



Jacalyn Duffin, MD PhD

The development of biological science and the extension of medical care worldwide is a triumph of human ingenuity, a defining achievement of the modern world. Even so, institutionalized medicine and advances in technology create challenges to the humane provision of care. Pressures for efficiency and systemization sometimes endanger attitudes required to serve patients compassionately. Dr. Jacalyn Duffin, Hannah Professor of the History of Medicine at Queen's University (1988-2017), and former president of both the American Association for the History of Medicine and the Canadian Society for the History of Medicine, has made enduring contributions to medical research and education that deepen our historical understanding and cause us to reflect on the origins of present-day health care.

A haematologist and historian, Dr. Duffin has assured that thousands of physicians and nurses appreciate the broader cultural and social contexts of their professions. Modern medicine emphasizes mastery of scientific and technical information, but Dr. Duffin argues that the humanities, notably history, form part of balanced, effective training.

Dr. Duffin's research has addressed a wide array of topics, sources, places, and time periods: diagnostic technology, rural practice, drug development, disease concepts and health policy including an exploration of medical miracles in the Vatican archives. She runs an activist website about the current drug shortage crisis and an online collaboration to translate an important author of seventeenth century Rome. Her classic textbook, *History of Medicine: A Scandalously Short Introduction*, reprinted five times since its publication in 1999, and now in its second edition (2010), is read by students and lay audiences throughout the world. It presents encapsulated histories of medical specialties, featuring the cultural and social factors involved in their development. Concise and accessible, it introduces complex ideas about the social definition of illness and the moral ambiguity of discoveries and treatments. Dr. Duffin has observed that "diseases are ideas," an insight fundamental to all her work.

Over a long and distinguished career, Dr. Duffin has written several books, published numerous articles, delivered many lectures, and received many professional and academic honours. She is a much-admired and beloved teacher whose students established both an award for advocacy and a conference for humanities in her name. Her passionate devotion to historical understanding as an inseparable element of humane practice inspires students, educators, and members of the general public. Dr. Duffin invoked Clio, the ancient Greek muse of history in her anthology of essays by physicians who apply history in their clinical work. In a sense, Dr. Duffin has served that role herself in the medicine of our time.