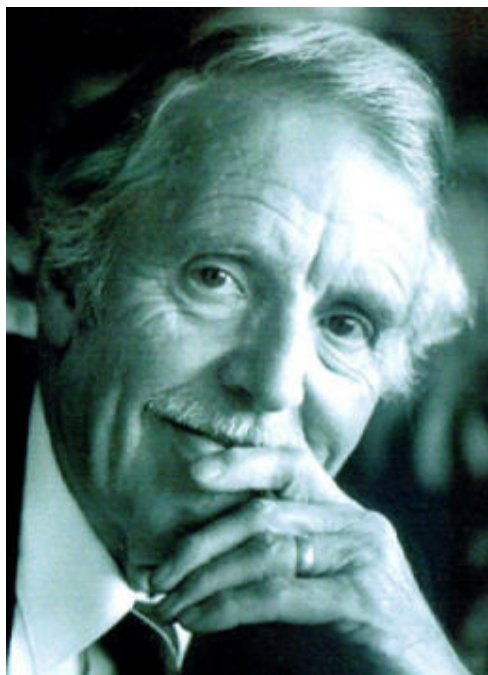




## Ellison James McInnes

*2 March 1923 – 16 January 2007*

Dr Ellison James McInnes died after a long illness.



Ellison was born in Temuka and his subsequent career in psychiatry was strongly influenced by his general practitioner father who enjoyed a close relationship with his community. It was enlightening to learn from Ellison that matriculation in Latin was a prerequisite for medical intermediate acceptance.

He was a Knox College Old Boy in Dunedin between 1941 and 1948 and, as was required at the time, in the Otago University Medical Corp.

Officers were fifth-year medical students and he wryly stated that the late Dr John Dobson, psychiatrist, was his lieutenant, who in later years, was his senior at Ashburn Hall.

He was a house surgeon in Timaru Hospital when the anaesthetic Boyle machine was introduced. With the late Dr John McLeod, chest physician, they had a few days of training in Dunedin Hospital to be acquainted with the modern innovation and subsequently responsible with a part-time general practitioner/anaesthetist for anaesthesia in Timaru Hospital. There is no question that Ellison's appetite for technology was whetted, whereupon he and his former wife Gaye set off to England in pursuit of his postgraduate studies.

On their return to Dunedin in 1961, he embarked upon a major career change into psychiatry under the tutelage of the late Professor Reg Medlicott. Ellison modestly makes light of his involvement during the infancy phase of modern anaesthesiology and psychiatry. His biological and pharmacological background would have equipped him for his contributing partnership to the well-thumbed Ashburn Hall manual on psychotropic medications much valued by generations of doctors.

He was subsequently recruited into public psychiatry as a Consultant and Deputy Medical Superintendent of Cherry Farm Hospital, but felt somewhat disillusioned by the deinstitutionalisation process as he was not convinced that patient care was adequately safeguarded.

Ironically, when he became my Deputy Medical Superintendent at Sunnyside, we in turn engaged in the final and major deinstitutionalisation process when his genuineness, compassion, and equanimity proved most helpful to me over what could

have been very turbulent years. His administrative experience was reassuring to me. He was one of the very few psychiatrists who enjoyed working with long-stay patients at a time when they received little specialist attention.

Following a brief retirement in 1987, he accepted the invitation to return to Sunnyside Hospital as a locum psychiatrist until his final retirement in 1991. This heralded a very satisfying and settled period in his life when he married Mildred.

Ellison was an educated man in the true sense of the word. His interests included the classics, genealogy, personal computers, the environment, historic places, birds and forests, photography, bush walks, gardening, and he was a member of the Landrover Club before the word 4WD was popularised. He was highly valued for his many years as a member and administrator of the Photographic Society and for his membership of the New Zealand Historic Places Trust and Forest and Bird.

He was philosophical, and true to character was quietly courageous through his terminal illness and had the delight of carrying their first great-grandchild in June of 2006.

Notwithstanding the marital separation, Ellison was effective in his dedication to his extended and blended family. He is survived by Gaye and Mildred, their children and stepchildren, grandchildren, and a great-granddaughter.

Dr Ellison James McInnes was formally a consultant anaesthetist in Melbourne in 1957 to 1960 and Assistant Medical Director, Ashburn Hall, (Psychiatric) Dunedin 1961 to 1973. He was Acting Medical Superintendent, Cherry Farm Hospital, 1980 to 1983, and Deputy Medical Superintendent of Sunnyside Hospital, 1984 to 1987. He was a locum psychiatrist at Sunnyside Hospital from 1988 to 1991.

Dr Ellison's qualifications: MBChB from the Otago University in 1949, DA(RACP, RACS) 1953, MFARACS 1960, MANZCP 1968, FRANZCP 1998, and FANZCA in 1992.

His publications include Medlicott and McInnes, *Drugs in Psychiatry*, An Ashburn Hall Manual, 1971.

Dr Les Ding (Consultant Psychiatrist, Avenue Consultancy, Christchurch) wrote this obituary.