

OBITUARY

Eric Cohen, 3 February 1943 - 31 December 2018



Eric Cohen's life was defined by a love of medicine and for humanity. A gifted doctor, he is remembered for his brilliant mind, eloquence, quick wit, integrity and compassion. As a colleague said, 'He lived the values which a lot of people hope for but never achieve.'

Born in Johannesburg, Eric graduated MB BCh from the University of the Wit-

watersrand in 1966. Following internship in surgery and medicine at Baragwanath Hospital in Soweto, he specialised as a physician, graduating FCP (SA) in October 1970. Eric oversaw the Medical and Coronary Care Unit at Johannesburg General Hospital before spending a year in the Cardiopulmonary Cardiothoracic Unit. After marrying Valda Baron from Bulawayo, he left for Zimbabwe in 1972.

Eric went into private practice and worked at the Mater Dei Hospital, ultimately becoming medical director and chairman of the Board. He was instrumental in establishing an intensive care unit, which was later dedicated to him as the Dr Eric Cohen ICU. Eric was renowned for his early rounds, arriving while the night staff was still on duty. He retained the smallest details of every patient, even if the last encounter had been years previously. He taught at the United Bulawayo Group of Hospitals and the Richard Morris Hospital, where he was a consultant physician.

Eric had a great impact on medicine in Zimbabwe, transforming clinical practice by example, by intervention and by addressing many medicopolitical issues. He served as a trustee of the National Cancer Association,

as vice-president of the Zimbabwe Medical Association and as chairman of the National Tariff Committee. He was a Fellow of the Institute of Directors of Zimbabwe and of the UK and a member of the New York Academy of Science and the Royal Society of Medicine.

A giant in the community, Eric never turned away a patient who could not pay, and often sponsored their medications. He offered empathy, wisdom and friendship to families suffering with a loved one.

A voracious reader with a passion for Shakespeare, Eric maintained a keen interest in world events. Socially, he played cricket, tennis and chess. Married to Valda for 53 years, he was an involved father to Graham and Dalia and relished his role as grandfather to five grandchildren.

Eric leaves a singular, far-reaching legacy built upon a life rich with love and meaning. His quiet selflessness, his dedication and the compassion he extended so generously will continue to enrich those whose lives he touched.

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