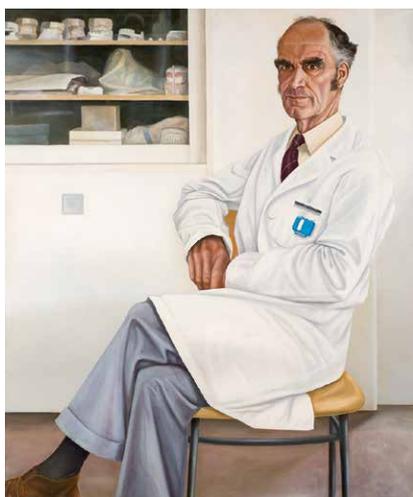


A tribute to Professor Emeritus Henry Forman Atkinson MBE LDS MSC DDS MDSC FDSRCS 20 August 1912 – 5 January 2016

Mike Morgan

For some people, retirement is not an option they ever really consider. Although officially 'retiring' in 1978, Professor Henry Atkinson continued his close association with the Melbourne Dental School and the Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne as honorary curator and honorary historian respectively.

Originally from Lancashire, Professor Atkinson held teaching and research positions at the University



John Scurry, *Professor Henry F. Atkinson*, 1978, oil on linen, 121.7 × 101.2 cm. 1978.0066, commissioned from funds raised by subscription for the Faculty of Dental Science 1978, University of Melbourne Art Collection. Reproduced courtesy of the artist.

of Manchester, as well as various hospital appointments. During World War II he served as an oral and maxillofacial surgeon in the British Army in Egypt, North Africa, and Italy, where he was awarded an MBE. He arrived in Australia in 1953 to take up the chair in dental prosthetics at the University of Melbourne. He also worked in the departments of biochemistry and physiology, was appointed lecturer in histology and embryology, served on numerous boards and committees, and was dean and acting dean of the Dental Faculty.

While teaching at the Australian College of Dentistry in Spring Street, Professor Atkinson developed an enduring interest in the college's museum, which, he discovered, dated back to the earliest dental society in Victoria. Upon his retirement he began cataloguing the collection and researching and writing about the history of dentistry in Australia. For more than 30 years he worked every week in the museum, giving consistently and generously of his time to support all its activities. His knowledge of the history of dentistry brought him radio and television exposure, where he presented as

an easy yet authoritative historian, eloquently explaining how dentistry evolved in Australian society.

In 2006 the then School of Dental Science officially recognised Professor Atkinson's contribution by naming the dental museum the Henry Forman Atkinson Dental Museum. 'Atki', as he was affectionately known by the dental fraternity, was a great mentor to generations of students and dental academics, and will continue to hold a special place in the hearts and minds of all.

Professor Mike Morgan is head of the Melbourne Dental School.



Professor Atkinson (with Mike Morgan) at the celebration of his hundredth birthday in 2012.