur Hugh Kinch died at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal. He was 91 years old, a long life with a profound impact on those who loved him, those who worked with him, those he taught and those he healed.

He is adored by his wife Kathy Keebler and loved to bits by his children: Martin (Miro), Richard (Anne), Cynthia, Jenepher (Larry) Shelagh (Marc), Robin (Greg), by his stepdaughters: the late Danielle (Kim), Nicole (Mark) and Michelle (Pete), by his grandchildren: Abigail, Jeffrey, Shannon, Leigh, William, Elisabeth, David, Matthew, Juliana, Alexi, Natasha, Graeham, Amelia and Juliette and by his great-grandsons Hugo, Rainer, Michael and Nolan.

Dr. Kinch was born in Kut-EI-Amara, Mesopotamia (Iraq) the son of a British Naval Captain. He spent his early years in Bombay (Mumbai) India, and attended The Cranbrook School in Kent, England. He studied medicine during the Blitz at Middlesex Hospital Medical School and Queen Charlottes Maternity Hospital in London, England. He then enlisted and served as a Surgeon Lieutenant in the British Royal Navy. He saw action in the North Atlantic, South Pacific and on D-Day.

In 1949, he immigrated to Canada with his former wife, Patricia and young family. He launched his medical career in Toronto as a practicing obstetrician and gynecologist. In 1957 he and his family moved to London, Ontario, where he became the Head of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Western Ontario. Then, in 1968, Dr. Kinch moved to Montreal as McGill Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology and continued his career to become Chief of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Montreal General Hospital and the Royal Victoria Hospital. In 1979 he was appointed Professor and Chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology of McGill University.

Dr. Kinch is recognized around the world as a leader in Obstetrics and Gynecology and as a true pioneer in womens health. Throughout his career he helped thousands of babies into this world and treated countless women. His waiting room was always jammed because he made sure every patient got the time she needed. He listened, he cared and his patients loved him.

He was also devoted to teaching and taught until he was 86. He helped thousands of medical students, residents and fellows into the world of Obstetrics and Gynecology. All of his students benefited from his superb teaching, extraordinary medical knowledge and his human approach to the treatment of his patients. His teaching philosophy was choose them, cherish them and launch them.

Many of his students have achieved success in academic medicine and among his graduates are the Chairs of the Departments of Obstetrics and Gynecology of eight Canadian universities. This is an achievement unique to him.

Dr. Kinch was a man of compassion and insight. His concern for his patients and students exemplify the healing art of medicine. He received many honours and awards during his medical career, and was an Osler Fellow and recipient of The Robert Kinch Chair in Womens Health at McGill University.

In keeping with his wishes, a private family memorial service will be held.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to The Robert Kinch Chair in Womens Health, McGill University , The McGill Programs in Whole Person Care, McGill University, or Head and Hands, 5833 Sherbrooke Street West, Montreal, Q.C., H4A 1X4, and would be greatly appreciated.