

Dr Val Lishman – Casey doctor 1985-86

Died 21 April 2016 at Eaton Bunbury.

The South West has lost a remarkable man who will be remembered as a true gentleman. The Val Lishman Health Research foundation was named in his honour in 1997 when he retired. In 1965 Dr Lishman became the first specialist surgeon to work in the South West Region of Western Australia.

Executive officer of the VLHR Jackie Ross has many fond memories of Dr Lishman and said meeting him was a life-changing experience. “He spoke to everyone and always made you feel good.” She recommended his autobiography ‘The Man in the Surgical Mask’ which was a true account of his life and an easy read. She said the book was funny and sad and revealed what kind of man he was.

Dr Ian Valentine Lishman arrived from the UK in 1965 to work at the hospital only to find that it hadn’t been built. The first surgeon to practice outside of Perth, he was pioneering in many ways. Dr Lishman had great humility and was much loved and respected both for his work and for his personal kindness.

In 1992, Dr Lishman became a Member of the Order of Australia for his service to medicine through the establishment of the first surgical practice in the South West of West Australia. Given his outstanding contribution to medicine Val has been recognised by many awards.

In 1997, when Dr Lishman announced his retirement, the inaugural board named the Foundation after him in recognition of his service and contributions to medicine in the South West. Val was stunned and honoured by the establishment of the Foundation. He said, “Every hospital or group of doctors should have a research. Research facility this directly benefits hospitals. Young doctors, registrars, and interns should be encouraged to work on projects. Advancement results from everyone looking at their work critically, following up ideas and sharing them with other people”.

(Excerpts from “The Man in the Surgical Mask; Val Lishman. A Life Well Lived”. by Margaret Mardon (Quality Press 2013)

I first met Val Lishman at Casey in September 1985, where we descended into a crevasse together on field training, Val was in his mid-fifties then but could still ascend a rope as well as any of us. I got to know that like me he loved Nepal and had trekked the Everest region as part of a British Army expedition, he apparently slowed the expedition down by insisting on holding a clinic for local people in every village he passed through. I was in the same region this March, and Val would be pleased to know that his work continues with many volunteer International medics following in his footsteps providing mobile clinics in the Solu Khumbu.

RIP Val It was a privilege to have met you and chilled in a crevasse with you.

Compiled by Mick Whittle - Station carpenter Casey 1986.

