

# A rich legacy of service to health

The retirement, this week, of Ballarat obstetrician and gynaecologist, Dr William Lister (Bill) Sloss, marks the end of an era of very special specialist care spanning three generations over 46 years.

Since it was announced he would retire on June 30, tributes have come from patients and colleagues near and far.

"It's a sad and a glad time," remarked one of his oldest patients whose children and grandchildren he brought into the world.

His work achievements, high principles and valued friendship were just some of the qualities emphasised by his gynaecological colleagues and medical friends during a farewell tendered him last night.

It's clear, from the time Bill Sloss graduated in medicine from Melbourne University in August, 1941, he has endeared himself to thousands of patients and their families.

When he decided to cease practising obstetrics in 1990, his total number of deliveries had reached 8000... "imagine all the nights of broken sleep," said someone who knows him well.

In October that year, *The Courier* featured a photograph of the last baby Dr Sloss delivered, together with the mother, father and an older child... all had been brought into the world by the good doctor.

The name of Sloss and the profession of medicine have been part of Ballarat for more than 90 years.

Born here, the only son of the late Bernice April and William



Alexander Sloss, Bill's father began practising medicine in Sturt street soon after the turn of the century.

"My father had a dinner given to him by the people of Ballarat in 1952, after he'd been in practice 50 years," Dr Sloss recalled.

After finishing his education at Ballarat College and Scotch College, Melbourne, and graduating from university, the young Bill gained experience as an RMO (registered medical officer) and Registrar at Prince Henry's Hospital.

Later, he saw war service, also as an RMO, with the second First Australian Infantry Battalion, and after the war returned to enter private practice in Ballarat.

"I didn't ever want to practice anywhere else," he said.

In 1946, Dr Sloss became one of the original members of the Ballarat Group Practice in Sturt street, and continued to work there until his retirement. The other founding members — surgeon W.R. (Ray) Griffiths, W.A. (Bill) Pryor, David Skewes, and William Alexander Sloss — are now dead.

"It was a good arrangement," Dr

Sloss recalled, "and it allowed time for those younger ones to do post graduate study. In 1948/49/50 I was away doing post graduate study in obstetrics and gynaecology, and in 1962, I again left to do more study."

In 1947, Dr Sloss married Dr Jean Proud whom he met while studying in Melbourne, and they now have four adult children and 12 grandchildren.

"She was marvellous when I was busy doing my midwifery," he said proudly, "she paused in her career for the family."

As well as being a member of Ballarat Legacy since 1955; a former president of Ballarat Sub-Division of the AMA; the first country member of the Victorian State Committee of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in 1965 and chairman of committee from 1963-71; a member of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and later a Fellow (FRCOG); a foundation Fellow of the Royal Australian COG, and chairman of the first Obstetrics and Gynaecology Committee of St John of God Hospital, Dr Sloss was heavily involved with such community works as the early Mayor's (Cr Jack Chisholm) committee for a university in Ballarat.

His work for Ballarat Base Hospital as honorary obstetrician for 10 years from 1952-62 and honorary obstetrician/gynaecologist until 1970 — a total of 18 years which was the limit allowed for this unpaid work — was tireless and remarkable.

He was a lecturer in O&G at both the BBH and St John's for many years, and in 1954, started the first



Dr William Lister (Bill) Sloss: A well-earned retirement after 46 distinguished years in the practice of medicine. — PICTURE: Lachlan Bence

ante-natal relaxation class at the Base Hospital where, in 1960-61 and again in 1966-68, he was chairman (honorary) of professional staff.

He served on the Base Hospital board from 1974-89, with two terms as president, and was made a Life Governor of the hospital in recognition of his outstanding service.

Dr Sloss has witnessed many changes in his profession.

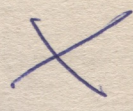
"Yes," he said, "I think the new

idea of surgery through lapriscope surgery — really started by gynaecologists — has advanced considerably.

"The improvements in anaesthetics have been extremely helpful to both surgeons and, particularly, patients, and the IVF program has been a great help to many unable to become pregnant otherwise.

