

IN MEMORIAM

Dr Kurt Whiffler

It is with immense sadness that the anaesthetic community learnt of the death of Dr Kurt Whiffler on 31 October 2014. Kurt was a great man and a wonderful doctor. His legacy as a teacher, and in particular, his passion for teaching regional anaesthesia, extended beyond his immediate environment.

Kurt graduated with his FFA(SA) in 1972. He always kept a close association with the University of the Witwatersrand's (Wits) academic medical department, and for many years occupied a part-time post at the then Hillbrow Hospital, teaching countless registrars and anaesthesiologists the art and skill of regional anaesthesia. When Hillbrow Hospital closed its doors in December 1997, Kurt moved his part-time appointment to the Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital. Kurt was always willing to teach and train regional anaesthesia in his free time, and started practical anatomy sessions in the Department of Anatomy at Wits, where he ran workshops for anyone who was interested in learning about regional anaesthesia. Kurt distinguished himself with a number of publications, the most notable of which described the infraclavicular coracoid block, which was published in the *British Journal of Anaesthesia* in 1981. Kurt was also one of the founding members of the Anaesthetic Foundation of South Africa. He dedicated a considerable amount of his time establishing it, and making the refresher course a premier academic event, a distinction which it still enjoys.

In his younger days, Kurt refereed rugby at provincial level, but had to stop when he fractured his ankle. However, his love of rugby and insightful knowledge of the game remained a part of his life until his death. Kurt loved animals and used to breed Bull Mastiff dogs, but most of us will associate Kurt with race horses. Many of his colleagues were fortunate enough to receive invitations to join him at the races on a Saturday afternoon, where he would animatedly entertain his guests and impart knowledge to those who had no idea on how "the races worked". He loved his horses, and until recently, still attended race days at Turfontein Racecourse.

Since retiring a few years ago, Kurt's health declined steadily, but despite this setback, he still kept in touch with his friends and colleagues. Those of us whose lives were touched by Kurt, and who had the privilege of learning so much from him in our careers, will miss and fondly remember him as a great man and a wonderful anaesthesiologist. Our thoughts and prayers go to his wife Margaret, and his children and grandchildren. May they obtain some solace from the knowledge that Kurt did make a difference. May he rest in peace.

Dr Des Lines

Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital