



IN MEMORIAM

Mohamed Abdullah

Dr Mohamed Abdullah, who passed away recently at the age of 78, was a little man with a big heart, a brilliant brain and boundless energy.

Born and schooled in Johannesburg, he studied medicine at Edinburgh and Glasgow Universities where he was awarded scholarships for anatomy and physiology. He was a clinical assistant at the Sunderland Royal Hospital in London in 1952. The following year he returned to Johannesburg where he became a part-time clinical assistant at Coronation Hospital from 1956 to 1960.

In 1974 he completed the MFGP course at the College of Medicine and in 1986 he completed a course in emergency medicine at Wits University. In 1993 he completed the family physician course offered by the SAMedical and Dental Council. He also taught medical students at Wits from 1992 until the time of his death.

He was the GP on the panel of the Garment Workers' Union, the Transvaal Furniture Workers' Union and the Millinery Union. He also ran two very busy practices, one in Jeppe and one in Bosmont, often consulting until late in the evenings.

Mohamed would burn the midnight oil reading medical journals and kept up to date with the latest medical trends by attending meetings and conferences. Although he relentlessly drove his mind and body, he ironically never drove a car!

His insight into medicine, his thirst for knowledge and his unabating energy will remain an example and inspiration to all who knew him.

Ashley Rayman

Soromini Kallichurum



Professor Soromini (affectionately known as 'Mini') Kallichurum died on 21 December 2002. Born in Ladysmith in 1932, she was one of the first 12 undergraduate students who enrolled at the University of Natal in 1950, qualifying in 1957 with an MB ChB.

She married Karoon Rughubar, a teacher, during her student years. She used to relate to me that she was forced to unwillingly pursue a medical career by her father. Nevertheless, she pursued a career in anatomical pathology soon after her internship under Professor J Wainwright, and then earned her

doctorate in medicine at UND. In the 1970s, as a result of disillusionment with academic medicine and discrimination in salary structure for black academic staff, she entered private practice as a specialist pathologist. In 1978 she became eligible for the post of Chairperson of Anatomical Pathology following the death of Professor Wainwright.

Despite her lucrative private practice, she accepted the position and became the first black medical professor in South Africa. From 1984 to 1986 she was part-time dean of the medical faculty and continued her post in anatomical pathology. She was also interim dean from April to June 1993.

The history of the medical school in the 1980s was one of turmoil - a discontented medical student body frequently boycotted classes and the UND governing body treated the medical school as a Cinderella regarding facilities and social contact. The university Senate and Council did not seem to be interested in the difficult working conditions that staff and students had to face. Perhaps one of Mini's greatest attributes was her negotiating skills with medical students, staff and the governing body. She retired as professor of anatomical pathology at the end of 1994.

Her next important role was that of President of the Interim Medical and Dental Council of South Africa from 1994 to 1997, as well as the transformed body, the Health Professions Council from 1998 to 2002.

She was an icon in the medical school and a strict disciplinarian who demanded high ethical standards in medicine. She became a role model, particularly for women in academic fields. A whole generation of students will remember her for her contribution.

Even though she suffered from an incurable lung condition, she still conversed with me on events at the medical school and the Health Professions Council until shortly before she passed away.

I had a wonderful friendship with Mini. I wish to convey my deepest sympathy and condolences to her daughters Karuna (a specialist pathologist), Ishana, Ramona, her two sons-in-law and her grandchildren.

YK Seedat

Notice to Contributors

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