

Eyelights

A man with thinning hair, wearing a brown and white tweed jacket over a light-colored shirt, is smiling and sitting outdoors. He is leaning on a wooden bench or railing. In the background, there is a large body of water (likely a lake or fjord) and a range of rugged, snow-capped mountains under a blue sky with some clouds. The overall scene is bright and scenic.

November 2023

Honouring a Glaucoma Pioneer

Trying new
procedures

Eye accident
saved sight

GLAUCOMA NZ
TO SAVE SIGHT



Ten year old Hadley Christian

Happy 21st Birthday

As Christmas approaches, it is the time of year when we think about family, friends, gifts, and Thanksgiving. I want to acknowledge the incredible mahi of our family of trustees, volunteers, donors, and members. Your generosity of in-kind and financial support has enabled us to develop new education and support services, increase awareness, and fund life-changing research to reduce unnecessary blindness.

In our 21st year, it is also appropriate to reflect on pioneers like Anthony Molteno, best known for inventing the world's first glaucoma drainage valve, and recognise Glaucoma New Zealand's founding trustees, Ken Tarr, Helen Danesh-Meyer, Gordon Sanderson, and Mike O'Rourke. There have been significant improvements in treatments, surgeries and glaucoma management over this period, and we are proud to work alongside world-leading researchers, eye industry and eye specialists to keep you informed of new technologies to help you live well with glaucoma.

The trustees and I would also like to acknowledge Karon Farmer, who has resigned as our administrator for 16 years. We are incredibly grateful for her dedicated service, calm demeanour, and attention to detail to ensure members of Glaucoma New Zealand are respected and supported. She steadied the ship many times, especially during Covid when she stepped up to manage the organisation. We wish her all the best in her next adventure.

We have shared the story of ten-year-old Hadley, pictured here, to dispel the myth that glaucoma is only for older adults. The eye drops, surgeries, and inconvenience of glaucoma are there regardless of age, and with your continued support, we will be too.

Wishing you and your family a very happy Christmas,

Warm regards,

Pippa

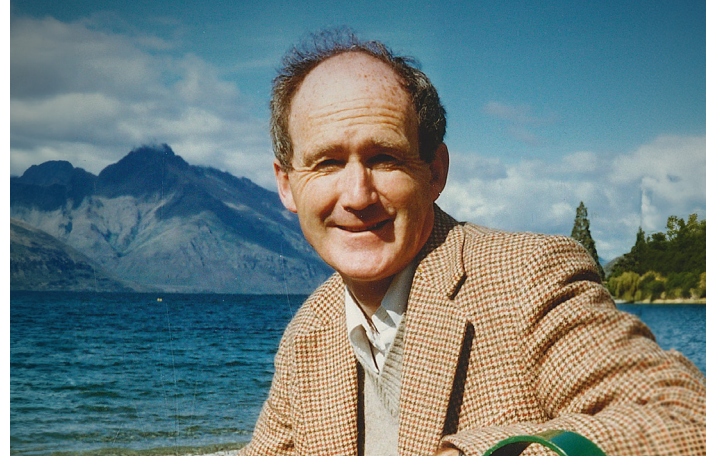
Professor Anthony C.B. Molteno: Pioneering, Polymath Ophthalmologist

(b. 20th May 1938; d. 25th August 2023)

The death of Professor Anthony Molteno, at age 85, prompts reflection on the life and career of possibly the most innovative—and certainly one of the most intriguing—glaucoma surgeons of all-time. An individual of rare talent and originality, best known for inventing the world’s first glaucoma drainage valve (“the Molteno implant”), Molteno was a pioneering clinician-scientist and fascinating character.

Born in Cape Town, South Africa, he developed a fascination for telescopes at a young age, when he began to grind his own lenses. When his parents built a new house, he even persuaded them to include a sliding roof to ease use of his telescopes for star-gazing. Although passionate about mathematics and physics, he did not recall his school days fondly. He liked to tell people that his best subject was divinity. (He did not believe in God, but he maintained a lifelong interest in world religions.)

After graduating in medicine from the University of Cape Town, Molteno was drawn to ophthalmology via his love for lenses. He served as an ophthalmologist at Baragwanath Hospital, before acting as head of the Department of Ophthalmology at the University of Stellenbosch and Tygerberg Hospital. Opposed to apartheid, Molteno and his wife Tess (their marriage spanned more than six decades from 1961) and their three children left South Africa in 1977, re-locating to New Zealand where he assumed an academic position at Otago University in Dunedin, initially as Consultant and then from 1984 as Head of the Department of Ophthalmology.



