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****EMBARGOED UNTIL 8PM AEST SATURDAY, 26 MAY 2018****

**AWARD FOR THE MAN WHO WROTE THE BOOK ON
 GENERAL PRACTICE**

AMA Gold Medal
2018 AMA NATIONAL CONFERENCE - #amanatcon
QT Canberra, 25-27 May 2018

The doctor who wrote *John Murtagh’s General Practice* - the pre-eminent reference textbook for general practitioners, medical students, and registrars – has been recognised with the AMA’s highest honour, the AMA Gold Medal.

AMA President, Dr Michael Gannon, announced Emeritus Professor John Murtagh AM as the Gold Medal recipient at the AMA National Conference in Canberra tonight.

“Professor Murtagh’s contribution to medicine and general practice as both a doctor and an educator in Australia is incomparable,” Dr Gannon said.

“He is the highly acclaimed author of several internationally adopted medical textbooks, including *John Murtagh’s General Practice*, which is now in its sixth edition, and has been translated into 13 languages since it was first published in 1994.

“Yet his medical career did not start immediately. Professor Murtagh originally started his working life as a secondary school teacher, teaching maths and science in country Victoria, having completed degrees in science and education at the University of Melbourne.

“In 1961, he retrained, fulfilling his childhood ambition to become a doctor. He graduated with an MBBS from Monash University in 1966, as one in a class of the first intakes at the newly established medical school.

“In 1988, he completed his Doctor of Medicine, with his thesis, *The management of back pain in general practice*.

“While studying medicine, Professor Murtagh met his wife Jill, a fellow medical student, and after completing their medical studies, they took over the general practice at the Neerim South Hospital in country Victoria – John providing the surgical skills and Jill the anaesthetics.

“Combining his love of teaching and medicine, training visiting Monash medical students at Neerim South was a natural fit. He was invited to write educational programs for the Royal Australian College of General Practice (RACGP), and to provide a rural teaching base for the Department of Community Medicine at Monash University.

“In 1979, he relocated to Melbourne to accept a full-time senior lecturer position at Monash University.

“During the 1980s and 1990s, as medical editor for the RACGP’s *Australian Family Physician* publication, Professor Murtagh introduced new features, including *Brain Teaser*, *Practice Tips*, *Patient Education*, and *Cautionary Tales*.

“Professor Murtagh later developed these journal articles into published books, following an approach from McGraw-Hill publishers.

“In 1991, McGraw-Hill requested that Professor Murtagh write a new type of medical textbook, one that defined the nature and content of general practice.

“Using chapters based on symptoms, rather than disease categories, and building on the diagnostic model he developed, the textbook – *General Practice* – was pitched in the way that undifferentiated disease presents in a GP’s consulting rooms.

“In 1993, he was appointed Professor of General Practice and Head of Department at Monash University, a position he held until his retirement in 2002.

“Post-retirement, Professor Murtagh continues to teach both undergraduate and postgraduate students, provide lectures to doctors around the world, and write medical books and – lately – Flashcards, morphing from books to apps.

“He was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 1995 for significant services to medicine, particularly in the areas of medical education, research, and publishing, and was awarded the inaugural David de Kretser Medal from Monash University in 1996.

“The RACGP has named its library in his honour, and the Department of General Practice at Monash has named the its *Annual Update Course for General Practitioners* after him.

“In 2007, he was awarded the AMA Victoria Gold Medal for services to medicine.

“Emeritus Professor John Murtagh AM has rendered outstanding services to the practice of medicine and, without question, is deserving of the award of the Gold Medal of the Federal AMA.”

26 May 2018

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