Dr Peter A Rogers

Second Censor-in-Chief of the Australian College of Ophthalmologists (1972–1978)

In 1972, Dr Peter Rogers took over from Dr Ken ("KG") Howsam, as Chair of the Qualification and Education Committee (QEC), which had been formed in 1969. A syllabus and conditions for training of young ophthalmologists had been compiled with the standard and examination system set at a high level. In 1971, it was agreed that entry to the College would be by examination as from 30 June that year. The qualifications issuing from the College's agreement with the Australasian College of Surgeons came to be accepted by the Australian Commonwealth and State Governments as accreditation for ophthalmologists and in due course, the university diplomas of ophthalmology were discontinued. In 1976, the role of Chair of the QEC was endowed with the title of Censor-in-Chief.

Peter was born in Hobart, Tasmania. He was educated at the Hutchin's School in Hobart. He had one brother, James, who also became an ophthalmologist. He entered the University of Sydney in 1941. At the end of 1941, he enlisted via the University of Sydney Regiment and became a military truck driver. Peter graduated MB BS from University of Sydney with honours in 1946 and was Resident Medical Officer (RMO) at Mater Misericordiae Hospital, Sydney from 1946 to 1947 before he became Ophthalmology Registrar at St Vincent's Hospital until 1949. He was awarded with a Diploma in Ophthalmology (DO) in 1949 and became Honorary Medical Officer at both the Mater Misericordiae and St Vincent's Hospitals in Sydney.

Shortly after qualifying with his DO in 1949, Peter took an active role in the Ophthalmological Society of Australia (OSA) from 1951 to 1960, and then again from 1965 to 1969. He was a Councillor with the OSA including the role of Secretary for seven years.

With the formation of the Australian College of Ophthalmologists (ACO) in 1969, the hotchpotch of available qualifications at the time was brought under control. Peter was a founding member of the ACO in 1969 and made an enormous contribution to the promotion and development of the College at almost every level. At the first Council meeting of the ACO on 31 May 1969, he pointed out that the basic reasons behind the move to establish a College had been the question of qualifications and standards. Therefore, the success of the College would stand or fall on the success of the QEC and the support given to it by members. Negotiations were then commenced with postgraduate medical education bodies in the States regarding courses of training for examinations for entry to the College. From 1969 to 1978, he was a member of the QEC, and as Chair of that Committee from 1972, he was an ex-officio member of the ACO Council.

Peter gave the Council Lecture in 1970 on Current Concepts in Surgery of the Eyelids, In 1971, with a new Journal planned to be published three times per year in place of the annual ASO Transactions, Peter Rogers, along with Reuben Hertzberg as Editor, Ronald Lowe, DRL Hart and D Shortbridge, was on the initial editorial committee. Peter participated in the National Trachoma Program operating field trip to the Northern Territory in 1976.

In 1960, Peter had received a Travel Grant from the NSW State Cancer Council and travelled to the UK where he became Senior House Officer in the Department of Jaw and Plastic Surgery at the Frenchay Hospital, Bristol, UK. While he was in England, he met Dr HB Stallard, a very distinguished ophthalmologist who had been the mile runner in the four man team which defeated the US in the 1924 Olympics in Paris, immortalised in the film "Chariots of Fire". Peter sought advice on Stallard's management with radiation of malignant retinoblastoma, a disease which occurs in very young children and can involve both eyes. Stallard had developed a technique of irradiating tumour in the posterior chamber of the eye, minimising damage to the rest of the eye. Stallard spent a generous amount of time with Peter explaining the surgical technique of applying this radiation with plaques temporarily attached to the sclera.

After a Federal Department of Health sponsored operating field trip to Thailand in 1963, he established the Oculoplastic Unit at Sydney Eye Hospital and became Honorary Ophthalmic Plastic Surgeon there from 1967 to 1992. He was admitted as an International Fellow of the American Society of Ophthalmic Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery in 1969 and a Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) in 1972. From 1988 to 1994, he was Chairman of the RACO Oculoplastic Committee and became the Foundation Chairman of the Australian Society of Ophthalmic Plastic Surgeons in 1995.