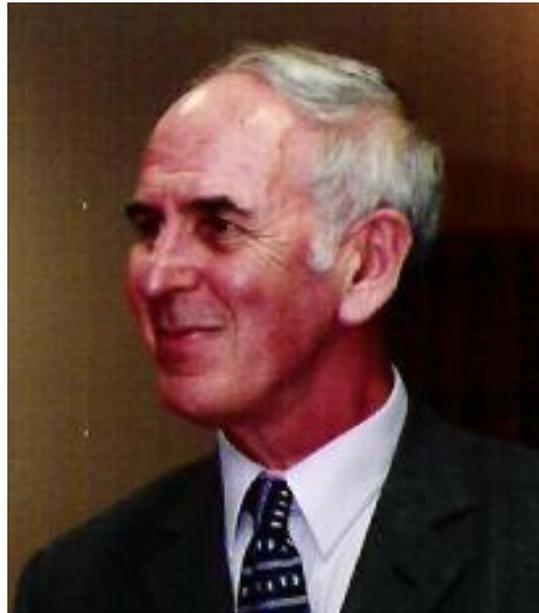


Donald FC Loran (1936-2018)



The recent death of Don Loran robs the field of contact lenses of one of its most outstanding educators. Born in Manchester, UK, Don was the son of an optometrist and received his own optometric education at what was then the Manchester College of Technology, now the University of Manchester. After an outstanding performance in his Professional Qualifying Examinations he was awarded a King George VI Memorial Scholarship, and crossed the Atlantic to Ohio State University to complete a Master's degree. His US experience was to have a strong influence on his later career.

With the major steps in his education completed, Don moved into general optometric practice, interspersed with three years in the Hospital Eye Service. By 1961 his interests had become focused on the area of contact lenses and his work in practice was largely concentrated on this field in the years before he moved into academic life, in 1972. This involved a return to Manchester to what by then had become the Ophthalmic Optics Department of the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST).

At that time, although Manchester's optometry students examined 'paid' patients, their only experience of real patients was obtained during a fairly limited period in attendance at the eye clinics in Manchester Royal Eye Hospital. Don was convinced that this was inadequate preparation for practice and, while carrying a normal teaching load of lectures and other activities, he therefore instituted an 'Open Clinic', in which final-year undergraduates under the close supervision of qualified staff would examine unselected members of the public who wished to have their eyes examined and, when necessary, to receive appropriate

spectacles or contact lenses. Worries that local optometrists would resent this 'competition' proved to be unfounded and, indeed, many of these were happy to undertake supervisory work within the clinic.

The fledgling venture proved to be a great success and soon expanded under Don's guidance as Clinical Director to embrace a range of specialties, including binocular vision, low vision, children's vision and contact lens work, while the initial trickle of patients swelled to several thousand. In his specialty area of contact lenses, at a time when soft lenses were becoming progressively more important, Don drastically modernized the syllabus and teaching at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, while also supervising various related research projects.

In parallel with his optometric and academic work, Don served in many roles within the British Optical Association, eventually becoming its President in 1979-80. With the founding of the College of Optometrists in 1980, he went on to make further contributions as a Council Member and Chairman of the Academic Committee, as well as being a College Examiner and Practice Visitor. His many years of service in these various roles were recognized by his appointment, in 1994, as Life Fellow of the College. In the international sphere, he served as a committee member with the International Association of Contact Lens Educators.

Don was a great enthusiast for sport. He was a keen runner and badminton player, and performed regularly as a wicket keeper during his years at UMIST. Football was perhaps his greatest love. He qualified as a referee, and for many years ran a Cub Scout football team. In a less active role, he patiently and philosophically followed the fluctuating fortunes of Manchester City throughout his life. These interests in sport culminated in his helping to found the Sports Vision Association and in the production, with ophthalmologist Caroline MacEwen, of the book *Sports Vision*.

Don was a man with a rounded personality, who cared about his family, his profession, his academic interests, his students and his neighborhood. Many generations of Manchester students and staff will remember him as a warm and friendly teacher with great enthusiasm for contact lens work, a man who always found time to listen to problems and help students with their difficulties. His long years of service with the BOA and College have done much to advance the practice of optometry in the United Kingdom. He will be sadly missed.

W. Neil Charman