



John Storey

1936 –2021

The malaria world lost one of its legendary figures with John Storey's death on 19 February 2021 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. John was one of the last generations of malariologists who learned the full range of essential skills in the field, living and working in remote places under the most challenging circumstances. He made his way up from being a laboratory technician to be a respected global authority on malaria control and the world's leading expert on malaria microscopy. Affectionately known as Lolo in the Philippines and Grandpa elsewhere, John was a friend, colleague, teacher, and mentor to virtually every malaria worker in the Asia-Pacific. Always the proper Englishman with his trademark bow tie, he was the voice of experience and reason in meetings. One of his basic pieces of philosophy was that in malaria, we are constantly reinventing the wheel, but in part, due to his leadership, the world is moving toward malaria elimination.

One of John's famous pieces of advice he jokingly gave to young, ambitious malaria workers was never to join the World Health Organization (WHO), but he proudly gave 37 years of service to WHO. He started his career in Pemba, the northern island of Zanzibar, after being discharged from the British Army. From Pemba, John moved on to Nigeria, where he worked from 1969 to 1976 as laboratory technician in the Garki Project, which has fundamentally shaped our understanding of malaria transmission in tropical Africa. In Nigeria, John grew from technician to malariologist, working with legendary malariologists including Louis Molineaux and Gabriele Gramiccia.

After Garki, John moved to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia where he joined the WHO Regional Anti-Malaria Team. While in Kuala Lumpur, John produced a series of training manuals. The most well-known was his Basic Malaria Microscopy that, together with the series of bench aids produced by Yap Loy Fong, became the standard references found in every malaria laboratory. Along the way, John earned a master's degree that added to his extensive set of practical credentials. John prided himself as an educator. His leadership style aimed to bring out the best in others. His focus was on people working on the frontline of malaria control, building, as we would describe it today, a community of practice.

While stationed in Kuala Lumpur at the Institute for Medical Research, John played an active teaching role in the Diploma course in Applied Parasitology and Entomology (DAP&E), an involvement that continued way past his retirement. Today, graduates of the DAP&E hold senior leadership positions in virtually every country in the Asia-Pacific Region.

From Kuala Lumpur John moved to Manila, where he took up the Regional Adviser's post in malaria at the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific (WPRO). As the Regional Adviser, John led a team of regional and country-based malaria professionals that helped malaria control programs set policies and provided technical guidance that facilitated the transition from the era of malaria eradication to malaria control.

Two of his many accomplishments were the collaboration with Ken Lilley that established an international grading system for malaria microscopists, and the founding of the Asia Collaborative Training Network on Malaria (ACTMalaria). ACTMalaria was formed in 1997 and continues today as a model of national programs working together to bring out their best.

John worked in the private sector for a short period before joining the European Union Malaria Control Project based in Vientiane, Lao PDR. John loved Vientiane and, for a long time, had a beautiful house overlooking the Mekong River. He was a founding member of the Vientiane Single Malt Club (VSMC), where he was famous for smoking his long Cuban cigars and enlightening his friends and colleagues on the finer points of single malt whiskies and many other things in life. The VSMC still meets regularly and has spun off similar clubs in Manila and Honolulu.

John and Annie eventually gave up their house on the Mekong and moved back to Kuala Lumpur. In recent years John served as a short-term consultant in Oman, Sudan, Myanmar, Thailand, and several countries in the Asia-Pacific Region, including one of his favorite places, Papua New Guinea.

John, the educator, mentor, and eminent malariologist, touched the lives of countless malaria and health workers across the region. He truly made a difference during his long career and will be missed.

John leaves behind his devoted Annie, two children, and six grandchildren.