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Geoffrey D. Maitland, 1924–2010

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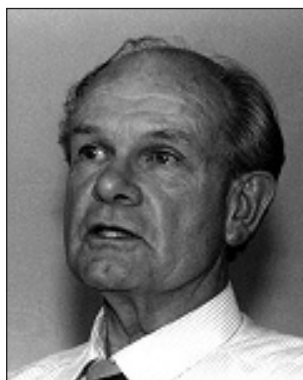
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Geoffrey D. Maitland, 1924–2010



Geoffrey D. Maitland, a physical therapy visionary and innovator for more than 4 decades, died on January 22, 2010, in Australia. A pioneer in the use of mobilization for pain modulation, his models for practice and his descriptions of examination and treatment techniques are still used as methodological standards by manual therapy researchers.

Maitland authored the classic texts *Vertebral Manipulation*, now in its 7th edition, and *Peripheral Manipulation*, now in its 4th edition, both of which have been translated into several languages, including Japanese, Spanish, and German. He wrote extensively for the *Australian Journal of Physiotherapy* and other journals worldwide. He promoted “research by physical therapists for physical therapists” at a time when prescribing physical therapy interventions was viewed as the role of the physician.

In 1965, Maitland presented the first 3-month course on “Manipulation of the Spine,” based at the South Australian Institute of Technology. In 1974, this course developed into the 1-year postgraduate diploma in manipulative physiotherapy and subsequently became a master’s degree course. In addition to serving on various physical therapy committees and boards in Australia, Maitland contributed to the bigger, international picture. In 1974, he participated in founding the International Federation of Orthopaedic Manipulative Therapy (IFOMPT), a branch of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT). The founders of IFOMPT wanted to establish a benchmark for the teaching of manual therapy internationally, and the 2008 IFOMPT Educational Standards Document is the culmination of those early efforts, forming the basis of manual therapy education program in member countries. Maitland also inspired the establishment of the International Maitland Teacher’s Association (IMTA).

Maitland received numerous honors throughout his career. He was named a Member of the British Empire in 1981 and received the Mildred O. Elson Award from WCPT in 1995 for his life’s work. He was awarded honorary membership in the American Physical Therapy Association in 1992.

Maitland’s legacy is reflected in the work of several researchers who have built on his decision-making process and developed it into a structured and evidence-based clinical reasoning framework and who have advanced knowledge, skills, and strategies that address neurogenic and other pain mechanisms. He highlighted the need for deep and broad theoretical knowledge to support and inform clinical practice. In addition to his foundational work in manipulation and mobilization, Maitland has been heralded for fostering patient-centered care and awareness of “the nature of the person” and its impact on treatment. He believed in “the body’s capacity to inform” both verbally and nonverbally and was said to detect the almost imperceptible nuances of the patient’s responses.

Maitland died almost 1 year after the death of his wife Anne, who was often present at his lectures and gave him honest feedback. From the beginning, Maitland and his wife developed a robust internal moderation system to ensure quality control and quality assurance of his work.

—Submitted by Kevin Banks, Chairman, and Members of The International Maitland Teacher’s Association

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