Dr Justin O'Day AM

Censor-in-Chief of the Royal Australian College of Ophthalmologists (1990–1993)

Dr Justin O'Day was born into a medical family in Melbourne on 30 April 1944 and was educated by the Jesuits. He played the drums in a rock group called the Wild Cherries in the 1960s during his studies in medicine and gained his MBBS from Melbourne University in 1968. He was also a member of the Australian Youth Orchestra and kept performing light operas after he graduated.

He gained Fellowship of the Royal Australian College of Physicians in 1972 before travelling to Africa, and he then spent three years doing ophthalmology in Melbourne. Having been awarded a DO (Melbourne) in 1976, he was awarded FRACS and FRACO in 1977 and then went to London for three years. There he was awarded FRCS and FRCOph by examination in 1979.

On his return, Dr O'Day worked at the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital (RVEEH) and St Vincent's Hospital in Melbourne and became Head of Ophthalmology there from 1984 to 1997 when the eye department was closed. From 1979 to 1985, he spent one month each year working in Africa on an onchocerciasis project, and in South America until 1983. Justin was Censor-in-Chief from 1990 to 1993 before becoming President in 1994. He became Head of the Neuro-ophthalmology Unit at the RVEEH in 1992 from where he retired in 2008. He also served on the College Journal Editorial Board for 25 years, the Ophthalmic Research Institute Board from 1986 to 1998, the Orthoptic Board of Australia, Part II Court of Examiners, the QEC, and Federal Councillor from 1989 to 1996.

Apart from having authored many articles and several books, Justin has also been a member of working parties on the Ophthalmology Workforce for the Australian Medical Workforce Advisory Committee, and on ophthalmology clinical indicators for the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards, Chairman of the NHMRC Working Party on Diabetic Retinopathy, member of the steering committee for the ICO held in Sydney in 2002, and a Director of the RANZCO Eye Foundation from 2002 to 2009. He advocated strongly for the two-year College Presidency which has now come to pass.

Justin believed that medical students should be taught ophthalmology in their undergraduate curriculum to enable them to diagnose, treat and refer patients with ophthalmic problems which are common in General Practice; to gain insight into disease processes; and that the act of teaching (by Fellows) improves the level of expertise of the teachers. It was said of him that he was a generous teacher of registrars, Fellows and medical students, motivated by the belief that one should not be selfish with knowledge. He became an Associate Professor at Melbourne University in 2002. He was awarded an AM in 2005 for services to Medicine, particularly in the field of ophthalmology as a clinician, teacher and administrator. In 2009, he was awarded the College Medal for his

distinguished, meritorious and selfless service to the College, the community and to medicine.

During his term in office:

- The inaugural Cedric Cohen Medal was awarded on the basis of the Part I Basic Sciences exam results to Dr Anthony Maloof.
- Dr Chris Buckley was appointed as Director of Continuing Education following the resignation of Dr Denis Stark.
- Guidelines for Continuing Education were approved in principle and distributed, while a points system equitable to all Fellows was devised.
- Focal Point Manuals were sent to all Fellows who wished to participate in Continuing Medical Education, together with a questionnaire regarding the number of meetings, publications etc with which they were involved.
- Training posts at Orange, Townsville, Royal Hobart Hospital and Royal Darwin Hospital were approved for fourth year posts.
- The role of clinical supervisors was upgraded.
- New surgical audit books to replace the surgical logbooks were distributed to trainees to provide information on the types of surgery performed in each post and a software package was developed to enable registrars and the College to collect the data.
- A position paper on the College's policy on overseas qualifications and training was prepared in response to a request from the Australian Medical Council, and a formal interviewing panel was convened to meet four times per year.

Justin stepped down from the position of Censor-in-Chief to take on the role of Vice President of the College. It was said that Justin's three years as Censor-in-Chief were remarkably productive and that his multiple initiatives would yield increasing benefits for the College and its Fellows as time passes.