

A MAN OF MANY LIVES AND PHILANTHROPIC IDEAS



PERPETUAL IMPACT
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Professor Bruce Warren has reached the highest levels of medical research and helped thousands of people with his medical skill. Additionally, his interest and investments in philanthropy have multiplied his positive influence on the world.

Professor Warren has received many accolades throughout his life. He has doctorates in philosophy (D.Phil) and science (D.Sc) from the University of Oxford, was Professor and Head of Anatomical Pathology at Sydney's Prince Henry Hospital for many years and has also authored more than 80 published medical papers and multiple textbooks.

Yet, even though he has such a distinguished career, Professor Warren remains humble and feels that life has been kind to him. "I've been very fortunate in the way my career has developed. The technology advanced rapidly at a stage that was conducive for my work. One area was in using electron microscopy (EM) to examine the pathology specimens from surgical operations." EM is a technique for obtaining high-resolution images which is used in biomedical research¹. He says, "It was an exciting time: the first time anyone was able to do these things."

Like many philanthropists, he is of the view he should pass on his good fortune to others through "a tithe or a portion of a tithe after providing for family financial requirements." He is also partly influenced by a keen sense of his own mortality.

As many lives as a cat

Professor Warren has feared for his life many times. He recalls his father driving them home from a holiday, through the middle of a bushfire and he “can still see the fire in the rear window and the trees falling down behind the car.” He has also been stuck in quicksand, caught in a blizzard, slashed at with a sharp screwdriver when he confronted a burglar, and been caught in “massive tempests” in ships and planes.

Then there were the early years of the HIV epidemic. “I was in charge of anatomical pathology at Prince Henry Hospital – the infectious disease hospital and we were asked to conduct autopsies on HIV patients. At that stage, no one knew how HIV was transmitted or how stable the infective agent was. Pathologists are well aware that, with an epidemic, the first person who dies is the post-mortem assistant and the next is the pathologist who did the autopsy.”

He was concerned for the health and safety of his staff, and himself, so he submitted a plan to administration to improve the post-mortem facilities to reduce the risk, but it was knocked back. Eventually all the teaching hospitals in Sydney banded together and recommended that these autopsies be carried out at the Coroners Court in Glebe, which had the appropriate facilities. Thankfully, it was approved.

His philanthropic journey

When Professor Warren wanted to build on his philanthropic giving, he turned to Perpetual for help in structuring it and fitting it into his overall wealth plan. He chose Perpetual as he was impressed with the management of the Ramaciotti Foundations and also liked the way Perpetual boosted the pay of employees who volunteered during World War II to match their normal wages.

Professor Warren’s broad philanthropy portfolio includes sponsoring scholarships for young doctors at the University of New South Wales as well as donating money to the Heart Foundation, Vision Australia, the Guide Dogs Association and other not-for-profits.

His philanthropic ideas don’t stop with pure monetary donations but are reflected throughout his life and career. One of the achievements he was most proud of while President of the Royal Society of NSW was helping the careers of young academics. He knew how important it was for their career development to be published in respected journals, but also how difficult and time consuming it was. So, he brought in a change which allowed abstracts of theses to be published, advancing the careers of scores of young academics.

While Professor Warren has now reduced his medical commitments, he still presents at conferences, remains an active member and Fellow of various medical and scientific societies and is also a keen scholar of Australian colonial history. Added to this, his philanthropic contributions, both in terms of time and money – are highly valued by all those who feel their impact.

1. <https://www.umassmed.edu/cemf/whatisem/>



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