Robert James Dallas

25 May 1931 – 21 October 2009

Dr Bob Dallas practised as a GP in Tirau from 1964 until retirement to Mount Maunganui in 1987.

Bob was born in Coventry, England, but after being evacuated because of the worsening blitz, spent much of his childhood with his two brothers and parents in Angus County, Scotland, near where his father’s clan were originally from.

Bob attended school in Dundee but his focus was drawn to medicine only after serving 2 years compulsory national service, after the war, in the British Army. Bob was a renowned athlete and excelled at school and in the army as a sprinter and soccer player.

He graduated MB ChB at St Andrews University, Scotland, in 1958 and gained D.Obst.RCOG in 1964. Bob was also awarded a Blue, representing Scottish Universities at soccer. Family links to medicine included two uncles and one brother as doctors while Bob’s father and older brother were pharmacists.

Bob met Frances Buchan, who had newly qualified MBChB from Glasgow Medical School, while working at Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary in 1959. They married in 1960 and, after short periods where Bob practised as a GP in Dundee and Millom, emigrated to New Zealand via Australia with three sons in 1964.

The rural township of Tirau welcomed Bob and Frances and family. Although Bob was the sole practitioner at Tirau, he received strong support from Frances (who also served at Waikato, Tokanui and Tokoroa hospitals as a physician and anaesthetist latterly). Bob shared a rostership with colleagues from Putaruru and delivered many hundreds at Putaruru Maternity Hospital.

Bob’s main passion was golf but he was also a ready participant at tennis, swimming, water-skiing, and snow-skiing. He played music by ear; was accomplished at chess, sudoku, and cryptic crosswords; and enjoyed travelling within New Zealand and abroad with Frances and family.

Professionally, Bob had been troubled by the mysteriousness of SIDS and had made observations on occasions where incidences occurred within his practice. Bob would always be keen to move quickly to the simplest solution and, since the 1970s, never wavered from the conclusion that over-heating is the most significant causal factor. While Bob monitored research developments, he would simultaneously refer back to factors such as age spread, time of year, house insulation, parental tuck-in, record-taking at scene, no PM clues, cooling mechanisms, and difficulty with proof—there is
no incompatibility with hyperthermia was his contention. Simply, Bob would draw the link to dogs that are left in cars and to refugees who succumb in containers.

Frances still lives at Mount Maunganui; son Angus resides with Michelle and their son Cameron in Te Awamutu; and son Graham resides with Lynette and Sam, Kieran, and Nicholas in Cambridge. Son Alan and Janette reside with daughters Morgan and Lucy in Wanganui.

Alan Dallas (son, Civil Engineer, CPEng) wrote this obituary.