Giants in Chest Medicine
Margaret Turner-Warwick, DBE, DM, PhD

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Editor's Note: This series recognizes and highlights the accomplishments of individuals who have contributed greatly to chest medicine. To view the video interview with Dr Turner-Warwick, go to journal.publications.chestnet.org

Margaret Turner-Warwick, DBE, DM, PhD, is a very appropriate choice as a Giant in Chest Medicine as she has had a major influence on research and understanding of pulmonary disease over a long period. She was born in London in 1924 and is related to Lord Baden-Powell, the founder of the Boy Scout movement. She studied physiology at Oxford University and qualified in medicine at University College Hospital in London in 1950. During the same year, she married Richard Turner-Warwick, who she met in Oxford and who went on to become a distinguished urologic surgeon. After junior medical posts in London, she decided on a career in respiratory medicine after working at the Brompton Hospital, then as now the major respiratory center in the United Kingdom.

Dr Turner-Warwick obtained her first post as a specialist in respiratory medicine at Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital in London, which was staffed entirely by female doctors and treated female patients. In 1957, she moved to a research post at Brompton Hospital to work with Guy Scadding, MD, who was head of the Cardiovascular Research Institute, a postgraduate institute of London University. In Professor Scadding's department, she undertook important work on pulmonary fibrosis and established a clinical interest in interstitial lung disease, autoimmunity in the lung, and asthma. She was appointed as a senior lecturer (assistant professor) in 1960 and then succeeded Professor Scadding as professor of thoracic medicine in 1972. Dr Turner-Warwick subsequently became the head and dean of the Cardiothoracic Institute (1984-1987), which became the National Heart & Lung Institute and was incorporated into Imperial College London. After a very distinguished career, she retired from this post in 1987 and was then elected as the first-ever female president (1989-1992) of the Royal College of Physicians in London in its 500-year history.

Her contributions to medical research and practice were recognized by her appointment as a Dame Commander of the British Empire in 1991. During her career,
Dr Turner-Warwick has made many important contributions to understanding interstitial lung disease and attracted patient referrals from throughout the United Kingdom and beyond. She also recognized the importance of different patterns of asthma and was involved in several important clinical trials in asthma and interstitial lung disease. Since her retirement, she has continued to be actively involved in various medical affairs and was chairperson of her local health authority for 3 years. In the interview, Dr Turner-Warwick discusses her medical and research career, the problems facing women in medicine, her research into interstitial lung disease and asthma, and her time as the first female president of the Royal College of Physicians at a time of many changes to the UK National Health System.

Suggested Readings


