



IN MEMORIAM

Johan de Beer

Dr. Johan de Beer is op 18 November 2008 op Somerset-Wes oorlede. Hy was 'n merkwaardige kollega wat die grootste deel van sy lewe aan die beoefening van doeltreffende gesondheidsadministrasie gewy en die hoogste sport bereik het.

Gebore in die distrik Somerset-Oos, het hy aan Boksburg Hoërskool gematrikuleer, en in 1951 die graad MB ChB aan die Universiteit van die Witwatersrand behaal. 'n Internskap in Bloemfontein is opgevolg deur 3 jaar algemene praktyk in Bethlehem, waarna hy op 29-jarige leeftyd aangestel is as Mediese Superintendent van Voortrekker Hospitaal, Kroonstad. In 1959 onderneem hy 'n buitelandse toer van 6 maande om die beginsels van hospitalisasie te ondersoek. Twee jaar later begin sy loopbaan in die staatsdiens toe hy as Adjunk-direkteur, Vrystaatse Hospitaaldiens, na Bloemfontein verhuis. Twee jaar daarna word hy bevorder tot Direkteur, en daar volg 8 jaar van energieke vernuwingsinisiatiewe in die Vrystaatse Hospitaaldiens. Hy was o.m. indringend betrokke by die gesamentlike aksie van die Suid-Afrikaanse Mediese Vereniging (nagraadse beplanningskomitee), Universiteit van die Vrystaat, en die Provinsiale Administrasie om 'n Geneeskunde Fakulteit vir die Vrystaat te beding. By die verkryging hiervan in 1969 het hy in tweeledige kapasiteit as Direkteur van die Hospitaaldiens en lid van die UOVS-raad 'n beslissende rol gespeel by die beplanning en vestiging van die Geneeskunde Fakulteit en die bou van die nuwe akademiese hospitaal. As waardering hiervoor het die Fakulteit in 2005 'n spesiale medalje aan hom oorhandig.

Met sy bevordering tot Sekretaris van Gesondheid in 1972 het Johan de Beer se toetreding tot die nasionale gesondheidsfeer begin. Oor die volgende 12 jaar was hy by vele deurslaggewende inisiatiewe betrokke, o.m. die promulgering van 'n nuwe gesondheidswet in 1977, die organiseer van 'n nasionale gesondheidsjaar in 1979, die instelling van 'n drieledige personeeldienst (staat, provinsie, universiteit) by geneeskundefakulteite, die vestiging van gemeenskapsgesondheid as volledige spesialisie, en die uitskakeling van alle personeel-rassediskriminasie in die gesondheidsdiens. In 1980 word hy lid van die Kommissie vir Administrasie, en met sy bevordering tot voorsitter van hierdie Kommissie in 1984 word hy die staat se mees senior staatsamptenaar. Hierdie erkenning was inderdaad gepas en 'n beloning vir 'n lewe van volledig onbaatsugtige diens



in staatsbelang. Johan het geweier dat enige staatsgebou of -struktuur ooit na hom vernoem word. Hy het in uiters moeilike tye die leisels oorgeneem, met die promulgering van 'n nuwe grondwet en instelling van die driekamer-parlement. In retrospek was hierdie 'n uiters belangrike oorgangsfase in ons land se ontwikkeling tot volle demokrasie, en was Johan die regte persoon op die regte tyd. Vertrou deur politici sowel as die amptenary, het hy tot sy uittrede in 1989 die staatsdiens verstandig gelei. Eretoekennings in die tyd ontvang, het ingesluit die Salusmedalje (goud), Eregenootskap (gemeenskapsgesondheid) van die Suid-Afrikaanse Kollege van Geneeskunde, en die Orde vir Voortreflike diens (goud).

Na sy aftrede het hy homself grotendeels uit die openbare lewe onttrek, maar was nog lid van o.m. die Kwotaraad vir Seevisserye, direkteur van maatskappye, en lid van die Pretoria-universiteitsraad. Ongelukkig het verergerende gesondheidsprobleme sy aktiwiteite begin beperk – veral rugprobleme wat tot verskeie groot operatiewe ingrepe gelei het. Mettertyd het hy hom gevestig in 'n rustige aftree-oord in Somerset-Wes, gekoester deur familie en vriende. Op die tye oudendom van 80 jaar is hy na kardiële chirurgie oorlede.

Ons opregte meegevoel gaan uit na sy geliefde vrou Annalee, drie kinders, skoonkinders en kleinkinders.

François Retief

Nagin Parbhoo (MB BS, FFA (SA), MD)

Nagin Parbhoo passed away peacefully in Cape Town on 21 January 2009 after a long illness. He was born in Wynberg Village, Cape Town, in May 1942, matriculated at Livingstone High School, and received a Government of India Scholarship for Medical Studies to study medicine at Grant Medical College in Bombay.

