OBITUARY

Obituary

A Remembrance: John W. Goodfellow MS, FRCS

A long legacy passing (1926–2011)

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On August 4, 2011, orthopaedics lost one of its luminaries. John W. Goodfellow (Fig. 1) passed after a long battle with leukemia, surrounded by a devoted family, his children, Tim and Allison, and his wife, Helene. He leaves a legacy not soon forgotten of being much more than that of a consultant orthopaedic surgeon, the discipline he loved, but also that of a creative thinker and teacher. The authors of this writing were all touched by John during our training at the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre, University of Oxford's, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery.

Serendipitously I encountered John in a pub opposite the Bodleian Library, a long time passing, in 1967 where he enquired of my plans for the DPhil I hoped to gain. Attended by Peter Bullough, the pathologist with whom he was closely aligned, he added the word “orthopaedics” to my vocabulary and set me on a course that has most definitively influenced my life. Determined to locate the weightbearing regions of the normal human hip and relate them to areas of pathologic change was typical of his creative thinking, but needed the involvement, as he told me, of my academic and aerospace engineering upbringing to

Fig. 1 John W. Goodfellow. (Published with permission of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons from *The Bulletin*, April 1991.)

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investigate a medical problem whose outcome would contribute to our appreciation of degenerative joint disease. Little could I have imagined that my first orthopaedic publication in *Nature* on joint incongruity would have emerged over a pint!

John and his first wife, Anne, were most kind and gracious in making Evelyn and I welcome while we were so far from the colonies and finding our ways in the Mother Country. Our families grew closer as Jonathan and Michael arrived and I undertook the “maths” tutorage of young Tim in his pursuit of the 11+ while enjoying the best of England's ancient sites and Stratford-Upon-Avon's thespian offerings.

These are but some of the good things we were exposed to as I remember the kindness of the man.

Seth

My two years at the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre from 1969–1971 represented the completion of my formal orthopaedic training and introduction to an academic career. I was John Goodfellow's Registrar for 6 months, a period that profoundly influenced the next 40 years. Through Seth's research on the contact areas of the human hip, we were introduced to the techniques that John and I applied to the patellofemoral joint. This led to a better understanding of the mechanics of chondromalacia patellae and indeed all of the afflictions of that vexatious joint. John's encouragement and participation in this research not only made it possible but also represented the inquisitive nature of his intellect to all the problems that were encountered in the clinical setting that led to experiments to resolve open issues. This research started me on a road of investigation that led to the publication of "The Disorders of the Patellofemoral Joint" with Paul Ficat, which is now in its third edition under the editorship of John Fulkerson. John Goodfellow remained a good personal friend and I regard him as one of my most cherished mentors and role models in orthopaedics.

David

John will always be remembered as a bigger than life figure, as a family man, superb orthopaedic surgeon, educator, researcher, and role model. John recognized the importance of teamwork and together with his research partners, John O'Connor, and Peter Bullough,

contributed much to the science of orthopaedic surgery. Serving as a Registrar or Fellow under John was not only a great honor, but also a life-changing experience. We all were enriched not only by his teaching, but also perhaps more importantly, by observing the importance which he placed on family values, loyalty, and professionalism. John also was a keen debater and whenever he was at a major meeting, his debates with Michael Freeman and others were a highlight. John Goodfellow will be missed, but we all can take comfort in John's life which was lived to the fullest and whose many contributions have made the world a better place.

Robert

All of the above is descriptive of a cascade of events that simply leapt from one to the other over the years, all unintentionally connected by John, and indicative of his continual inquisitiveness to appreciate the mechanical behavior of joint articulations. There is much more that can be said about the man: his ability to break down complex problems with the spoken word, his presidency of the British Orthopaedic Association, and his editorship of the British volume of the Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery that dramatically improved its content. But without uncertainty, he was in at the outset, working with his engineering colleague, John O'Connor, on the role that mobility plays in total knee arthroplasty design. And to his credit, the Oxford Unicompartamental Knee continues to enjoy universal use and clinical success.

These intertwining memories describe a slice of life of an individual who dramatically impacted orthopaedics and the professional lives of many, connected by the invisible threads of time. John, you will be missed.