

David Crompton, AO, President of the Australian College of Ophthalmologists, 1973 - 1974

David Crompton was born on 18 November 1915 and died on 8 August 2006. He married in 1940 and was the father of three sons. He gained his MB BS at Adelaide University in 1939 and became an Intern at Royal Adelaide Hospital in 1940. In 1941 he joined the AIF and undertook a course in Tropical Medicine in Sydney. He served as a Captain in the Australian Army Medical Corps as General Medical Officer in Palestine and New Guinea.

After WWII, in 1945 he undertook a Diploma in Ophthalmology at RVEEH and in 1946 joined the Honorary Staff at Royal Adelaide Hospital where he served as Head of Department from 1963 to 1980. He also served at the Adelaide Children's Hospital from 1946 to 1953; Mt Gambier from 1946 to 1955; and the Queen Victoria Maternity Hospital from 1954 to 1973. He also practiced in North Adelaide from 1946 to 1995 and continued to assist with surgery until 2005.

During this time he managed to achieve Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons in 1957; Member of the Australian College of Ophthalmologists in 1969; and Fellow of the Royal Australian College of Ophthalmologists in 1978. He was also Consultant for Townsend School for Deaf and Blind from 1956 to 1973; and Royal Society for the Blind of SA from 1956 to 1980 where he served as a board member for the last nine years, and President from 1979 to 1980.

Dr Crompton was appointed by the Adelaide University as Charles Goss Lecturer, from 1961 to 1980 and served on the ORIA Board from 1965 to 1985. During his term as President, the 2nd edition of "Notes on Ophthalmology for Students" was prepared and published. A Planning Committee, chaired by Geoff Harley, formulated proposals for comprehensive eye care with a reasonable path towards integration of Ophthalmic services and this was submitted to government. Orthoptists were incorporated into the NSW College of Paramedical Studies with Pat Lance as head of the School of Orthoptics, while the "Guide for Assessment of Visual Loss" was reviewed by the Visual Safety and Prevention of Blindness Committee.

Other achievements of David Crompton were his work with Father Frank Flynn against trachoma in Australian Aborigine populations; and research in the cause of endophthalmitis cases, urging for sterilisation of eye drops. As a result, Australia became the first country to introduce sterilisation of eye medications with inclusion of a bacteriostatic in containers with tamper-proof seals to exclude micro-organisms.

In 1984 he was appointed as an Officer of the Order of Australia for his work in Public Health ophthalmology.

He was a member of the Adelaide Club; the Naval Military & Airforce Club; the Royal Adelaide Golf Club; was a generous benefactor of the arts; and helped struggling medical students.

In his retirement David enjoyed fine art, gardening, gourmet food and wine, contract bridge and travel.

It was said of him that he held strong views and set high standards, leaving a legacy of well-trained graduates in South Australia. Through his research on eye drops, he left a legacy of decreased preventable iatrogenic blindness.