Eulogy - **Michael Selby Watson** (1941-2024)

**WATSON, Michael Selby MA, MB Camb. 1967, BChir (Distinc.) 1966; FRCS Eng. 1971;
MRCP (UK) 1970; MRCS Eng. LRCP Lond. 1966 (Westm.). Cons. Orthop. Surg. Guy's Hosp. Lond.; Socs Fell. Brit. Orthop. Assn.; Mem. (Ex-Pres.) Europ. Soc. for Surg. of Shoulder & Elbow; Corresp. Mem. Amer. Soc. of Shoulder & Elbow Surg.; Founding Mem. (Ex-Pres.) Brit. Elbow & Shoulder Soc. Late Lect. Inst. Orthop. Lond.; Regist. Westm. Hosp. Lond. Pubns Editor, Pract. Shoulder Surg. 1985; Surg. Disorders of The Shoulder. 1990; papers on Forefoot arthroplasty, painful arc, rotator cuff repair, rotator cufffunction. Jl. Bone & Joint Surg. 1989, vol. 71-B; Design rationale shoulder arthroplasty. Orthopaedica Belgica. 1994**



Michael was born in Newcastle but moved with his family to South Africa aged 5.
After several years in South Africa the family returned to England and Michael went to Quarry Bank Grammar school in Liverpool.
His best friend at school Phil Payne recalls "*Michael arriving in a funny blazer and with a strange accent. His pale complexion prompted the unkind name "death warmed up" by fellow older pupil John Lennon (who was in a band called The Quarrymen, later became The Beatles.)"*
Phil remembers a first year race, where the whole year lined up to race 2 miles. Michael won and marked his spot as an outstanding athlete. He continued running , competing for England in the 400m. A cartoon appeared in The Liverpool Echo of Michael running, which emphasized his energy and speed.
He also excelled at languages, art and the sciences winning prizes for each.
While at school Michael joined the scouts , rising to the rank of Queen Scout, one of the youngest Queen Scouts at that time.
Winning a scholarship he went to Caius College Cambridge.
He continued in the University Athletics Team and was awarded a blue for athletics. Injury stopped him from competing in the 400m at the1960 Olympics

His clinical studies were at the Westminster Hospital in London. After qualifying as a Doctor Michael signed up onto a graduate recruitment scheme with the Royal Air Force for a 5-year commission, which paid for his flying training as an Acting Pilot Officer (APO), and he visited many countries including Germany and Sweden. Michael passed his FRCS at RAF Hospital Wegberg in Germany, having already passed his MRCP a year earlier. However, he departed from the RAF upon completing his five-year term, as he was keen to resume his orthopaedic training in London, where he secured a position as an orthopaedic Registrar.

In 1974, he was promoted to Lecturer under the newly appointed Professor Lipmann (Lippy) Kessel, whose clinical base was initially at Fulham Hospital before relocating to Charing Cross Hospital. It was here that Michael's academic career flourished. Seven highly referenced papers followed, published between 1977 and 1996, focused on the trans-acromial approach to the shoulder and Acromio-Clavicular (AC) joint degeneration and rotator cuff tears published in the top Medical Journals.
At that time Charles Neer in New York published his landmark paper on "Anterior acromioplasty for the chronic impingement syndrome in the shoulder" (1972). Around the

same time Michael's published research with Lipmann Kessel was proving that arthritis of the AC joint with its associated osteophytes was a major cause of rotator cuff tears in the shoulder. Roger Emery recalls that –

"Michael managed to create a bridge between Europe and the United States when his ex-teacher Lipmann Kessel and Charles Neer were literally poles apart. In addition, he was one of the few orthopaedic surgeons who reached out to continental Europe and secured a place for the UK within the fledgling organisation of SECEC"

It was a consequence of Michael's collaboration with the United States that he became one of the first British Shoulder surgeons to be elected to American Shoulder and Elbow Surgeons as an Honorary Member.

One of the other problems Michael had to contend with was the conflict between Lipmann Kessel (Fulham Hospital and the RNOH Stanmore) who had developed the Kessel constrained Total Shoulder Replacement and Alan Lettin (St Bartholomew's Hospital and RNOH Stanmore) who had developed the Stanmore constrained Total Shoulder Replacement, a real diplomatic challenge at the time. Michael was very much in the Lipmann Kessel camp at that time.

Ian Bayley has observed -

"Michael was very instrumental in Lippy's development of the Kessel constrained TSR and he inserted a prototype into a cadaver, making the comment that he was able to suspend the body part off the Kessel glenoid screw, highlighting just how strong the screw fixation was."

