

58 TRIBUTES

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Medico's holistic approach to life

PETER Last played an important role in the development of medical services in South Australia. His holistic approach to medical matters was echoed in his own rich and diverse intellectual and lifestyle pursuits.

He was born to a distinguished doctor and anatomist, Raymond Last, and Vera (nee Judell) but was only a toddler when his parents separated, leaving him and his older brother John to be brought up by Vera.

His father, who became a professor of anatomy at the Royal College of Surgeons in London, had no further part in his upbringing apart from two brief visits.

His family believes that was to play a large part in his unswerving dedication to his family, children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. Peter had the unusual experience of being more than 40 years old when he first got to better know his father.

Through his cousins, the Juddells, Peter was introduced to sailing at Somerton at a young age, and sailing and yachting would be a primary form of sport and relaxation for the rest of his life.

At St Peter's College, Peter's name is on various honour roles for academic rather than sporting achievements. Having completed his schooling at 15, too young to study medi-

cine, he repeated his final year, this time studying all the arts subjects. It was a revelation for him and developed within him a love of history, classical music and literature.

He went on to top his medical degree courses in his final years at the University of Adelaide.

He met a nurse, Jenny Robertson, a Happy Valley winemaker's daughter, while working as a registrar at the Royal Adelaide Hospital and they married in 1955.

There followed a series of attachments to the Walter and Eliza Institute in Melbourne and the Hammersmith Hospital in London, gaining him membership of the Australian and British Colleges of Physicians.

He came back to Adelaide to work in teaching and practice positions across Adelaide hospitals and at Adelaide University. He was popular as a teacher, and many would remember his advice on patients: "Double the drinking they admit to, and halve the sex."

As medical superintendent at the Repatriation General Hospital at Daw Park in the 1960s looking after patients dating back to the Boer War, he developed a holistic approach to geriatric care that would become a model for that branch of medicine. He saw war conditions himself by working at the Bien Hoa Hos-



PETER MURRAY
LAST OAM

Medico and yachtsman

Born: November 23, 1929; Unley
Died: July 5, 2019; Adelaide

pital during the Vietnam War. In 1972, frustrated at hospital bureaucracy, he switched to hospital administration. He became director of medicine when the hospital sector evolved into the SA Health Commission. He was deeply involved in the development of country hospitals.

He returned to the work-face in 1983 as Julia Farr Centre's clinical superintendent, clearing out restrictive regimes and exploring new ways of

treating young adults with severe brain injuries.

He retired in 1990 and was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for services to medicine the following year.

Peter had moved on from sailing dinghys to the Royal SA Yacht Squadron, where he would become a life member.

The family cruised widely in a succession of yachts in the Pacific and the Mediterranean as well as in SA waters.

Peter edited *Squadron Quarterly* after his retirement from medicine. He catalogued the yacht squadron's large collection of objects and pictures, planning a history of the squadron.

That points to his other great love, of history and current affairs. Peter subscribed to five newspapers a day from

around the world. *The Advertiser*. I
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General F. Park) and *A History*
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He could receive the original as well as English, and was a cyclopedia, probably favouring encyclopaedia interest as a young

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He is survived by three children: Robert, Anne and William. He also leaves five grandchildren.

READER CONTRIBUTIONS: Do you want to honour someone? Readers are invited to provide obituary information including dates of birth and death, and a photograph. Contributions must also include the author's telephone contact details. **SEND TO:** Tim Lloyd, Obituaries, The Advertiser, GPO Box 339, Adelaide, 5001.
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