On his return to South Africa he worked in Port Elizabeth, first at Livingstone Hospital and later as a general practitioner with a special interest in anaesthesia. He subsequently specialised in anaesthesia at the University of Cape Town (UCT), obtaining the FFA (SA) in 1983, and became a specialist on the staff at Groote Schuur Hospital. From 1987 he was in private practice in Cape Town, while retaining links with Groote Schuur Hospital as a part-time senior lecturer until 1995.

Early in his anaesthetic career he developed a keen interest in historical aspects of anaesthesia and subsequently





contributed much time and effort in collecting and researching old anaesthetic equipment. The Department of Anaesthesia, UCT, honoured him in March 2000 by naming this unique collection, which is housed in the department, The Nagin Parbhoo Museum of Anaesthesia.

Throughout his career Nagin contributed much time and effort to the wider aspect of professional life. He played an important role in the affairs of the South African Society of Anaesthesiologists (SASA) both locally, where he served as Western Cape Branch Chairman in 1990, and nationally as Councillor. In 1987 Nagin was invited to be the Society's Honorary Archivist and in this capacity he authored the Society's history in a publication, *Five Decades – The SA Society of Anaesthetists 1943-1993*. This book was launched at the Society's Jubilee Congress and has been widely distributed locally and internationally.

In 2002 Nagin was awarded the Degree of Doctor of Medicine by UCT for his thesis *The Department of Anaesthesia, UCT 1920-2000. A History*.

The South African anaesthetic fraternity owes a great deal to Nagin for the legacy he left through his meticulously researched history of the development of anaesthesia at UCT, Cape Town and South Africa.

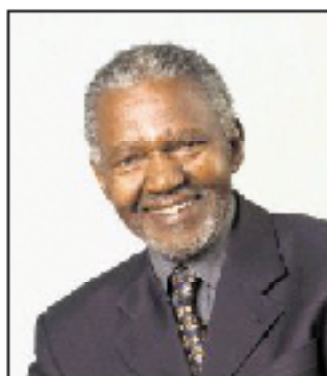
Family life was a priority in Nagin's life. He is survived by his three daughters, Anita, Lavina and Shakila, to whom we extend our sincere sympathy.

Peter Gordon

Nthato Motlana (16/02/1925 - 30/11/2008)

The indefatigable Dr Nthato Motlana's important role in the South African liberation struggle has been well covered in the media. We wish to highlight his critical role in the success of Medical Education for South African Blacks (MESAB).

MESAB was a private co-operative effort of South Africans and Americans that began in 1985 to increase the pitifully small number of South African black health professionals and thereby improve health care for the underserved black



community. Dr Motlana saw this effort as preparation for a post-apartheid South Africa where blacks would play a meaningful role in leadership and in providing improved health care for all South Africans. In its 27-year history MESAB provided assistance to about 10 000 black individuals, enabling them to become health professionals and/or upgrade their skills. MESAB also introduced a pioneering mentor programme for disadvantaged students as well as providing support to advanced training in midwifery, rural outreach programmes, and training for the care of HIV/AIDS patients.

A founding Trustee of MESAB/South Africa, Dr Motlana served as Chairman for 15 years, leading a cross-section of highly respected health professionals. His participation, endorsement, and leadership in the dark days of apartheid lent credibility to the effort which was suspect at first both in the eyes of those who advocated 'liberation before education' and the South African apartheid regime. Nthato fervently advocated education as an instrument for overcoming prejudice and for personal advancement. He drew from his own history as a poor black boy taken under the wing of a white Jewish teacher who recognised and nurtured his talents, paying his fees. He twice stood trial with Mandela and others in 1962.

Although MESAB was not his first priority among his many other activities, we marvelled at the time he gave the organisation. He came to the USA on short notice and for remarkably short visits. His advocacy helped to persuade American donors like George Soros to contribute to MESAB. He kept a fearful schedule and slept little. When we asked how he could get by with so little sleep, with a smile he said, 'My grandmother told me I'll have plenty of time to sleep when I'm dead'.

His example was an inspiration to the young students and made them proud to be part of the 'MESAB family'. They were thrilled to meet him in person.

We cherished Nthato's friendship. When we first met almost 40 years ago, he was one of two black general practitioners in Soweto. We vividly recall our first visit to his surgery early one evening. A long line of patients waited outside. Inside, a single light bulb hanging from the ceiling illuminated his office.

Along with his acute and cogent comments on all matters of interest to us, he always brought a smile to our lives. We will never forget our pleasure in having Nthato and his wife, Zanele, visit us at home in Palo Alto, California.

Dr Nthato Motlana – a true hero! The world will miss him.

Joy and Herbert Kaiser
MESAB founders