

DIABETES NEW ZEALAND SIR CHARLES BURNS MEMORIAL AWARD CRITERIA



A Sir Charles Burns Memorial Award will be presented to any member of Diabetes New Zealand who can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Awards Committee that he or she has managed their diabetes for a period of 50 years or more through the use of insulin therapy.

Sir Charles Burns



Sir Charles Burns is generally acknowledged to be the first resident doctor to administer insulin to a patient in a New Zealand hospital. The patient was Isabell Styche, and the year 1923.

Sir Charles had a distinguished medical career and was awarded a KBE following a period as Vice President of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians from 1956 to 1958.

Awards committee

The decision to award a Sir Charles Burns Memorial Award will be made by an awards committee comprising

- The President of Diabetes New Zealand
- The Chief Executive of Diabetes New Zealand
- The Chairperson or nominated executive member of NZSSD.

Eligibility

The applicant must currently be a member of Diabetes New Zealand or one of its member societies, and must have been a member for at least two full years prior to the award.

The applicant must have diabetes which has been managed by insulin therapy for a continuous period of at least 50 years.

The applicant must provide one or more of the following

- A copy of a hospital record confirming the diagnosis of diabetes and verifying the date on which insulin was first administered.

OR

- A copy of a GP or other medical practitioner's record confirming the diagnosis and verifying the date on which insulin was first administered.

OR

- A copy of a record from some other form of medical or para-medical organisation (eg Medic Alert, St John's ambulance, prescribing pharmacy) that can be used to verify the date on which insulin was first administered.

OR

- A family or personal diary that contains records of blood or urine tests and attested to by two independent persons as a record pertaining to the applicant.

Presentation of Awards

The presentation of the Sir Charles Burns Memorial Awards will usually be made during a Diabetes New Zealand annual conference. In the event of the nominee not being able to attend the annual conference, then some other suitable function will be held.

Forward applications to the Chief Executive of Diabetes New Zealand at least two months before a Diabetes New Zealand annual conference.

Address to for applications

All applications should be addressed in confidence to:

The Chief Executive
Diabetes New Zealand
PO Box 12441
WELLINGTON

For further information contact:

The Chief Executive
National Office
Diabetes New Zealand
PO Box 12441
WELLINGTON
Phone: 04 499 7145
Fax: 04 499 7146
Email: diabetes@diabetes.org.nz

**DIABETES NEW ZEALAND
SIR CHARLES BURNS
MEMORIAL AWARD
APPLICATION**



diabetes
new zealand

I have diabetes and have been managing it with insulin injections for 50 years or more.

I submit the following information in support of an application for a Sir Charles Burns Memorial Award

Name

Address

I am a member of the following diabetes society

OR

I am a direct member of Diabetes New Zealand

I was diagnosed with diabetes in (year)

in (place)

I have managed my diabetes continuously with Insulin since

I attach evidence of this in the form of:

PLEASE CROSS OUT WHICHEVER DOES **NOT** APPLY

Record of hospital admission or discharge with notes regarding use of insulin

OR

Record from GP or medical practise that confirms diagnosis and prescription of insulin as means of treatment

OR

A certificate from a para-medical body, or pharmacy confirming use of insulin

OR

A personal diary recording use of insulin or blood or urine tests and attested to by two independent persons

I am the Secretary/Treasurer/President of

and confirm that

has been a financial member of this society continuously since

Signed _____

I confirm that the information supplied above is to the best of my knowledge true in every respect, and apply to be awarded a Sir Charles Burns Memorial Award.

I give Diabetes New Zealand permission to use my name in publicity promoting longevity and full life to people affected by diabetes.

YES

NO

Signed

Date

Burns, Charles Ritchie 1898 - 1985
Doctor, medical administrator

Born in Blenheim on 27 May 1898, Charles Ritchie Burns was the eldest son of Archibald Douglas Burns, a draughtsman, and his wife, Margaret Mary Direen. He had two sisters and two younger brothers. In him were mixed Scottish Presbyterian and Irish Catholic streams: the latter dominated. From the Sisters of Mercy at St Mary's school in Blenheim he went on to Marlborough High School and later Nelson College. Then in 1917 he entered the University of Otago Medical School, emerging in 1922 with the travelling scholarship in medicine, the Batchelor memorial medal in obstetrics and gynaecology, and an MB, ChB degree awarded with distinction.

Burns worked as a house surgeon, then in the pathology department in Dunedin, and by 1925 had gained his MD. In 1924–25 he made the first of many postgraduate study trips to Britain, becoming an MRCP (he was elected a fellow in 1943). Work as a medical registrar and tutor back in Dunedin was interrupted by his developing tuberculosis.

