

Obituary

John E.A. Wickham BSc, MB BS, MD, FRCS(Eng), FRCP(Hon), FRCR(Hon), FRSM(Hon)
1927 – 2017

“The Gentleman Pioneer”

The legendary John Wickham passed on 26 Oct 2017 leaving a huge gap and deep sadness among the members of the Society for Medical Innovation and Technology (SMIT), a Society he has founded as the Society for Minimally Invasive Therapy nearly 30 years ago. We have lost our good father, a visionary thinker, innovator and pioneer who throughout his life fought for reducing the trauma of surgery for the benefit of his patients. “An Open and Shut case – The story of Keyhole or Minimally Invasive Surgery” is the title of the book he was able to publish this year, in which he describes his remarkable journey through life and his outstanding passion for MIT.

When I first met John Wickham in 1990 I was particularly impressed by his polite yet meaningful way to speak promoting Minimally Invasive Therapy. MIT a term he introduced became mainstream and the leading goal for medical innovation and technologies throughout all surgical and interventional disciplines. One of the reasons why, at the beginning of this millennium, the name of the society has been changed yet preserving the acronym.

John Wickham hold many important positions and among those as Director of the Academic Unit at the Institute of Urology at the Peter, Paul and Phillips Hospitals (3Ps) and after that he served as Consultant Urological Surgeon at the King Edward VII Hospital and The London Clinic. and was later awarded the Hunterian Professorship.

His pioneering achievements are numerous e. g. a renal cooling coil device (1967) or the PROBOT, the first autonomous surgical robot which he developed together with Brian Davies at Imperial College. The device was combined with a mapping ultrasound and became known as “Vaportome”, leading to the world first clinical tested image guided robot, still displayed at the Royal College of Surgeons of England.

It was a privilege to know him and he will remain a lasting inspiration to all of us at SMIT.

Andreas Melzer

on behalf of the international Society for Medical Innovation and Technology