Molteno implants, now used extensively in glaucoma surgery worldwide, had their origins in the 1960s when Molteno began tackling intractable glaucoma. In his typically imaginative and resourceful style, his first implants were made from dental acrylic, boiled for hours to avoid chemical leaching. In 1969 he published the first article about treating glaucoma with a novel drainage device involving a small implanted plate.

Establishing the Otago Glaucoma Surgery Outcome Study, a long-term follow-up study into glaucoma surgery, Molteno monitored more than 1000 eyes with a Molteno implant, and more than 1000 eyes that had a trabeculectomy, at Dunedin Hospital since 1977 to determine their long-term outcomes. This work provided uniquely valuable insights into the processes of bleb formation and the life-cycle of fibrosis following glaucoma surgery, reported in nearly 100 articles and seven book chapters.

Molteno’s imaginative contributions to clinical problem-solving extend well beyond the management of glaucoma. For example, he developed the bone-derived hydroxyapatite M-Sphere orbital implant, used following enucleation. Mischievously naming this bovine-derived implant “the Moabone orbital implant” to evoke New Zealand’s extinct giant flightless bird, Molteno was amused to witness the confusion and agitation this name created among customs agents each time he exported an implant. Another major contribution was his invention of a photo-screening method to detect early strabismus and ametropia in infants. In his typically unconventional style, Molteno tested the device on sealions during a visit to a

local beach, entailing a narrow escape when their sunbathing were disturbed.

Held in the highest regard by colleagues and patients everywhere, Molteno was an inspirational leader and teacher. He fostered an environment that mirrored his personal qualities: enquiring, dynamic, playful, and provocative. He cared deeply for his patients, his students, and the people he worked with, exhorting his trainees to "cure sometimes, alleviate often, comfort always".

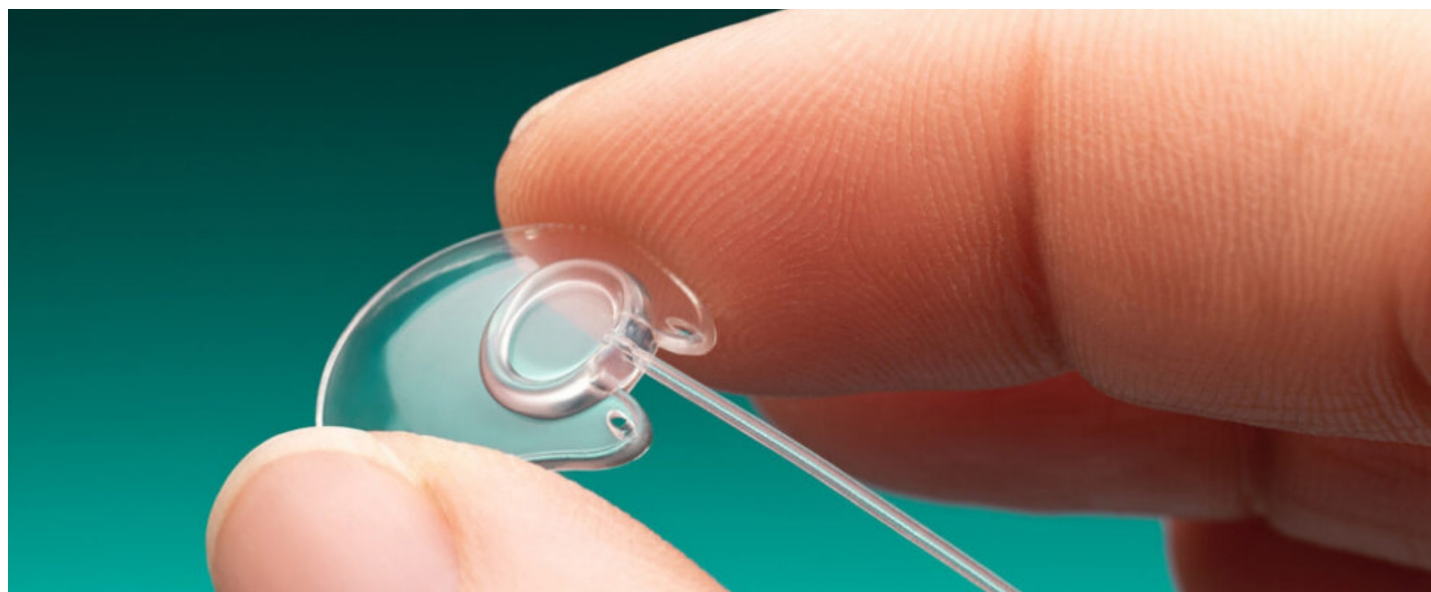
He could relate to patients from a wide spectrum of society, telling a 90 year old patient who could not legally drive after cataract surgery that she was "fit to fly a plane".

He encouraged his trainees to be bold and out-spoken, urging them to challenge orthodoxy of all types. He was, for example, sharply critical of the rise of managerialism in hospital medicine, cheekily hanging an "evil eye" above the department coffee machine to ward off hospital administrators. He once prompted the hospital's maintenance department to fix an overdue problem by composing a poem about seagull droppings contaminating an operating theatre through a leaky roof.

Molteno was a gifted polymath. His interests were both diverse and highly-developed, including chess, various card games, botany, sailing and literature. He collected microscopes, partly because he couldn't bear to see old but functional microscopes thrown out. He shared his lifelong fascination for telescopes and astronomy with his trainees, inviting them to evenings with him and Tess at their farm to marvel at the stars while discussing philosophy, politics and countless other topics. At one of these dinners, he advised that one really had to read only four books to understand life: the Bible, Machiavelli's *The Prince*, *The Peter Principle*, and the *Kama Sutra*.

Molteno's extraordinary contributions to ophthalmology have been widely recognised, including by the award of the Goldmann Medal from the International Glaucoma Societies (1998; he was its second-ever recipient), Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit (2006), Distinguished Service Award from the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists (2009), International Society of Glaucoma Surgery Medal (2014), and the American Glaucoma Society Innovator Award (2015). Elected an Emeritus Member of the Glaucoma Research Society, he was also president of the Ophthalmological Society of New Zealand.

He is survived by Tess and his three children, 11 grandchildren and 1 great grandchild.



"Molteno Implant"

Margaret Gilbert - Living with Glaucoma



I have worn glasses since I was a teenager due to myopia and over 25 years ago, during a routine eye examination the optician felt I should see a specialist because of the raised pressures in my eyes. He referred me to an ophthalmologist who diagnosed glaucoma. I was prescribed drops to be used twice daily in both eyes. The drops worked well and kept the pressures in the normal range for some years. Unfortunately I then developed an allergy to the medication. My eyes became very itchy, red and swollen. I had to stop using the drops.

Over the next few years I was prescribed a variety of drops, none of which were as effective as the original ones and the pressures in my eyes gradually increased.

About ten years ago I had cataract operations on both eyes as it was hoped the surgery would help control the pressures. However, that did not happen.

Some years later I had laser treatment, but again this made no difference and the drops were not controlling the pressures enough to stop damage to the eyes.

During covid nothing further was done until about two years ago when I first saw Dr Sahoo in the ophthalmology clinic at the hospital. She was concerned about the high pressures in my eyes and the damage being caused. Dr Sahoo discussed with me the options for future treatment of my glaucoma, one of which was surgery. She explained in terms that I could understand the procedure to form a channel at the top of the eye to drain the fluid away. I agreed to the surgery and this was performed on the right eye in April last year. The surgery went well but needed some slight post-surgery adjustment which Dr Sahoo had explained may be necessary. The eye settled, the pressure was well within the normal range and after some weeks I was able to stop using drops in the eye.

I continued to use drops in the left eye but the pressure remained high and earlier this year Dr Sahoo again discussed surgery for the eye. However this time there was a new Preserflo procedure available which was much less invasive. Dr Sahoo said she had performed three operations to that date, all of which had been successful. I was happy for her to go ahead with the surgery, which I had done in June. The operation was successful. Apart from slight discomfort for a few days there was no pain and the eye settled quickly. The pressure is now well within the accepted range. I am still using drops in the eye but should soon be able to stop them. After years of drops morning and night this is such a bonus.

I am very grateful to Dr Sahoo for her care and skill in treating my glaucoma. Despite having had glaucoma for many years I can read, watch television and movies and enjoy doing crossword puzzles. I enjoy a busy social life and recently when I had to renew my driver's licence I had no trouble passing the eye test.

