

Sheila Glennis Haworth CBE

A tribute to a pioneer in the fight against pulmonary hypertension

Sadly Sheila Glennis Haworth, who had dedicated her professional life to academic and clinical research into pulmonary hypertension, died aged 81 at her home in Oxfordshire after a short illness in October 2020.

We were delighted and honoured when she accepted the invitation to give the opening lecture on “Lung development and pathogenesis of pulmonary vascular disease” at our Münster Symposium in 2019.

Her early medical career started at the Royal Free Hospital followed by paediatric training at Queen Elizabeth Hospital for Children. She also worked as a fellow at the Presbyterian & Babies Hospital, Columbia University in New York. She began her clinical career as a junior doctor at the Hammersmith Hospital and Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children, during which time she developed her passion for academic work. She participated in the Paediatric Developmental Biology and Pathology Initiative at the Department of Experimental Pathology at the Cardiothoracic Institute at the Royal Brompton Hospital where she was mentored by Professor Lynn Reid.

Professor Haworth worked on the developmental vascular pathology of congenital heart disease, as well as pre- and postnatal modulation of vascular growth and function, which had been the topic of her MD thesis. This helped her gain deep insight into the pathophysiology of pulmonary vascular disease.

She was appointed an Honorary Paediatric Consultant in 1977 and was promoted to the Chair of Developmental Cardiology at the Institute of Child Health in 1988. In 1990 the British Heart Foundation agreed to fund the Chair, and Professor Haworth became the first female to have been so honoured. She founded the UK Paediatric Pulmonary Hypertension Service in 2002 with a nationwide network and satellite centres all over the UK - an outstanding example of collaborative clinical networking. She became Emeritus Professor in 2004 but continued to work for the Pulmonary Hypertension Service and was academically active until her untimely death. Professor Haworth one of the founder members of the Pulmonary Vascular Research Institute (PVRI) in 2004 and was the first Paediatric Taskforce Leader. She was elected President of the Institute in the years 2014–2016. She contributed to its successful expansion and actively shaped the structure of the PVRI. She played a key role, setting up a link with the Indian subcontinent on behalf of the PVRI, and in establishing clinical and scientific networks around the world. She was a true pioneer who took part in the last few years with more targeted therapies, and she drove clinical and basic research in the fields of pulmonary hypertension and collaborative networking to strive for optimal patient care.

For her outstanding distinguished work and service to cardiology in the NHS and recognizing her foundation role in setting up the UK Paediatric Pulmonary Hypertension Service, she was made a Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (CBE) receiving her award from Her Majesty the Queen in 2007.

Glennis, as she was known by her family and widely within the profession, was a highly respected academic and clinical scientist and a medical professional of international standing. She was passionately dedicated to her work, committed to striving for excellence and always showing sincere empathy for her patients and fellows. She was a role model in every way and adored by the many people who were fortunate in getting to know her. She had a great sense of humour and enjoyed painting, playing the piano, opera and travelling.

She is not only greatly missed by her husband, Major General Leslie Busk, who was the Director General of the British Heart Foundation from 1990–2004, and her family, but also by the many friends and colleagues all over the world, for whom she had been a true friend and role model.

We would like to dedicate this Special edition to her memory.



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