

In Memoriam: Dr Beatrice Doran PhD, MBA, BA, Dip Lib

Kate Kelly

Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI), Dublin

Beatrice Doran, formerly Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland's (RCSI) Chief Librarian 1986-2007, died October 13, 2025.

Beatrice had a transformative impact on RCSI library services and librarianship in Ireland, UK, Europe and internationally.

Beatrice was the first qualified Librarian in RCSI's long history and professionalised RCSI Library service at a rapid pace following her appointment in 1986.

Most visibly she moved the old 19th century library full of antiquarian texts, to a purpose-built modern library in the Mercer building, opened by then President Mary Robinson in 1994 and followed this by establishing the Beaumont Hospital Library, opened in 1996, as the largest hospital library in Ireland at the time.

More importantly she introduced technology to the libraries and to RCSI. She was an early adopter of technologies that supported and improved student and faculty access to, and delivery of, library services and resources. She provided computing facilities for library users, introduced the first online library management system and was often ahead of the College and other libraries in adopting and using technology of the day. The library had the first and only fax machine in the College in 1987, was the first Irish library to introduce CD Rom technology in 1989 and provided RCSI with its first online catalogue in 1990. With the arrival of the Internet to RCSI, circa 1996, the library services entered the digital era. Just a year later, in 1997, 400 e-journals were available through the library website, also one of the first College websites. By the end of her tenure, 2000 e-journals were available and the foundations for the future, predominantly online, service were set. By the time she retired in 2007 and in the words of Prof Cathal Kelly (RCSI) she had transformed the service into— *'a flagship for medical libraries throughout the world'*.

Her impact on the development of health sciences librarianship in Ireland and Europe was significant. She served as President of the Library Association of Ireland (LAI) three times, 1993, 1995 and 1998. She was Chair and Secretary of the Consortium of National and University Libraries for Ireland (CONUL). She was a founding member, later Secretary and Senior Vice President of the European Association for Health Information and Libraries (EAHIL) and the Chair and founder of the Health Sciences Libraries Group of the Library Association of Ireland (LAI). She provided consultancy services internationally travelling variously to the UK, Europe, Iraq, the Sudan, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia and served on editorial boards for health sciences librarianship journals in Ireland. Beatrice was a founding member and member of the editorial board for many years, for Health Libraries Review, now Health Information and Libraries Journal (HILJ) UK. Beatrice wrote extensively in professional journals and was a frequent attendant and speaker at international conferences including the US Medical Library Association (MLA) conference.

Continuing professional development was something she advocated and practiced. She was generous with her time, always contributing ideas and with enthusiasm. During her time in RCSI she achieved an MBA and following her retirement a PhD in 2011, with her thesis “**Knowledge Management: an empirical analysis in relation to Irish healthcare**”. It was the first empirical study of its kind in the health system of the Republic of Ireland.

In later years she gained recognition as a local historian and published a number of books on the history of the Dublin suburb of Donnybrook.

She is remembered as a congenial companion, powerful advocate and trailblazer in medical and health care libraries, and as someone with a rich and full life beyond her professional persona – she had a keen intellect, a great curiosity and interest in people and places, was a breeder of prize-winning cats, and was passionate about golf, opera, history and her beloved Donnybrook, Dublin where she lived for most of her life.

May she rest in peace.

