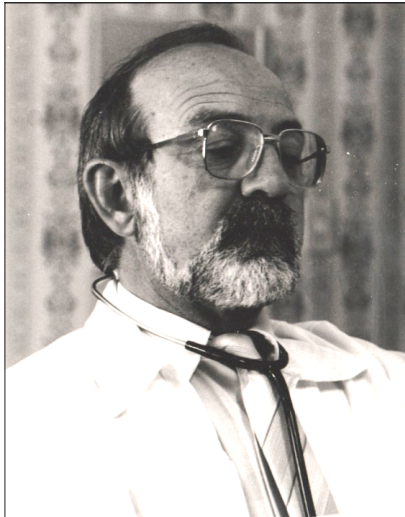


OBITUARY

Basil Michaelides, 30 November 1934 - 20 March 2021



The old *Readers' Digest* often featured a column titled 'My most unforgettable character'. Basil certainly fitted this category. I was first aware of his presence when he strolled into the lecture theatre with a Union Jack shaven into his scalp! He had been on a freshers' raid to Stellenbosch during Intersarsity week, and was treated accordingly by his Matie captors.

After completing the internship requirements, he joined Dr Gordon's practice in Port Elizabeth, where he remained until his retirement. He was an active member of the Academy of Family Physicians and wrote many editorials in the journal, *Family Practice*. I recall a poignant topic termed 'Midlife career change'. Basil had been under great pressure from his junior partners to institute a dispensing practice. This went against his teachings and conscience. But times were dire, and general practitioners' remunerations from medical aids were a pittance. Reluctantly he succumbed, knowing that the pharmacist would suffer, but that his patients would benefit.

Early in his years of practice, Basil realised that there was sometimes an urgent need to advise married couples on matters of the birds and the bees in order to save their union. Society at the time was very conservative, and such subjects were omitted from the school curriculum and from family discussions. This state of affairs was rudely overturned when the late Dr Domeena Joseph visited South Africa in the 1970s and expounded publically and in detail on these matters. She and Basil were peas in a

pod, and he too became a doyen of sexual disorders.

In retirement, Basil was devastated by two events, the loss of his best friend, Dr Ivan Nurick, with whom he had daily communication, and then of his beloved wife, Praxia. Their hobby had been travel, and together the couple had explored the world. To add to his loneliness in later life, he lost the vision in both eyes – but not his sense of humour. He was a loyal member of the class of 1957 that met every five years to renew acquaintances. And later, when a smaller Cape Town group gathered each month, the now-ailing Basil was always seated at the table, entertaining his chatty colleagues. He was ever grateful to his daughters, who unfailingly took him out every weekend, and his classmates express the same sentiment to Olga, Alexia, Sava and Thalia, for the love they showered upon him until he quietly died in his sleep.

Vincent Harrison (on behalf of the UCT class of 1957)

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