

OBITUARY

**Dr NEIL ANTHONY BERRY, FRACS
GENERAL SURGEON
5 OCTOBER 1947 – 10 DECEMBER 2025**

Family, friends and colleagues gathered at the Holy Name of Mary Parish, Hunters Hill to celebrate the life of this distinguished surgeon, whose career spanned some 40 years of clinical excellence, surgical endeavour and medicolegal practice.

For all of those who attended and watched online, it was no time to die, as was sung the entrance song “Time to Say Goodbye”. As a famous Polish Monk Zeno Zebrowski put it, “when I walk, I feel good, when I stand still, I am immediately tired”. As a Franciscan friar, he had a propensity for wandering, wondering and enquiry, just like Neil.

Neil was blessed with the surgeon’s motto “often right, sometimes wrong, but never in doubt”. In his vocation, he provided exemplary care to his patients, was professional to a tee when dealing with Personal Injury assessment and involvement with both the AMA (as NSW Treasurer) and the RACS (twice as the Head of the Medicolegal Section). He was courteous in demeanour and respectful of senior colleagues, the judiciary and his fellow Assessors at PIC (Personal Injury Commission) NSW. He served for many years as a VMO surgeon at Fairfield and Liverpool Hospitals.

We got to know Neil in our clinical years at RNSH with his rapier wit, he was a veritable raconteur who managed to entertain his group, tutors and patients alike.

We met again as Senior Residents at RGH Concord where, under the inspired teaching and guidance of David Gillett and Ken Hume, we directed our energies to surgery.

Later we were slowly drawn into medicolegal practice where we both were Chairmen of the RACS Medicolegal Section at different stages.

We teamed up at many surgical and medicolegal meetings. Neil was an enthusiast for the right diagnoses with intellectual rigour that bode well for those who suffered personal injury. He wrote the WorkCover Guidelines for GIT, which are still used today.

His passions were Trish, his wife, his family and grandchildren. A distant fourth came golf. Score cards were rarely shown but his fairway mates were supportive till the end, arranging for lunches when he could no longer swing the club at Pennant Hills.

His other passions were cooking, especially prawn risotto, Italian meatballs and red wine - his house at Beecroft was supported by his wine vault.

We raise our glasses to salute a proud family man, a super surgeon and one who lived his life to the fullest. May he rest in peace. On a personal note, my wife Debbie and I have lost a truly great friend. Neil, see you again in the great surgical clinical in the sky.

Drew Dixon, FRACS