



Vice President. She has been an important role model for younger people coming into the specialty. She was featured as one of five psychiatrists giving their views on why psychiatry is a rewarding career to choose, in the College's career information pack produced in 1990, and again in 1994. What she wrote here is typical of Pearl's approach to her work:

'the field of psychiatry fascinates me. It takes time, patience and diligence to unravel the workings of the human mind and one can never fully understand its intricacies. Every patient I see, even after 23 years' experience is still a diagnostic puzzle and a therapeutic challenge. So there can never be any burnout or boredom.'

And further:

'At the core of psychiatry is the ability to empathise, understand and give something of yourself to the patient within the therapeutic relationship. . . .'

Pearl has been determined and devoted to her work: her humanity and compassion are shown by her willingness to take unpopular stances when in the interests of her patients. Her advice was overruled during a ward closure in 1994 and eight elderly patients died shortly after moving from long-term hospital care into private nursing homes, against medical advice. The ensuing scandal led to guidance on long-term care, an ombudsman's enquiry and a Select Committee hearing. Pearl was quoted in the press as saying:

'the care team becomes the family of the patient. They are faces in their failing memories.'

She has worked tirelessly on behalf of older people in need of long-term care, unafraid of making her views known.

Pearl was elected to the General Medical Council (GMC) in 1994, and re-elected in 1999. Her election was a great event in Sri Lanka, as she was the first Sri Lankan to serve on the GMC. Her re-election was reported in *Island International* on July 21 1999: the report noted that Pearl had participated in the discussions the GMC had with Sri Lanka's Minister of Health in 1998 on holding the Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board test (part 1) in Sri Lanka. This was a landmark achievement and she has continued to work to support the development of services in Sri Lanka. With the GMC she has served on the Racial Equality Group, the Steering Group for Performance, the Professional Conduct Committee, the Standards Committee, and the Working Group on withholding and withdrawing life-prolonging treatment. She became Medical Screener for Conduct and Performance in 1997 and regularly investigates complaints against doctors.

She retired from clinical practice on 4 February 2002, after 34 years' continuous service in the NHS, but later that year on

23 October, her work was recognised and honoured when she was invested OBE by Her Majesty the Queen at Buckingham Palace for services to old age psychiatry.

Pearl continues to be active in voluntary work, medico-legal work and medical politics. She is actively involved in national and local fora in influencing policy and decision making in the NHS, and her advice is respected on a range of subjects including the ethics of health care, the support of doctors in difficulty and issues in multi-ethnic populations. Following the inquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence, she has become involved in work with the Chief Medical Officer on racism in medicine, and is about to become an official role model for ethnic minority doctors. For many of us, she has been an unofficial role model for a number of years. One of the pleasures of her retirement is to be able to spend more time with her family, especially her six grandchildren.

Pearl is a valued, loved and respected psychiatrist and old age psychiatrist. I am delighted to present her for the Honorary Fellowship of the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

Dr Benedetto Saraceno

(Introduced by Professor Hamid Ghodse)

Dr Benedetto Saraceno is the Director of the Department of Mental Health and Substance Dependence of the World Health Organization (WHO) in Geneva – and, as such, can be said to be responsible for the world's mental health. Leading up to this elevated position is a career of considerable eminence, of which I can only offer a brief outline now. Benedetto Saraceno graduated as a doctor from the University of Milan and moved swiftly into psychiatric practice, obtaining his post-doctoral degree in psychiatry from the University of Parma. He progressed from strength to strength and soon became Chief of the Psychiatric Unit at the Mario Negri Institute for Pharmacological Research, with a distinguished academic record. But his interest in a broader landscape for his talents was manifest by his gaining a qualification in public health and epidemiology. This led him towards the international stage and during the 1990s he contributed to a number of WHO projects in South and Latin American countries. This in turn led on to his appointment as the Head of the Laboratory of Epidemiology and Social Psychiatry and Director of the WHO Collaborating Centre for Research and Training in Mental Health at the Mario Negri Institute.

Later, in 1996, he moved to Geneva as Programme Manager in the Division of

Mental Health and Prevention of Substance Abuse. Yet again, he made his mark and, with the reorganisation of the WHO, he was appointed Director of the Department of Mental Health and Substance Dependence – a post in which he has continued to demonstrate his industry and leadership. For example, he convinced the WHO to designate 2001 as the World Health Organization Mental Health Year and to dedicate the World Health Report of 2001 to mental health. This is the first time that mental health has been accorded such a prominent position in the WHO Programme of Action and, for those of us who work in and are dedicated to services that are often perceived as 'Cinderella services', such recognition is very important. It also illustrates the underlying theme of Benedetto Saraceno's professional life, which has been dedicated to the need of giving voice to the underserved, the excluded and the poor. This topic was a major preoccupation for him as a young psychiatrist working in Italy, when he led the Italian psychiatric reform; it was broadened during his service in Latin America, and was the key issue of his WHO programme 'Nations for Mental Health'. The same topic is the main axis of the new WHO mental health Global Action Programme.

Dr Saraceno is also committed to the international role of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, with the firm belief that the College has a unique position in training, education and advocacy. His initiative led to a memorandum of understanding between the College and the WHO for research training fellowships and, with his persuasive encouragement, the WHO is firmly committed to closer collaboration with the College.

In summary, Dr Saraceno, with his distinguished academic and clinical background, is a psychiatrist of significant stature. He can be singled out as an individual who has made, and continues to make, a major contribution to global mental health, by his sustained and vigorous efforts for the advancement of psychiatry and mental health around the world, and particularly for those who are least able to speak for themselves. As such, he is eminently worthy of the highest honour that the College can bestow – an Honorary Fellowship. For us, the presence among us, of a person of such high international esteem, emphasises the importance of mental health as a global issue. It is therefore a great pleasure for me to present Dr Benedetto Saraceno to you as an Honorary Fellow of this College.

The Vote of Thanks on behalf of the Honorary Fellows for 2003 was given by Mr John Bowis, OBE, MEP.