OBITUARY

Ronald Ellis 'Ronnie' Kottler

Born in Oudtshoorn on 11 December 1927, Ronnie Kottler matriculated from Oudtshoorn Boys' High School in 1944 and qualified MB ChB at the University of Cape Town in 1950. He gained his DCH (RCPS, London) in 1954. He returned to Cape Town in 1958 to make up a group of four registrars undertaking the first officially sanctioned radiology qualification under Prof. Jack Jacobson in the Groote Schuur Hospital department, graduating MMed (Rad D) in 1960. After working at GSH and for 3 years in private practice, he was appointed senior specialist at Somerset Hospital, where he also collaborated closely with the new School of Radiography.

In 1974 Ronnie returned to GSH, and in 1981 was appointed Professor and Chairman of Radiology at GSH and the University of Cape Town. From 1982, he was Head of the Division of Radiation Medicine. In 1985 he qualified FRCR (Eng).

Ronnie was keenly interested in the department's cross-sectional history. When GSH first opened its doors in 1937, the diagnostic and therapeutic X-ray departments shared the same space. Diagnostic radiology started with four X-ray and fluoroscopy rooms. By 1991, 56 rooms required conformance to radiation protection regulations.

He was a tremendous role model, being very supportive and encouraging in his advice and engagement, both during training and engagements, both during training and subsequently.

After he retired at the age of 65 years on 31 December 1992, Ronnie was appointed as Emeritus Professor at UCT. He continued sessions in GI radiology and then mammography, until he retired completely at the end of 2013.

He died on Friday 30 July 2021, leaving a proud legacy of personal respect and the academic and teaching ethos of radiology, and also of his thoughtful departmental planning. He is survived by his beloved wife Pam, daughter Jacqui, son Rob, and their families.

Philip Palmer, who was appointed Head of Diagnostic Radiology in 1964, with completely modernising the department. He was keenly interested in the department's history. When GSH first opened its doors in 1937, the diagnostic and therapeutic X-ray departments shared the same space. Diagnostic radiology started with four X-ray and fluoroscopy rooms. By 1991, 56 rooms required conformance to radiation protection regulations.

Ronnie strongly encouraged professional growth in his many trainees. His weekly lunchtime GI radiology teaching sessions were cleverly annotated, and many of his teaching points are still regularly put into practice. Always generous with his advice and time, he gratefully noted the contributions by many consultants and registrars over the years, while also making a point of paying tribute to key workers in the department such as radiographers, nurses, porters, and support and clerical staff. From humble beginnings when he qualified in 1960, 25 years later there were 18 specialists and 18 registrars, the latter rotating through the Red Cross War Memorial Children's and Somerset hospitals.

In 1983, our group of six new registrars appreciated the warm welcome we received from Berry Neumann and Prof. Kottler in the Old GSH building. Prof. Kottler was known countrywide as a kind, inquisitive and knowledgeable man with a knack for memorable teaching and common sense. He was a tremendous role model, being very supportive and encouraging in his advice and engagements, both during training and subsequently.

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