

## ■ Obituaries

### Ted Beavis

#### **Obstetrician and gynaecologist**

16-11-1920 - 21-5-2000

**A leading gynaecologist, from 1981 he became increasingly involved in forensic work as an expert witness in cases involving allegations of medical negligence.**

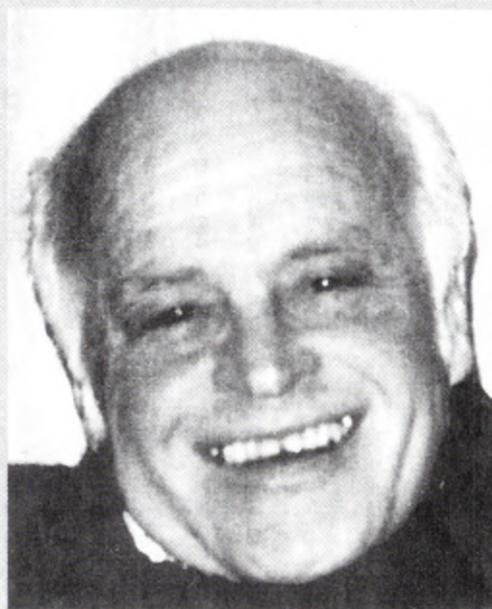
By **GORDON LEWIS**

Ted Beavis was a man with a great zest for life, respect for the individual and a passion for justice.

A well-known and widely respected medical practitioner for half a century, he developed a strong interest in medico-legal matters that came to the fore in his later years.

His reputation for the pursuit of excellence combined with a deep compassion for his patients meant he was much in demand. He will perhaps be most remembered for his expertise in the area of birth asphyxia and cerebral palsy.

Edward Leslie George Beavis was born at Blackheath in London, although his parents were Australian. His early childhood was spent with his extended family at Hunters Hill, in Sydney. The family returned to England in 1930, and in



**“While his preparedness to criticise colleagues sometimes made him unpopular . . . the courts were quick to recognise his integrity and his expertise.”**

1934 he began boarding at St Paul's School, Hammersmith.

In 1936 the family came to Melbourne and Ted completed his education at Melbourne Grammar School, where he was equal dux of his year.

Beavis studied medicine at Melbourne University, graduating in 1944. He completed Fellowships in Surgery and in Obstetrics and Gynaecology in both England and Australia, and was a Foundation Fellow of the Royal Australian

College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. He worked as an intern and registrar at the Alfred Hospital in 1944 and 1945.

Beavis' military service included almost two years with the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan, from 1946 to 1947. His experiences in Japan proved to be influential in his choice as a career of obstetrics, where he was involved with new life.

He subsequently worked at the Royal Women's Hospital in

## Civil Justice Award

### — Call for nominations

Nominations close August 31, 2000.

The annual conferring of the Civil Justice Award is a highlight in the APLA calendar. Past Recipients of the award are John Gordon, Peter Cashman, Peter Long and Rob Davis. The award in 1999 went to three plaintiffs - Jean Hart, Maree Whitaker, and Judie Stephens.

The Civil Justice Award recognises contributions to the field of civil justice that support the aims and policies of APLA. The Award is open to both

Melbourne until 1951. He became Assistant Gynaecologist at the Alfred Hospital in Melbourne and commenced private practice in 1955. Between 1955 and 1957 he undertook research into ovarian hormonal function at the Baker Institute.

In 1950 he married June Williams and their four children were born between 1952 and 1959.

Ted was a keen sportsman, with a passion for skiing and sailing. At Somers Yacht Club he was well known for his fearless (some would say foolhardy) approach to sailing in all conditions, despite suffering chronic asthma.

In later years he took up solo dinghy sailing and competed in a number of national titles well into his 70s. He continued sailing and skiing until the onset of motor-neurone disease at the age of 77.

Beavis was often called on in his last 20 years to provide expert evidence in court cases. From 1981 he became increasingly involved in forensic work as an expert witness, particularly in cases involving allegations of medical negligence in obstetrics and gynaecology.

His thorough research, his painstaking attention to detail and his clear thinking in the witness box meant his services were in demand. He often gave evidence regarding birth asphyxia and cerebral palsy. He was impatient in the face of perceived injustice and he was intolerant of professional

incompetence. He believed the status of the medical profession should never deny a patient's rights.

While his preparedness to criticise colleagues sometimes made him unpopular with them, the courts were quick to recognise his integrity and his expertise.

Throughout his life he maintained a keen interest in research and medical education. In later years he renewed this interest, and his views on birth asphyxia and cerebral palsy were published in the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology* and the *British Medical Journal*.

His last difficult year was spent confined to bed, dependent on a ventilator. He bore his incapacity with grace and good humor, and continued working and writing until the day before his death.

While confined to bed by illness, he gave evidence that was videotaped in several important court cases.

His keen wit and sense of humor remained undimmed. Having been a great talker all his life, there were times when he was unable to speak due to his illness. At one such time a friend remarked "Oh, shut up, Ted!" and he laughed and laughed.

Beavis is survived by his wife June, sister Connie, children Catherine, John, Robert and Margaret and eight grandchildren.

*Judge Gordon Lewis is a judge of the County Court and a friend of the late Ted Beavis.*

*The Australian Financial Review 16/6/2000. Reproduced with permission.*

lawyers and other members of the community. The Award will be conferred at the APLA National Conference in October.

The National Council seeks nominations from APLA members for the 2000 Civil Justice Award. If you are aware of a person who has made a significant contribution and would like to nominate them for an award, please write a short note describing their achievements and forward to

**Jane Staley, APLA Executive Officer,  
Level 1, 128 - 134 Chalmers St, Surry Hills, NSW, 2010**

Nominations should be sealed in an envelope marked "private and confidential".

# APLA

The Annual General Meeting of the Australian Plaintiff Lawyers Association Ltd will be held at the Marriott Hotel, Surfers Paradise, on Thursday, 26 October 2000, at 12pm



## The Annual General Meeting

### Agenda:

- Confirmation of minutes of the previous AGM
- Consideration of financial accounts and Audit report
- Consideration of the report of the Directors
- Appointment of auditors

Enquiries:  
**Jane Staley**  
02 9698 1700