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# People & places



## FORTHCOMING MARRIAGES

**DOVE — LOCK (Melton):** Colin and Fran, along with their family and friends, are happy to announce their wedding, on Saturday, July 9, at 11.30 am, at the Sebastopol Uniting Church, Albert Street, Sebastopol.

**HEMS — SURRIDGE:** Pat and Jim, together with Dell and Gerry, announce with pleasure, the marriage of Kylie, to Matthew, on Saturday, July 9, 1994, at 3.00 pm, at Mary's Mount Chapel, Sturt Street, Ballarat.

**SKELTON — SMITH:** Judy and Ron together with their parents announce their marriage will take place on July 9 at St Matthew's Church, Wendouree.

## ENGAGEMENTS

**BEASTON — BINKS:** Pam and Rob, together with Bronwyn and Roly have much pleasure in announcing the engagement of Amanda and Matthew.

**CHARLESON — HOOD:** Mary and James, together with their parents, Helen and the late Adrian, and Irene and Robert, of Wagga Wagga, happily announce their engagement to family and friends.

Present address: 1/37 Kookera St, Griffith 2680, NSW.

**GRAY — KNIGHT:** Cheryl and Gareth wish to announce their engagement to family and friends.

**HOARE — HART:** Phyllis and Max, together with Eunice and Don, have great pleasure in announcing the engagement of Tracey and Glenn, on June 20, 1994.

**HORNSBY — DOWSING:** Geoff and Lois, of Cohuna, together with Barry and Helen, of Wendouree, are delighted to announce the engagement of Paula and Craig.

**LAIRD — ALEXANDER:** Russ and Dot, of Calivil, together with Kevin and Pat, of Mt Clear, are pleased to announce the engagement of Adele and Tim, on June 24, 1994.

**MACDONALD — McNAUGHTON:** Mr and Mrs K. P. Macdonald, of Darra, Meredith, have much pleasure in announcing the engagement of their only daughter, Susan Margaret, to Peter Andrew, eldest son of Mr and Mrs P. R. McNaughton of Hamilton.

**PLOTECKI — MORRIS:** Mary and Richard Plotecki have much pleasure in announcing the engagement of Paula, to Matt, son of Barbara and the late Allan Morris.

**ROUSCH — PRENDERGAST:** Suzanne and Kieran, together with their parents, Maxine and Nick, and Sheila and Tom, are thrilled to announce their engagement.

**WEIR — SHARKIE:** Sue and Ian Weir, of Ballarat, have much pleasure in announcing the engagement

## Domingo for opera

WASHINGTON. — International opera star Placido Domingo has been named artistic director of the Washington Opera in an arrangement that will allow him to continue touring.

Domingo, 53, will begin planning the 1996-1997 season immediately. "I will plan to sing in every season, if allowed," Domingo said.

The opera company also took into account his enthusiasm as a sports fan in scheduling the announcement of his hiring — it was timed so that the famed tenor could rush off to root for Mexico in its World Cup game against Italy.

## COMMERCIAL ENGAGEMENT NOTICES

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## Legacy of medical service

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"There's been a bit of a swing in obstetrics ... when I first started, the aim was to get patients to have safe deliveries in hospital — now, there's a tendency towards the return of home births."

Dr Bill Sloss, like all truly great people, was modest and rather shy about his achievements and contributions.

He said he felt he had really done nothing very much ... he'd be hard pushed finding anyone to agree with him on that score.

His plans for retirement are not specific at the moment.

"It will take weeks to tidy up all the loose ends," he said, "then we will probably go to Queensland for a while.

"But, we'll be back for the grand final," added the voice of a staunch Geelong supporter!

William Lister Sloss does not remember ever wanting to be anything else but a doctor.

"My original plan was to be a general surgeon," he said.

But, when a junior member of the Group Practice he was led into a field of medicine that has, for more than four decades, seen him loved, respected, revered and thanked.

He has been doctor, confidant, mentor, strength and support, counsellor ... and servant.

All who've been his patients and friends wish him a long and happy retirement.

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