

Ralph was a keen photographer – his 1964 film on sickle cell disease won a prize from the Royal Society of Medicine. He played the piano by ear, entertaining friends and family. His wife, Begum, predeceased him. He died at his home in Cheshire on 6 May 2010 surrounded by his five children, William, Margaret, Terry-Anne, Nerina and Sandra.

A contemporary senior academic at the University of Cape Town Medical School described him as a 'giant of African medicine'.

Professor Krishna Somers

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Willem Lubbe

Willem Lubbe, an exemplary physician-scientist, recently died at the age of 72 on his farm in New Zealand. He was born on 30 October 1938 and obtained his MB ChB degree at UCT in 1962 and his MD in 1969. He passed the FCP (SA) in April 1971. He was active in SHAWCO and was associated with Smuts Hall and Kopano

student residences. After his internship he worked in the United States and returned to the Department of Medicine as a Registrar in 1969. In 1971 he was appointed as acting physician and subsequently to the full-time staff as a specialist, then senior specialist. In 1977 became Principal Specialist and *ad hominem* Associate Professor.

As a physician, he was highly competent, hardworking and conscientious. He was an outstanding clinician and a popular teacher at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. His major interest was in hypertension and he headed the Hypertension Clinic. He was responsible for the organisation of the annual postgraduate course for physicians from all over South Africa from 1975. He also organised the final examinations for the UCT MB ChB. He carried out all these responsibilities with his characteristic thoroughness and care. He will be remembered as an outstanding member of the Department of Medicine, loyal, hard-working and committed. He could be somewhat authoritarian and did not suffer fools gladly but he was admired by all.

As a research worker in the Heart Laboratory, his work together with that of Tim Noakes and Thomas Podzuweit was absolutely crucial in ensuring local and international recognition for our molecular heart attack hypothesis (cyclic AMP as the noxious beta-adrenergic messenger). His dedication to research inspired others in the laboratory. His crucial paper, published in the highly rated *Journal of Clinical Investigation*, was widely regarded as a significant advance in the prevention of sudden cardiac death, and was even cited in the *Japan Times* in 1976.

We lost him to New Zealand in 1978, when he emigrated to take up a senior lectureship at the highly reputable Green Lane Hospital, University of Auckland. He briefly returned for two sabbatical visits to Cape Town in 1982 and 1991. He retired to take up serious sheep farming. When visited by one of us (LHO) a few years later, he was absolutely at home shearing the sheep and proudly showing off his highly honed farming skills. He died suddenly while tending his cows in the fields of his farm – his last moments were in the greenery of nature, and on his beloved his farm.

Stuart J Saunders, Lionel H Opie