David White was born and bred in Dunedin. He was the son of a lawyer, and grandson of the first New Zealand Professor of Education. His uncle was well-known Dunedin orthopaedic surgeon, James Renfrew White.

Following a family conference, he was directed into a career in medicine despite his strong preference for a practical ‘hands-on’ occupation, which had a bearing on his later direction.

He graduated with a class of 65 in 1938, and while a house surgeon at Wellington Hospital met Zita Treahy to whom he was happily married for 52 years. At this time he was rejected for military service for what he termed a “dicky ticker”.

During the next 3 years at Tauranga Hospital, David’s practical ability led him to establish their first radiology department with some “clapped-out stuff” from Christchurch.

Subsequent reappraisal of his “dicky ticker” led to army entry and service from 1943 to 1946 in Egypt and Italy, where he served in a front-line hospital X-ray service, treating German and British casualties, with the use of local Italians as orderlies.

In 1946, he was appointed to a full-time position as a radiologist at Waikato Hospital, assistant to visiting radiologist Harold Harris. He spent two 6-month periods in Melbourne, away from his wife and family, studying for the University of Melbourne Diploma of Radiology.

David spent 33 years at Waikato Hospital, where he oversaw the development of a wide range of new imaging techniques, including ultrasound, CT and MRI scanning, and managed a huge increase in the size and complexity of staff and facilities.

He established a successful departmental School of Radiography in 1951, and in 1957 purchased the practice of Harold Harris and
established Hamilton Radiology. He led this with subsequent partners, Keith Robertson, Robin Gee, Hugh Douglas, Malcolm Baigent, Pek Low, Sabaratnam Muthukumaraswamy, and Alison Sommerville until his retirement in 1987.

In 1989 he was made a Life Member of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists.

He played an active role in education at Waikato Hospital, being involved in the establishment of a Postgraduate Committee in 1944, and serving as the first President of the Waikato Postgraduate Medical Society from 1966 to 1970.

In his private life, David was a skilled model maker of aircraft, boats, and railways, and extended his home to accommodate this hobby. He built both his Hamilton home and his holiday home on Lake Tarawera. He was a skilled painter, and a superb musician (piano and drums).

David was a competent professional and a colourful character who had an unorthodox turn of phrase, which earned him the affectionate nickname “Dr David bloody White”

He managed in his own home after his beloved wife's death 23 years ago, until the last few years when he needed nursing care.

He is survived by his two daughters, Catherine (Raglan) and Dierdre (Wellington).

At his funeral on 28 August, a moving eulogy centred on his great love and life at his holiday home at Lake Tarawera was delivered by neighbour Brigadier General Ian Thorpe CBE.

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