Richard Evans



My name is Richard Evans and I am 83 years old. I have led a very busy life both at work and at play. I have used computers for most of my working life. At play I was a keen hockey player, runner and swimmer and for many years I had four very active children. I still ride a bike, swim and walk most weeks. I always took my eyesight for granted as most people do; never having to wear glasses until I was in my 60s. I prided myself that I could easily spot a skylark up in the sky.

I retired to Katikati at the age of 67. Wherever I have been, I have always swum once or twice a week in one swimming pool or another and have also loved swimming in the sea. I started swimming at the Dave Hume swimming pool in Katikati when I retired. Then out of interest I went to the pool Trust AGM in 2008 and the next thing I knew I was elected to the volunteer Trust board that ran the pool. At the next AGM I was elected chairman so it fell to me to find replacement supervisors. We found suitable supervisors for a few seasons, and then there were none. I then decided to qualify as a lifeguard, and this led to me taking over as supervisor of the pool.

It was a huge learning exercise dealing with many different people. I learned all about underground bores, heat exchangers, pool filters, young staff, and all the devices and chemicals used to keep the pool

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clean. The main chemical used was a mix of chlorine and sodium hydroxide, also known as caustic soda. Both chemicals are very toxic. The device used to dispense this chemical combination into the pool had plastic flexible pipes going in and out of the pump. The pump is mounted on a wall at head level.

One Sunday in 2012, I went in to check on the lifeguards as well as the state of the pool chemicals. As I walked past one of the chlorine dispensers a pipe burst and shot the chemical into my left eye and down my shirt front.

There was a small basin with a tap right next to the dispenser, so I quickly removed my shirt and washed my face and left eye with water. One of the local doctors had children who swam, so my wife called her, and we met her at the clinic in Katikati. She proceeded to wash my eye out with a special solution for about an hour.

She then organised for me to go to the Park Road Eye Clinic in Tauranga. It was then that I found out I had Glaucoma. To quote from my first assessment; "Mr Evans is showing features consistent with chronic open angle glaucoma"

To be honest I had never heard about Glaucoma until my accident. So my accident with the chemical

spill was in a way also a blessing as it revealed that I could eventually lose my eyesight and needed other treatment. I started with eye drops for a few years. Then in 2016 my wife and I moved to Hawkes Bay.

Since that time, I have been looked after by the staff at Villa 3 at the Hastings hospital. My driver's license was revoked when I turned 80 because of bad peripheral vision.

Dr Baswati Sahoo has since operated on both eyes at different times with a cataract replacement and placing a stent in each eye. The stent helps to reduce the fluid and so reduce the pressures in the eyes.

The eye operations were an interesting but easy experience and very professionally done. I felt comfortable right throughout the surgery.

My vision is now better, and I feel much more comfortable about my eyesight. Finally, I say to anyone who is worried about their eyesight have your eyes tested and if needed undergo surgery without delay. Do not wait until you have an accident, as I did. It is so easy to take your eyesight for granted. It is only now that I understand how precious your eyesight is.

2% Don't lose sight of family

Leaving a gift in your will is a powerful way to make a positive difference for your family for generations. 2% of Kiwis have glaucoma, with the risk of developing glaucoma 10 times higher if you have a close blood relative with the condition.

A gift of just 2% of your estate to Glaucoma New Zealand leaves 98% for your family.



Glaucoma Support Groups

If you would like to join a support group please contact Karon **0800 452 826**, or find our more on the website. **www.glaucoma.org.nz**

Glaucoma Groups are an opportunity for members to meet regularly to gain peer support on living with glaucoma, hear from speakers to learn more about the disease, and make new friendships.

WARKWORTH

Summerset Falls, Warkworth

AUCKLAND NORTH

Glenfield Community Centre, Glenfield

AUCKLAND CENTRAL

Epsom Community Centre, Gillies Ave.

HAMILTON

Settlement Centre, Claudelands, Hamilton

TAUPŌ

Ross Gordon Optometrists- 66 Ruapehu St, Taupo

WELLINGTON CENTRAL

Penthouse Cinema and Café, Brooklyn.

TIMARU

Caroline Bay Lounge, Timaru

CHRISTCHURCH CENTRAL

Mary Potter Hospice or Mona Vale Homestead.

NEW PLYMOUTH

Muffin Break, Centre City Shopping Centre.

KAPITI

Card Room, Kapiti Village, Paraparaumu

HAWKE'S BAY

Havelock North Function Centre, Hastings.

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Always check with your health professional before trying alternative remedies or supplements.