

## JONES, ALAN TREVOR (1901-1979), health service administrator and Provost, Welsh National School of Medicine

**Name:** Alan Trevor Jones  
**Date of birth:** 1901  
**Date of death:** 1979  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** health service administrator and Provost, Welsh National School of Medicine  
**Area of activity:** Education; Medicine  
**Author:** Alun Roberts

Trevor Jones was born in Pengam, Glamorgan 24 February 1901 and educated at Lewis School, Pengam where his father, Roger Williams Jones, was headmaster. He undertook his preclinical medical training at the University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire. However, in 1921, rather than pursue his clinical training in Cardiff in order to obtain the medical degrees of the University of Wales - as he later observed, 'an unnecessary exhibition of patriotism to those of us who were content with the easier and less arduous London Degree' - he proceeded to University College Hospital, London, obtaining the MB BS Lond. in 1924.

After being a houseman to the distinguished Welsh physician, **Sir Thomas Lewis**, Trevor Jones held a series of hospital appointments in London and the provinces which equipped him to obtain the Membership of the Royal College of Physicians and the London MD in 1927 and the Diploma in Public Health in 1929. Between 1927 and 1929, as medical officer in charge of general medical beds and deputy superintendent at St Marylebone Infirmary, working under Dr Basil Hood, he acquired a particular interest in the minutiae of medical administration which never left him.

In 1929, hoping eventually to obtain a position on the consultant staff of a hospital in Wales, Trevor Jones took the position of medical superintendent of the Swansea General Hospital where he combined clinical and administrative duties. After little more than a year he moved to Carmarthen to join a busy general practice headed by Dr Arwyn Davies, whose wife was Trevor Jones's mother's older sister. This position also allowed him to engage in hospital clinical and public health work - as medical officer of health - in the town.

By 1935 his medical experience was sufficiently varied for him to receive an invitation to apply for a post of medical officer in the Welsh Board of Health in Cardiff. He spent much of the first two years in this position evaluating projects to be undertaken in the depressed areas of south Wales which both alleviated unemployment and improved health facilities. In 1937, under the government's Emergency Medical Services Scheme to plan for the impact of approaching war, he was appointed Hospital Officer for Wales, the only Hospital Officer of any region in England, Scotland or Wales to survive in post from first appointment in 1937 until the end of the 'emergency' in 1947. Trevor Jones's initial priority was to review Wales's health-care facilities and ensure that they were fit to deal with air-raid casualties, displaced civilians and the other health-related consequences of war.

However, as the government began to plan for the post-war introduction of a national health service Trevor Jones, Professor J. A. Nixon (University of Bristol) and Professor Ralph Picken (Welsh National School of Medicine) undertook a fundamental review, published in 1945 as Survey of Hospital Services of South Wales, which would have a major impact on the pattern of hospital services in the principality, emphasising in particular the need for a large new medical teaching centre in Cardiff. Appointed in 1947 as Senior Administrative Medical Officer of the new Welsh Regional Hospital Board, he played a key role in the implementation of the National Health Service Act in Wales.

Recognising the vital importance for Wales of training more doctors - and dentists - and specialists of all kinds, he became increasingly interested in the work of the Welsh National School of Medicine and its leadership role in the future health service in Wales. When, in 1954, the opportunity arose to apply for the post of Provost, soon to become vacant, he seized it with confidence arguing at his interview (as he wrote in his diary) 'that a Provost with general experience of all sides of medicine was able to contribute something to a school, which the teachers, with their very narrow interests, could not bring'. However, several months were to elapse before Trevor Jones was appointed, owing to the reservations of a few of the senior academics, notably Harold Scarborough, the professor of medicine, but in the event his time as provost, from 1955 to 1969 - the only Welsh-speaking provost in the School's history - proved to be outstandingly successful. A companionable man, he formed an excellent rapport with the staff and the medical students, many of whom he had personally interviewed for admission, and under his leadership the School flourished. It was able to attract and retain academic staff of the highest calibre, some of them having strong personalities. Not the least among them was the formidable professor of pathology, **Jethro Gough**, whose overbearing manner not even the provost was able to control, according to Professor Archie Cochrane, himself not the easiest of colleagues.

Cochrane acknowledged, however, in his book *One Man's Medicine*, that Trevor Jones was 'an exceptional medical administrator' and, closely involved from the 1940s in the planning of the medical teaching centre concept in Cardiff, his priority as provost was to implement the plans. In the words of Owen Wade, at the time professor of therapeutics in Belfast, Trevor Jones was 'just the right man' to see the medical teaching centre project through to completion on its 53 acre site at Heath Park in the north of Cardiff. First to be built was the Dental School and Hospital, opened by the Duke of Edinburgh in 1966. Construction of the 800-bedded University Hospital of Wales and medical school buildings commenced in the same year, the complex, integrating the functions of teaching, research and clinical care in a manner unparalleled in the United Kingdom at that time, being officially opened by the Queen in 1971. By then Trevor Jones had retired as provost though he continued to serve on the main committees of the hospital for some years. Among the accolades which gave him particular pleasure at the time of his retirement was the School's decision to have his portrait painted by the popular Newport artist, Thomas Rathmell - it hangs in the School of Medicine's main committee room at Heath Park. However, as he wrote in his diary, 'the most gratifying thing of all was an Honorary LLD given to me by the University of Wales, when I was presented before the Court at Swansea with a very complimentary speech by Patrick Mounsey, who could not have been more generous to his predecessor'. During his speech Mounsey referred to Trevor Jones's abiding belief in the essential role of the University in inculcating a spirit of independent thought and enquiry, as important for doctors as for anyone else. In his (limited) leisure time he himself took great pleasure in reading - Dickens and historical works - and he was an active member of the 'Fortnightly', a literary club in Cardiff made up mainly of academics and other professional people. After one meeting he wrote in his diary: 'A very good dinner and very good conversation, as one would expect from a crowd of this kind. I like it very much'.

In 1931 he married Gwyneth Evans, and they had a son who became a consultant paediatrician and a daughter who became a nurse. He died on 10 June 1979 and, though a staunch Presbyterian throughout his life, he was buried in Gelligaer churchyard where his parents had gone before him.

### Author

Dr Alun Roberts

### Sources

*Trevor Jones papers*, Cardiff University

*The Lancet*, 23 June 1979

*British Medical Journal*, 30 June 1979

information from his son, Dr Roger Verrier Jones

### Additional Links

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