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Long-time ‘general medicine’ champion leaves a lasting legacy

Long-serving Waitematā physician and hospital leader Dr Hamish Hart is retiring after 50 years of medicine and mentorship – including nearly 40 with the DHB.

The rheumatologist, general physician and cardiologist leaves behind a remarkable legacy – most visibly, the Hart Department of Medicine, which was opened and named after him in the main North Shore hospital tower block in 2016.

Generations of physicians have trained under Dr Hart who, by the time he started work on the North Shore campus in 1984, was already in his 13th year of practice – having graduated from the South African University of Witwatersrand Medical School in 1971.

Dr Hart held multiple clinical directorships across all general medicine services during his long tenure at Waitematā and led the DHB’s cardiac division for nearly two decades.

He was a powerful voice for the DHB’s expansion - leading the development of general medicine services and pioneering 24/7 acute care at Waitakere Hospital.

His tireless advocacy was a key driver behind the establishment of a new coronary care unit, dedicated cardiology ward and cardiac catheter labs at North Shore Hospital – paving the way for construction of the multi-million-dollar Lakeview Cardiology Centre which opened in 2011.

“Dr Hart is also a much-loved mentor to many young doctors and has taught generations of physicians,” Waitematā DHB CEO Dr Dale Bramley says. “I recall over 100 people attending the opening of the department that carries his name – the largest department of medicine in the country. That turnout was a real testament to the respect and admiration so many people have for him.

“There was also an outpouring of tributes at the time from people who couldn’t attend. Most importantly, Dr Hart has cared for many thousands of people over his years of dedicated service. He has been a true physician, bringing healing and comfort to so many.”

Waitematā DHB Chief Medical officer Dr Jonathan Christiansen says Dr Hart will be remembered for his “absolute integrity and selfless sacrifice.”

“He is the foundation on which general medicine has been built at North Shore and Waitakere Hospitals. Around New Zealand, he is synonymous with the service and we rightly named our department in his honour.”

Dr Hart will leave Waitematā DHB at the end of the month.

Ends.

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