Once sufficiently recovered, he spent a year as resident physician in New Plymouth, before returning once more to Dunedin and to private practice, with an appointment as assistant to the outpatients department of the public hospital. Burns was already conspicuous as an innovative physician: he was one of the first to use insulin in the hospital management of diabetes in New Zealand, and was a pioneer of the use of raw liver for pernicious anaemia.

After a further visit to London in 1937–38 Burns took up an appointment as director of the division of medicine at Auckland Hospital. The arrangement was not a success, and in 1940 he moved to Wellington as visiting physician and head of the cardiology department at Wellington Hospital. He also became physician to Our Lady's Home of Compassion in 1940.

Despite his past history of tuberculosis, Burns enlisted during the Second World War, serving in hospital ships in 1944–45, then in Italy in the latter stages of the war, and finally, in the rank of acting colonel, as senior medical officer to Jayforce in Japan for some 11 months to May 1947. For his services he was appointed an OBE (military division) in 1948.

After returning, he resumed his positions at Wellington Hospital. In 1966 a crisis in the administration of Southland Hospital in Invercargill led to his appointment as commissioner there. The appointment gave him draconian powers; his success depended not so much on using these as on the respect he gained from the parties to the dispute, and on his patent integrity in an awkward situation.

Burns devoted himself to a wide range of activities related – some loosely – to medicine. In 1938 he was a foundation fellow of the Royal Australasian College of

Physicians; his service to this body culminated in a term as New Zealand vice president (1956–58), at the conclusion of which he was made a KBE. At that time he chaired a college subcommittee which examined the training and standards of physicians in New Zealand. Its report received high commendation from the college council and provided a basis for subsequent planning. He examined for his college and at undergraduate level in the University of Otago Medical School. Here his penetrating gaze, right eyelid drooping above half-glasses, though forbidding at first, could not altogether conceal his concern for the welfare of the candidates that came before him. As a teacher he was highly regarded.

He served on the Medical Council from 1947 to 1955, was an original trustee of the Wellington Cancer and Medical Research Institute, a founder member and later president of the Nutrition Society of New Zealand, and patron of the Wellington Diabetic Society and the New Zealand Asthma Society. Other interests included membership of the Lepers' Trust Board (NZ) over many years, and of the Wellington Association for Deaf Children as its patron.

During his years of active practice as a specialist physician, Burns became concerned at the wide-ranging adverse effects of alcoholism on patients and their families; in 1969 he took up a post as medical officer at Queen Mary Hospital in Hanmer Springs so that he might develop his understanding of the condition. On his return to Wellington after this posting, he became director of clinical services to the National Society on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence and embarked on what was effectively a second career. His standing in the field led to his selection as Leonard Ball orator in 1975, when he spoke on 'Alcohol, the family disease'. In 1977 he delivered the Muriel Bell Memorial Lecture.

Other honours came his way: in 1974 a fellowship of the Medical Association of New Zealand; the following year an honorary DSc from the University of Otago; and, in 1977, a knighthood in the papal Order of St Gregory the Great. He was the second master of the Guild of St Luke and Saints Cosmas and Damian, the society of Catholic doctors in Wellington.

Burns had married Margaret Muriel Laffey on 24 May 1935 at St Michael's Church in Remuera, Auckland. She had been a nurse and their marriage was a happy one until her tragic death, in July 1949, of burns sustained when her gown caught fire as she was preparing to attend a ball. They had one daughter and a son. On 12 June 1963 Burns remarried at the Church of St James in Marylebone, London. His second wife was Doris Ogilvy Ramsay, who was his cousin and respected in Red Cross circles as a holder of the Florence Nightingale Medal. She predeceased him in 1982; he died in Auckland on 8 February 1985 at the age of 86. His funeral was held in Wellington.

Outwardly austere, Charles Burns was a warm-hearted man and a very genuine friend. His religion was of overriding importance to him, and he would attend mass daily, whatever his other commitments. He is best remembered for his dedication and commitment: the length and thoroughness of his ward rounds were legendary, as was his willingness to visit his patients late at night. He set himself high standards in a profession that was becoming scientific while needing to remain humane; he expected similar dedication from those who worked with him, but if a lack of it attracted his criticism, this was soon relieved by a friendly word, even an apology. He delighted more openly in the achievements of

colleagues, especially younger ones, than in his own distinctions.

A. W. BEASLEY

Notable New Zealanders. Auckland, 1979

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