

Porter Stephen (Orcid ID: 0000-0002-3328-2759)

Corresponding author mail id: [S.Porter@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:S.Porter@ucl.ac.uk)

Obituary of Professor Sir David Mason

SR Porter

UCL Eastman Dental Institute

UCL Rockefeller Building

21 University Street

London WC1E 6DE

A Crighton

University of Glasgow Dental School

378 Sauchiehall Street

Glasgow G2 3JZ

Key words: Obituary; Professor; Oral Medicine

This article has been accepted for publication and undergone full peer review but has not been through the copyediting, typesetting, pagination and proofreading process which may lead to differences between this version and the [Version of Record](#). Please cite this article as doi: [10.1111/odi.14309](https://doi.org/10.1111/odi.14309)

This article is protected by copyright. All rights reserved.

Professor Sir David Mason, CBE, BDS, MB ChB, MD, FRCS Glas, FDSRCSE, FRC Path, FRSE

Professor Sir David Mason, who died on the 27<sup>th</sup> of March 2022, contributed significantly to international Oral Medicine and was a leading light in many other aspects of oral health care. His contributions have impacted positively on many aspects of education, research and regulation of dentistry and thus have a lasting benefit to patients and those around them.

Following graduation in dentistry from the University of St Andrews, later National Service, a period in General Dental Practice in Scotland and completion studying medicine David ultimately focused upon a career in Oral Medicine and Pathology. His rise to seniority was rapid such that he was appointed Professor of Oral Medicine and Oral Pathology in 1967 at the age of 39 years. He held the role of Dean of the University of Glasgow between 1980 and 1990 and was President of the General Dental Council (GDC) of the UK between 1989 and 1994, after which he was Emeritus Professor in Glasgow University.

As Chair of Oral Medicine and Oral Pathology his research of biochemical aspects of saliva was notably innovative and still has application today. He appointed and mentored a plethora of budding academics who went on to impactful success, for example, as Deans of Dental Schools (e.g. Aberdeen, Belfast, Bristol, Dundee, Hong Kong, London), leaders of Oral Pathology and Forensic Odontology and NHS Education Scotland (NES) amongst others. As Dean he recognised the value and need for postgraduate education and helped raise funds that ultimately led to the establishment of the West of Scotland Centre for Postgraduate Education that today flourishes under the leadership of NHS Education Scotland. As Convenor of the Faculty of Dentistry of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow, together with colleagues, he ensured the endowment of Professor Tom White, a previous Dean of Glasgow Dental School, became the the TC White Bequest Fund for Dentistry that continues today to be an important funding opportunity of international clinical and non-clinical attachments as well as travel and pump prime grants for talented young clinicians.

Within the UK David was a leading light of the research process, leadership and organisation and was President of the British Society for Dental Research (BSDR - now BSODR) between 1984 and 1986. Together with several senior colleagues he was instrumental in the establishment of the British Society for Oral Medicine in 1981 thus creating the opportunity for clinicians to meet to encourage education and research of this expanding and increasingly relevant specialty area. The success of this is perhaps reflected in the high numbers of consultant posts that now exist in Oral Medicine in the UK, the recognition by the GDC that this is a stand-alone specialty, and the expansion of the society to become the British and Irish Society for Oral Medicine (BISOM) in 2018.

At a national level David contributed to many key decision-making groups for education, medical research, and the National Health Service (NHS) and it was perhaps of no surprise that in 1989 he was appointed President of the GDC, holding this role for 5 years. Highlights of his time in this office included the establishment of a wide-ranging 5-year BDS curriculum, the beginnings of formalising Continued Professional Development and his promotion of enhancing the roles and regulation of dental care professionals such as therapists and hygienists across the UK.

Internationally, together with Dean Millard of the University of Michigan David established the World Workshop in Oral Medicine (WWOM) in 1988. This required significant patience, organisation and indeed guile to bring together 60 leading or emerging lights that resulted in definitive reviews of key areas relevant to the practice of Oral Medicine. 34 years on WWOM thrives with new generations of leading lights creating consensus reports important to direct education, research, and clinical practice

in Oral Medicine. Similarly with a with a small group of like-minded leaders from Spain, Portugal and the UK, David helped establish the European Association of Oral Medicine (EAOM) in 1998. This now has an enormous membership and, despite its name now has engagement from members in all parts of the globe including Australasia, North and South America, MENA and Southeast Asia.

David's professional achievements were recognised nationally and internationally; his sustained impact being acknowledged by his elevation from CBE to KBE in 1992 and election to the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1999.

David was an "all rounder". He was an excellent sportsman. He initially excelled in rugby but later focused upon golf. He had a enviously low handicap and represented Scotland in international golf tournaments, was a member of the world's most prestigious golf club (the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews) and while relishing the challenge of playing against students and colleagues was always magnanimous and encouraging – when he inevitably defeated them.

The successes of David Mason were undoubtedly only possible through the love and care that his wife, Judy, endlessly provided. Married in 1967 (the same year David became Professor – and secured MD with commendation), Judy and David brought up a family of three children (Michael (now a doctor), Katie (a Hospitality manager) and Andrew (as solicitor) in an encouraging, loving and fun-filled household (just a stones' throw from their local golf club). In later years David and Judy continued their playful and supportive ways with grandchildren Ashley, Harrison and Georgina and great-grand daughter, Molly.

All those involved in the practice and promotion of oral health care should be thankful of the industry, foresight, and innovation of Professor Sir David K Mason – and be grateful to his family for the love and care they provided to him.

SR Porter, UCL Eastman Dental Institute, London

A Crichton University of Glasgow Dental School, Glasgow

Acknowledgements: The authors have no conflicts of interest.

Image:

Figure 1. Professor Sir David Mason



ODI\_14309\_Figure 1 Professor David Mason image.png