A Man for All Seasons

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Dr. Ian Jackson was truly a remarkable renaissance plastic surgeon. He was a brilliant surgeon who performed microsurgery, craniofacial surgery, and hand surgery with great precision and elegance. He was truly a surgeon among surgeons. I initially met Dr. Jackson when I was a third-year plastic surgery resident at the University of Michigan. What is so remarkable is that he was our visiting professor, and in an 8-hour time period, he spoke to us on all aspects of plastic surgery from hand, craniofacial, microsurgery, craniofacial trauma, cleft lip and palate, and head and neck reconstruction—simply amazing! That evening, we went to dinner with Drs. Grabb and Dingman and the faculty and, as usual, Dr. Jackson was the life of the party with his Scottish wit and humor. We were back the next morning for another day of continuous talks. Dr. Jackson was simply unbelievable! He had such remarkable stamina, such wisdom, such incredible wit, and he was a technically superb surgeon.

He had an illustrious career at Canniesburn Hospital in Scotland, the Mayo Clinic, and later in private practice in Detroit, Michigan. I was fortunate to serve as one of his visiting professors (April of 1997) several years before he retired. He was still as remarkable as when I first met him. After my visiting professorship, he was taking me to the airport in the early morning hours on a Saturday when he said he then had a full day of surgery—on a Saturday! He was unrelenting.

Dr. Jackson was also an individual who gave back. He gave back to the specialty, to others, and was a person to never say “no.” If you called him, he was always there to say, “I am there for you, I can do this, or you can do this with me.” We have lost a truly amazing giant in plastic surgery. I miss him. Where are the future generations of people like Ian Jackson? I ask each of you to reach out and become one like him.

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