

Daniel Hart, President of the Australian College of Ophthalmologists, 1969 - 1970

Daniel Hart was born on 14 October 1920, post WWI. There were five older siblings who were born pre-WWI. Daniel married in 1950 whilst in the UK and is father to three sons and one daughter.

Daniel spent most of his life in Clayfield, Brisbane. He attended Ascot State School from 1926 to 1933 and was awarded a Scholarship to "Churchie" (Church of England Grammar School – C.E.G.S.) for his secondary education from 1934 to 1937. He proceeded to Medical School at the University of Queensland in 1938, and in 1939 during his 2nd year of Medicine he joined the 7th Field Ambulance, part of the Army Medical Corps, for peacetime training. In 1942 his 5th year medicine was reduced to six months as part of the 'war course', to meet the urgent need for doctors in the services, and he commenced his 6th year medicine in June 1942. He graduated in 1943 with the usual two to three year residency reduced to one year for those who planned to join the services. He finished his residency on D-Day, 10 June 1944 and commenced a 3-week 'locum' at Cleveland in Brisbane. He then enlisted as a Medical Officer with the rank of Captain in the AIF on 17 July 1944, and in October 1945 volunteered for the British Commonwealth Occupation Force to take part in the occupation of Japan until August 1947. On discharge from the services he undertook further medical training to fill gaps left from his shortened training, and in 1949 he sailed for England to study for Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons. In February 1950, after passing the FRCS Primary, he enrolled in a 12 month course for a Diploma in Ophthalmology and passed this in February 1951. He became a resident at the Bristol Eye Hospital and passed the FRCS DO final in November 1952 before arriving back in Australia in January 1953. In March 1953 Daniel commenced practice with his Ophthalmologist brother Jim, at 137 Wickham Terrace and in July 1954 he was appointed Hon Sec of Qld Branch of the BMA. He was elected to the BMA Council from August 1956 to 1958 and became Hon Sec to the Medical Defence Society of Queensland. In July 1956 he retired from the Hospital for Sick Children and Mark Harrison took over the post as clinical assistant Ophthalmologist. Daniel attended his first OSA Congress in 1956 which was held in Brisbane that year. He became a member of ORIA Board in 1960 until 1965 and set up research into Eye Melanoma in 1966. As President, Daniel Hart wore the first Chain of Office which symbolised the ties with the Ophthalmological Society of Australia with each link bearing the name of a Past President of the Society.

The main achievements of the College under Daniel Hart's Presidency were the education and examination of people in ophthalmology: the *raison d'être* of the College, which entailed the work of the nine-man Qualification and Education Committee under the able Chairmanship of K.G. Howsam. The first challenge was the selection of suitable applicants for admission to the College which addressed general requirements for entry; and the experience and qualification of the suitability of a large number of applicants. Acceptable experience set out in the Articles of Association was at least one year of general residency and then three years' full-time training in an approved post to qualify for membership. A system of accreditation of hospitals was still to be set up. It was found that in other countries accreditation became a challenge to provide better training programs and better facilities, with benefits all round.

Although a few years' grace was given to those already in training, from June 1971 examinations were introduced to qualify for "Membership of the Australian College of Ophthalmologists" or M.A.C.O. The regulations and syllabus for the M.A.C.O. consisted of anatomy, physiology and applied optics for the first part; with pathology, surgical and medical aspects of ophthalmology for the second part. Exemptions from either part were discretionary by the Q and E Committee. Daniel Hart foresaw that once the examinations had settled in, the Q and E would be able to concentrate on education with help from university departments of ophthalmology and from other Colleges, particularly RACS, which had assisted with the examination regulations. It was hoped that productive years wasted in taking courses and degrees could be avoided by integrating the training programs of the ACO, RACS, and the universities. Although the College did not have the resources for the full three-year training of ophthalmologists from Asia, it was considered that shorter courses would suit their needs.

In the first year, therefore, the College had achieved quite a lot in recruiting, encouraging and educating ophthalmologists to succeed the founders; and success would be measured in the art and science of ophthalmology being better in a few decades.

In his retirement Daniel Hart has written and published a book entitled "Fido and Friends", which is described as a family story and The World War II of Queensland. The information was gathered from an assortment of pictures, journals and letters dating back as far as 1936, and the text marks the historical personal growth from child and medical student to husband, father and highly regarded ophthalmologist. Stories and events from WWII with the impact on Queensland and Queenslanders abroad, together with social and political events of the day are used to illustrate how they shaped today.