After his appointment as a Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon at Guy's Hospital in 1977, Michael published 2 excellent books – "Practical Shoulder Surgery" (1985) - a multi-author reference for inexperienced shoulder surgeons; and "Surgical Disorder of the Shoulder" (1990) for more experienced surgeons. Michael's artistic skills were highlighted in these books as the illustrations were personally drawn by him.

Roger Emery recalls

"London was a difficult place to train with very little exchange between programs and the Thames creating a total barrier. I was granted 'permission' to go and watch Michael do a Bristow procedure in around 1985, a shoulder stabilisation operation that Michael promoted both clinically and in one of his papers. More memorable was seeing an Arthroscopic Subacromial Decompression (ASD) carried out by Harvard Ellman at Michael's invitation at Guy's in 1989, the first arthroscopic shoulder operation to be carried out in the UK. I recall walking back across the Thames having been very disappointed as could not see a thing. "

Michael Watson and the British Elbow and Shoulder Society (BESS)

On 3 November 1986, after the very successful 3rd International Conference on Surgery of the Shoulder in Fukuoka, Japan, Michael Watson wrote to three of his closest shoulder colleagues - Ian Bayley (Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital, London), Steve Copeland (Royal Berkshire Hospital, Reading) and Angus Wallace (Nottingham University Hospital) the following letter that started –

“Dear colleagues, I think the time has come to take the bull by the horns and seriously consider the nuts and bolts of setting up a British Shoulder Surgery Association. I am sure that we are going to start to get enquiries for our corporate stance on technical and education.”

As a consequence, four of the five founding members of BESS – Michael Watson, Ian Bayley, Steve Copeland and Angus Wallace met in Michael’s Harley Street rooms in London on 28 March 1987 and discussed the setting up of a Society. BESS was born. Michael’s artistic skills resulted in him creating the first BESS logo – the humerus with a serpent winding around it – it was based on a combination of Asclepius, God of medicine, healing, rejuvenation and physicians with his serpent-entwined staff and a modification of Andry’s tree.

Michael was elected the 3rd President of BESS (1993-5) after Willie Souter and Ian Bayley, his appointment being postponed by his activities with the European Society of Surgery of the Shoulder and Elbow (vide infra). Michael subsequently ran the 7th BESS Congress at the Connaught Hall in London that was combined with some SECEC papers in order to foster European collaboration.

Michael Watson and the European Society for Surgery of the Shoulder and the Elbow known as Société Européenne de Chururgie de l’Épaule et du Coude (SECEC)

Michael was an excellent linguist, and this resulted in him developing friendships with shoulder surgeons across Europe.
He formed a particular friendship with Didier Patte who wrote a chapter in his book on “Disorders of the Shoulder” before he died in 1990.
Didier Patte (shoulder surgeon) with Norbert Gschwend (elbow surgeon), set up SECEC in 1987 shortly after the 3rd International Conference of the Shoulder in Fukuoka, Japan (1986). Norbert Gschwend was appointed the 1st SECEC President (1987-88), and Michael Watson was the 2nd SECEC President (1989).
During his Presidency Michael worked hard to bring in membership of SECEC from northern Europe and Scandinavia. He had formed friendships with Lennart Hovelius, Richard Wallenstein, Jan Thorling, Rolf Ideberg, and Bo Lundberg (Sweden) and Otto Sneppen and Jens Soejbjerg (Denmark) and he was instrumental in drawing them all into SECEC.

Michael Watson’s Family Life

Michael met Angela at Guys Hospital, where she trained and worked as a doctor. They married in 1986. At that stage he had had to stop doing paediatric and spinal surgery, which he enjoyed doing, as the demand for his shoulder expertise left no time to do anything else. He moved his private practice from Harley Street to London Bridge hospital to be nearer Guys, which saved travelling time. Angela and Michael attended the Japan ICSES meeting together in 1986 which gave Angela the opportunity to meet up with Michael’s shoulder colleagues many of whom became close family friends. Michael was very much a family man, and he attended many of the international meetings (Ottawa, Paris, New York, La Quinta) with Angela and their three young sons.

He was diagnosed with multiple myeloma in 1997, taking early retirement in 1998 after total body irradiation and autologous stem cell graft. Michael remained interested in

shoulders and attended further BESS and ICSES meetings in the UK (Edinburgh, Warwick, Glasgow).

Angela has noted -

“Our medical books at the time said myeloma was invariably fatal within 2 years. Michael was Guys Hospital’s “miracle” longest surviving myeloma patient.

Michael was a gentle, kind, extremely knowledgeable and able man, who excelled at anything he put his mind to. He was admired and loved by all who had the opportunity to know him. He has left a huge void in our lives.”

Michael died on 31st October 2024 and is survived by Angela Watson, his wife and their sons: Michael, Charles and George. Also, his daughter Karin and son David from his previous marriage and his brother Dave.

by W Angus Wallace, Roger Emery and Angela Watson