

Obituaries

Pursuit of learning GP's eternal quest

LUCIUS ALLEN

Doctor, linguist

Born Rockhampton, March 17, 1920

Died Brisbane August 2, 2003

DR Lucius Allen was the product of a rich intellectual and cultural heritage.

His grandfather, William Allen, was an Anglo-Irish pioneer who had emigrated to Sydney in 1948, and settled in Rockhampton in the 1870s. The suburb, Allentown, bears his name.

Dr Allen's father was dux of Rockhampton Grammar School and later won the University Medal in law at the King's Inn, Trinity College, Dublin at the turn of the 20th century.

He became an esteemed Brisbane academic barrister and district court judge, writing the Justices Acts of Queensland, the Police Manual and Solicitors' Manual, and received an honorary Doctor of Philosophy in Law from the University of Queensland in the early 1950s.

Into this rich patrimony, Lucius was born on St Patrick's Day, 1920.

The family moved to Brisbane in 1926 and by the time he attended primary school in Ascot, Lucius could recite some Greek and Latin to the headmaster.

He was dux of Brisbane Grammar School in 1937, receiving the Lilley medal as well as prizes for Ancient Greek, Latin and the Basil Porter Prize in French.

He was awarded an open university scholarship and graduated with first class honours in Classics at the University of Queensland, then in George Street.

In his second year in the Department of Philosophy, he was awarded the Douglas Price Memorial Prize in ethics and metaphysics as the top student in classics and philosophy.

Although he started a Master of Arts, he did not finish because he switched to medicine.

In 1942, he became a Latin master at the Toowoomba Grammar School for a year followed by a stint at Brisbane Grammar School in 1943 before starting medicine.

He married Lucy Gulbrandson, a senior theatre



DR Lucius Allen with his wife and practice manager Lucy.

sister, in 1950 and soon after his internship, started practising at Pittsworth, on the Darling Downs. The couple's first child, Roger, was born in Toowoomba in 1951.

After several years of service, Dr Allen moved to a solo practice in Ballina, northern NSW, where Kathryn was born in 1955.

In 1960, he studied in London – neurology at Queen Square, internal medicine at Hammersmith, cardiology at the Institute of Cardiology and at the Post-Graduate Medical School – but returned to Brisbane in 1961 when his father became ill. After working at the Repatriation General Hospital, Greenslopes as a senior house officer, he bought a practice in Gympie Road, Chermiside, Brisbane, where as a solo general practitioner, he served the local community for 28 years – and never with appointments.

His wife Lucy was his constant companion, practice manager and confidante.

Although a physician, he was ever the teacher and student. Literature was his greatest love. He had an exhaustive, and sometimes exhausting, knowledge of European and ancient history, ancient Greek, Latin, French and later Italian and Spanish, and knew enough German to tutor his granddaughter, Rosemary, in Grade 10 German.

He was widely travelled

with a love of Egypt and often on bus trips became the de facto guide because of his amazing knowledge of antiquity.

Curiosity was his hallmark, academic excellence his aspiration, teaching and reading his escape and love. He carefully guarded his innermost thoughts, and was a complex man of many paradoxes; generous of money and time but parsimonious with his wife's old cake tins, intolerant of fools and mediocrity but long-suffering as a teacher.

Every evening meal was punctuated by an excursion to the dictionary of one language or another. He tutored most of the family members including his brother, Julius, at some time in one or other discipline: algebra, mathematics, French, Greek, Latin, German, English and history.

He taught his son Roger senior French as an extra subject and for five years tutored an advanced class in French for the University of the Third Age at his home.

For three years, he taught Italian to the Rev Phil Crook who conducted his funeral service at Saint Mark's Anglican Church, Clayfield.

He is survived by his wife, Lucy, daughter, Kathryn, son Roger and 10 grandchildren as well as his brothers whom he called "The Twins", eight years his junior, Adrian and Julius.

— Dr Roger Allen