

Helen Mary Louise Carty

Professor of Paediatric Radiology (b 1944; q Dublin 1967), died on 23rd April 2017

Helen was born in Dungarvan, Co Waterford in May 1944, received her medical training in Dublin and died on St George's day 2017 in her own bed in Cressington Park Liverpool. Her family were in attendance, for she had battled with a familial cardiomyopathy over more than a decade, necessitating multiple hospital admissions in New Zealand as well as locally.

Her memorial service in Liverpool Cathedral was attended by many hundreds of celebrants, when in a glowing tribute, Dame Lorna Muirhead described Helen as "authentic". She was indeed.

Helen came to Alder Hey hospital via St Thomas's in 1975. She developed radiology there, not only with progressively modern equipment of ultrasound, CT, radionuclide scanning and MRI but most importantly she built a team of nurses, radiographers and colleagues expert in caring for children and their parents. Kindness, prompt attention and expert reporting were her department's culture.

Liverpool University appointed her professor in 1996 and her academic successes were embodied in the standard European text book "Imaging Children" for which she was editor-in-chief.

Alder Hey recognised her fine clear thinking and straight talking when they appointed her as clinical director of support services including the time of the pathologically induced "Alder Hey Scandal". This episode was a challenge to Helen's authentic integrity, and although eventually exonerated by the GMC, she took the memory of these events to her deathbed.

Professor Carty was a world expert on the radiological appearances of abuse of children and she was a formidable court witness as many cross examining barristers were to discover. Internationally Helen was the first Lady president of the European Congress of Radiology, a Gold Medal recipient from many societies and Colleges as well as a Councillor and Warden of the U.K. College of Radiologists.

Locally she was president of the LMI in 1996 and her address was on the geology, flowers and beauty of the Burren in west Ireland which she photographed with skill.

A DL, she was appointed High Sheriff of Merseyside in 2011; a role she fulfilled with distinction. In her last year she was president of the Innominate Club dying in office.

Despite her enormous commitment to professional activities, Helen was above all wife of Austin, mother of Tim, Jenny and Sarah and grandmother to six. A fine cook, she and Austin liked nothing better than hosting dinner parties in their extended well proportioned dining room. Conversation flowed as did vintage cellar wines and the cooking by Helen was always wholesome and generous. Their house was full of works of art, libraries of books - many Irish and latterly her woodcarvings.

As a schoolgirl she had played tennis to a high standard, was an accomplished fly fisherman, a dedicated letter writer, and a Liverpool Football Club supporter. As a keen follower of the Grand National, at which she invariably was a successful punter, she also enjoyed foreign travel especially to New Zealand where Jenny lives. That country's bird life was a special attraction to Helen.

Helen and Austin loved entertaining away from home nearly as much as at Cressington Park, be they fishing expeditions to house parties in Scotland or Ireland, or opera at Glyndebourne.

Her photograph taken in the LMI, wearing her High Sheriff's chapeau, captures also her lovely smile, for she was fun loving and eschewed pomposity.

Chris Evans