

## **Reminiscences of and tributes to Greg Crane**

JAMES R. LAWRENCE

### **Formerly Head of the Department of Medicine, Concord Repatriation General Hospital, Sydney, Australia**

Greg Crane was a broadly cultured clinician-scientist, at home with the scientific rigour of the laboratory as well as the humanitarian, patient-focussed clinical science of the bedside. His patients respected and loved him as did his students and colleagues. He made a very significant contribution to the evolution of Concord Repatriation General Hospital as an effective Clinical School which was very popular with students, as well as helping the development of the Department of Veterans' Affairs. His considerable intellect, clear and stimulating teaching, obvious integrity and restrained good humour earned

the admiration and trust of his colleagues. They prevailed upon him to undertake, often reluctantly, numerous committee responsibilities including both the Ethics Committee and the Staff Council. Once persuaded of the importance of accepting such a role, he did it with distinction and quiet but unmistakable authority. Cultured, professionally excellent role models have a very important influence in a medical school and Greg Crane achieved much as a researcher, influential teacher and professional leader who was a gentleman scholar.

MARYANN NICHOLLS

### **Director of Haematology, Concord Repatriation General Hospital, Sydney, Australia**

Greg Crane was a good friend and mentor. I knew and worked closely with him for two short decades. He was a gentleman of integrity, a very private cultured man of honour and a respected teacher whose clarity of thought and logical presentation unravelled the complexities of medicine and haematology. His contribution to patient care was such that many still talk of him with ongoing respect and sadness at his premature death. He held many influential and critical positions within the Hospital and as chairman of the Pathology Committee and the Drug Committee, for example, he played a significant and responsible role in Hospital affairs.

As Associate Professor his teaching, research and academic facets elevated the profile of the Department of Haematology and his appointment at the University of Sydney was due recognition of his achievements. He was a pioneer in the computerization of haematology laboratories and spent many hours exploring and implementing these boundaries. His contribution to the collegiality of the Department of Haematology and the Hospital was extensive, and he fostered and enabled new ideas to be implemented, thus encouraging the growth and development of the Department and of the Hospital.

MICHAEL P. ALPERS

### **Centre for International Health, Curtin University of Technology, Perth, Australia; formerly Director of the Papua New Guinea Institute of Medical Research**

Greg Crane was the highly respected first Deputy Director of the Papua New Guinea Institute of Medical Research (known then as the Institute of Human Biology). Greg's

engagement was firmly in medical research and he was committed to studying problems in human health and disease. He became internationally renowned for his work on

hyperreactive malarious splenomegaly (originally called tropical splenomegaly syndrome). Greg was a scientist in the best mould of the Institute: quietly passionate about his work, rigorous and meticulous in carrying it out, and personally involved in all the details of his field work. He enjoyed working out in the community as well as in the clinic or lab, he delighted in the people who were the participants in his studies and he was not happy with a project until it began to show some benefit to the people involved.

Greg had left Papua New Guinea before I became the Director of the Institute, although we knew each other from previous associations in Papua New Guinea. When I asked if he would like to continue his studies on malaria and HMS, in collaboration with the Institute, Greg jumped at the opportunity and was delighted to be able to return to Papua New Guinea through regular field trips. He quickly renewed his contacts with the people in the Watut and collaborated with Kuldeep Bhatia on studies into the genetic basis of HMS. We were both disappointed that we could never secure the long-term funding necessary to expand Greg's intervention studies in the Watut: unfortunately, in the research game, the more applied a project is the less likely it is to get funded.

Greg was always ready to help others with his wide-ranging expertise when he was called upon. He contributed significantly to studies on ovalocytosis in the days when to diagnose it we had to assess the phenotype by looking at red blood cells. He also helped in writing up this work with Jacqueline Cattani, David Gibson and myself. He supported Bernard and Loretta Brabin in their studies on malaria in women, especially pregnant women, and on the complex ways their immune responses had been perturbed. Greg made many other contributions to clinical haematology and to haematological research in Papua New Guinea, apart from his seminal work on HMS.

In 1993 the Institute celebrated its 25-year Jubilee, and Greg characteristically gave the occasion his enthusiastic support. He was a discerning colleague and a good friend to many of us at the IMR. I honour his contributions to the work of the Institute and towards improving the health of Papua New Guineans. I mourn the loss of a much esteemed friend. It is fitting that the Papua New Guinea Medical Journal celebrates the life and career of Greg Crane and acknowledges his achievements. In doing so we acknowledge also the important part played in his life's work by his colleague and wife, Dr Helen Bashir, who survives him.