



We are deeply saddened by the passing of one of our own, Mr. William Harkness. Both a literal and figurative giant in the fields of pediatric neurosurgery and global neurosurgery, William was a dear friend and colleague to all of us. He contributed tremendously to the betterment of the specialty and the world, and always with good humor, gentleness, and respect. His charismatic personality made him larger than life, and always quick with a joke, William made sure he left everyone around him smiling.

William received his education in medicine at the University of Birmingham in 1979, and his neurosurgical training at the Radcliffe Infirmary in Oxford and later in Birmingham under the tutelage of Bernard Williams and Tony Hockley. Upon completion of his training in 1991, he began his neurosurgical career at the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery and the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children, where he focused on pediatric neurosurgery and began his journey to become one of the greatest contributors to and advocates for the specialty.

He was an exceptionally skillful surgeon, and an expert in the field of pediatric epilepsy surgery. Always seeking optimal care for his patients, he was as an avid proponent of a multidisciplinary approach. However, in addition to the thousands of children who benefitted from his compassionate and skilled care, the specialty benefitted tremendously from his tireless efforts to improve care for all. He advocated for access to pediatric neurosurgery as a leader on multiple platforms, and was instrumental in making global neurosurgery a priority of the International Society of Pediatric Neurosurgeons (ISPN). As president of the society, he built off of his experience with the Global Initiative for Children's Surgery (GICS), and committed his presidency to building global pediatric neurosurgery. In his presidential address at the 45th annual meeting of the ISPN in 2017, he passionately detailed the inequity and gaps in neurosurgical care around the world.

He sought to assist pediatric neurosurgical colleagues in low- and middle-income countries to improve access to care, and was pivotal in establishing the neurosurgical specialty as a leader in global surgery, and pediatric neurosurgery in particular as pioneers of the field. Ever the entrepreneur, he worked with Dr. James Johnston to create *InterSurgeon*, a web-based platform to connect the global surgical community and promote international collaboration by linking surgeons, obstetricians, anesthesiologists, trainees, and organizations around the world. *InterSurgeon* continues to grow, was always being improved by William, and will be a lasting testament to his compassion, vision, and drive.

William was also an integral member of the Global Neurosurgery Committee of the World Federation of Neurosurgical Societies (WFNS). He worked tirelessly to propel the field, and always made sure he was available to provide advice and assistance. During his time with the committee, he expanded the

knowledge base on global neurosurgery, worked to align the multitude of projects in the field, and improved collaboration amongst neurosurgeons around the world. The field would not have come as far as it has without his knowledge, experience, and passion.

He is survived by his beloved wife Philippa, his loving children Edward, Francesca, Gabriella, and Letitia, and their growing families of the Harkness clan. Our hearts go out to them, and we pray for their comfort the way William comforted all around him. He will be sorely missed, but never forgotten. We are privileged to be counted among his friends and colleagues, and we will forever strive to continue the legacy of our dear friend.

Adam Ammar, M.D. and Kee B. Park, M.D., MPH
WFNS Global Neurosurgery Committee
Program in Global Surgery and Social Change, Harvard Medical School