



## Ian Magrath and Melissa Adde – an appreciation

Ian Magrath, the creator and first president of the International Network for Cancer Treatment and Research (INCTR), was the best sort of idealist. A gentle man and a gentleman, he was determined to make a difference in his chosen calling: building capacity for cancer treatment and research in low and middle income countries where resources were either poorly provided or non-existent.

In many ways a visionary, in the first decade of this century – when there was little or no widespread interest in the concept of “Global Cancer” – he built up a network of clinical and scientific experts that stretched from Vancouver and Brazil to Europe, across sub-Saharan-Africa and India. Compassionate and generous to his colleagues, Ian placed a high value on collaboration and service to others, and had little time for well-heeled institutions and individuals who in pursuit of financial or political advantage, or professional self interest, withheld their support from programmes designed to save the lives of people less fortunate than themselves.

Known and widely respected in the field of oncology for his extensive work on African Burkitt’s lymphoma. Ian was a polymath who carried his erudition lightly. His colleagues will remember his magisterial discourse, published over four editions of the INCTR newsletter, of the evolution and discovery of the Cell. Beginning with the Dutch microbiologist Antonie van Leeuwenhoek, Ian’s account travelled both backwards to the traces left in the fossil record dated to 3.5 to 3.8 billion years ago (e.g., stromatolites containing microorganisms), and forwards to our understanding today of simple and complex cells. Although exceedingly well read Ian was no bookworm. Appearing slender and diffident in character, he was in fact physically strong, and quick to act. On one occasion having lunch with friends in a Paris restaurant he heard a diner choking noisily on a piece of meat. Going to his assistance Ian took the necessary steps concluding with a perfectly executed Heimlich manoeuvre. On being congratulated on saving the man’s life he shrugged and said simply “It’s what we do.”

Cruelly stricken with Parkinson’s Disease, Ian Magrath was nursed for several years by his wife Melissa Adde who eventually succeeded him as INCTR’s President. Tragically, Melissa passed away shortly after Ian’s death. Their work,

and the example of the lifetime commitment that they provided, touched many people’s lives and they will be sorely missed by those who had the privilege to know them.

**Mark Lodge**, Director, INCTR UK

Melissa Adde, RN, MSc, served as the Director of the Clinical Trials Office and then as President of INCTR for many years beginning in 2000 and ending in 2023 with her untimely death. She coordinated multi-institutional clinical research studies for multiple adult and pediatric cancers in countries such as Peru, Egypt, and India. Melissa conducted training in basic skills of clinical research, database design and data analysis with results shared in multiple publications.

I had the pleasure to collaborate with Melissa throughout her INCTR career including attending INCTR annual meetings in various low- and middle-income countries. Two memorable occasions were our participation in the 24th International Congress on Chemotherapy in Manila, Philippines and the INCTR 2007 meeting in São Paulo, Brazil. Melissa’s quiet presence and on-going support of clinical researchers was notable. She was cognizant of the challenges of conducting clinical oncology research in resource-limited settings yet set the bar high for quality data capture and analysis. She will be missed by many in the international oncology community, particularly those striving to improve cancer care in LMIC settings.

**Julia M Challinor, RN, PhD** Associate Adjunct Professor  
School of Nursing University of California San Francisco USA

It is a pleasure and a privilege to write about Ian and Melissa, with whom I worked for the INCTR, for 10 years. I first heard Ian speaking about his work, soon after he had founded the organization and was so moved that I asked whether I could help with teaching doctors and nurses in developing countries. As a consequence, INCTR (UK) was created, St. Bartholomew’s Hospital and the Medical College having allowed me to give up 40% of my regular work in order to do this, for 5 years. With my colleague, Tom Lister, we were able to organize funding and teaching for medical and nursing staff in Turkey, Egypt, Nigeria, Uganda, Hong Kong and Brazil but the delegates came from far and wide. Ian and Melissa were totally dedicated to their cause and had a talent for

convincing others to do the same. I miss them both.

**Ama Rohatiner**, Emeritus Professor of Haemato-Oncology, St Bartholomew's Hospital, London

I had a lot of contact with Ian and Melissa during the administrative, legal, political and logistical preparation for the establishment of the INCTR at the Pasteur Institute in Brussels.

Over the years I have had the privilege of working with them, and have come to appreciate their enthusiasm and generosity. I will have unforgettable memories of Ian, a great humanist and outstanding scientist, and of Melissa, who lived in profound harmony with her husband, for whom she became an irreplaceable adviser and an unconditional support.

**Louis de Schoofs**, Brussels, Belgium

### **Ian Magrath Melissa Adde -gone but will never be forgotten...**

Ian Magrath and Melissa Adde left us at short interval causing great loss to INCTR at the "best of times and the worst of times in oncology" Their selfless service in treatment of haematological malignancies through international clinical research contributed remarkably to the recent success in treatment of Leukemias and Lymphomas heralding the "best of times". Their untimely demise occurred at the "worst of times" when the whole world is desperately trying to recover from the deleterious effects of a pandemic on cancer care. Empathy is considered as the skill that builds bridges around the world. Ian and Melissa were in the forefront of building such bridges in cancer care across the oceans. May you both rest in peace!

**Madhavan V Pillai MD, FACP**, President, INCTR, USA

I met Ian and Melissa at different colloques and meetings on Burkitt lymphoma and Epstein Barr virus. I remember the meeting in Virginia Falls for the new edition of the WHO classification of tumours of hematopoietic and lymphoid tissues and how proud I was when he asked me to be a member of the Alliance Mondiale Contre le Cancer (AMCC), an NGO created by his best friend Guy de Thé. For several years, we worked together in connection with INCTR with a lot of trust.

**Martine Raphaël**, Vice President of AMCC

Here is an unforgettable memory, the beginning of the adventure of the French office of the INCTR: a sweet memory for Ian and Melissa who have always supported us. The office of the Alliance Mondiale Contre le Cancer (AMCC) opened in Montpellier on 4 April 2003. The inauguration was attended by Prof. Dubois, Director of ICM, Prof. Guy de Thé, President of AMCC, Dr Ian Magrath, President of the INCTR, Ms Melissa Adde, Director of the INCTR's Clinical Research Department, AMCC is part of the International Network for Cancer



Treatment and Research (an association under the French Law of 1901). This association is the French-speaking branch of the Brussels-based INCTR (Institut Pasteur). It's an adventure that's still going strong in 2023! Thank you Ian and Melissa, we'll never forget you!

**Sabine Perrier-Bonnet**, Chargée de projets e-santé UNFM

I am proud to have known these two extraordinary persons for many years. Both had enormous sincerity – for long years – for the cause of lessening the suffering of cancer patients in the world. Prayers, may their souls rest in peace.

**Prof. Ahmed Elzawawy, MD, PhD**, Egypt

Attending their funeral service was the saddest thing I have done in a while. I had just returned from Ethiopia where I was a part of the WHO/IAEA team that did the country's need assessment for cancer. I thought of Ian a lot as he would have been so proud to know that I achieved the purpose of establishing pediatric oncology in Ethiopia through the ASLAN Project and made it a GICC Focus country this week.

**Aziza T Shad, MD**, Ellen WP Wasserman Chair of Pediatrics Professor of Pediatrics & Oncology Georgetown University School of Medicine

I have said in the introduction how important Ian was to founding of the Cancer Control series and how much I valued his expertise and friendship, but I would like also like to say how much to enjoyed the company and, latterly, long telephone conversations with Melissa. I remember what fun it was to stay in with them in Brussels once, whilst we were do some planning work. I shall miss them both.

**Tim Probart, MA**, Publisher, *Cancer Control*