It is with much sadness that we received the news that Donald Paterson had passed away peacefully in his home in Plettenberg Bay on 10 February 2015 after a battle with cancer.

Donald was born in Durban on 13 February 1950, schooled at Kearsney College in Natal, and graduated with an MBBCh from the University of the Witwatersrand in 1974. While a student, he met his future wife, Gillian, who was studying to become a physiotherapist. From a young age, Donald developed a questioning and often restless mind, and while a medical student, his tutorial group was renowned for debating issues medical and non-medical long after the practicals or tutorials had ended. Throughout his life, Donald would wrestle and seek solutions to South Africa’s and the world’s problems. These solutions were not always conventional or practical. Donald was a keen sportsman. He played provincial water polo for Transvaal in the 1970s, became a South African biathlon champion in the junior veteran age group in 1989, and was an accomplished horse rider.

After specialising in anaesthesia at the University of Cape Town in 1982, he went into private practice in Kimberley in 1985, before moving to Muscat in 2001, and to the UK in 2003, where he worked for a number of years in the anaesthetic department at the King’s Lynn Hospital in Norfolk. During his time abroad, Donald was a regular attendee of the annual South African Society of Anaesthesiologists congress. In 2011, Donald and Gillian returned permanently to the home that they had built for themselves in Plettenberg Bay. He joined the anaesthetic department at George Hospital, where he soon made a mark as an excellent, albeit uncompromising teacher of the basics of safe anaesthesia to trainees.

All who were privileged to meet Donald will remember him with fondness, for his candour, integrity, ready smile, appreciation of family and friends, and his indomitable spirit, right up until the end. He is survived by Gillian and their three sons; Richard, an orthopaedic surgeon; Alistair, an anaesthesiologist, and Christopher, an engineer, to whom we extend our condolences.

Peter Gordon and Ken Huddle
Groote Schuur and Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital