

# OBITUARY

## Cecil Moss



Anaesthetist Dr Cecil Moss died in Cape Town on 27 October 2017, at the age of 92. He was born in Riversdale in February 1925, to parents of Lithuanian extraction. His grandfather served as Rabbi in Riversdale. Determined to provide their sons with a good education, Cecil's parents moved to Muizenberg and enrolled them at SACS, from where Cecil matriculated at the age of 15 in 1940. An excellent all-round sportsman, he never played for the school's first rugby team because of his young age.

The following year he enrolled to study medicine at the University of Cape Town,

and played for their first XV in 1943. In 1944 he broke his studies and enlisted in the armed forces together with fifteen other UCT students. He became a medical corporal in the Special Service Battalion of the 6th Division, serving in Egypt and Italy. After the war he returned to UCT, graduating MB ChB in 1948, at the age of 23.

During his internship year at Durban's King Edward VIII Hospital Cecil captained the Natal rugby team and was vice-captain of the 1949 Springbok rugby team that trounced the All Blacks 4-0.

In November 1950, Cecil married University of Natal science student Jill Kalf. The couple moved to Cape Town, where Cecil went into general practice. He developed an interest in anaesthesia, and in 1954 they relocated to England, where he specialised at the University of Liverpool under Prof. Cecil Gray and then at London Hospital, obtaining the DA (Ire) in 1955, the DA (Eng) in 1956 and the FFA RCS (Eng) in 1957.

After returning to Cape Town in 1959, Cecil became a founder partner of Dr Basil Solomon and Partners (forerunner of the Cape Anaesthetic Clinic), with part-time sessions at Groote Schuur Hospital. In 1961 he returned to full-time practice at Groote Schuur. As the anaesthetist on call on 3 December 1967, he was part of the team led

by Chris Barnard that performed the world's first human-to-human heart transplant operation, during which he cared for the donor during the explantation procedure before assisting senior anaesthetist Dr Joseph Ozinsky. In 1989 he returned to private practice with Dr Clive Nussbaum.

Cecil is probably best known for his success on the rugby field as player, coach and administrator. He coached the UCT rugby team for nine years, during which time they won the Grand Challenge, Town Challenge and Ted Sceaes trophies. He also coached Western Province from 1972 to 1992, winning several Currie Cups, and during the isolation years he coached the Springboks, winning ten out of twelve 'unofficial tests'.

Cecil's colleagues and friends will remember him for his modesty, thoughtfulness, attention to detail and intellect. A few weeks ago, he paid a fascinating off-the-cuff tribute to Ozinsky at the memorial service held for him at GSH.

Cecil is survived by his wife Jill, their son Jaime and daughter Tessa, and four grandchildren.

### Peter Gordon

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