



## IN MEMORIAM

### EM (Max) Sandler (31/05/1920 - 3/07/2008)

Max Sandler, a dear friend and respected colleague, died in Cape Town on 3 July 2008 at the age of 88 years. He was born in Heidelberg Cape on 31 May 1920, matriculated at Robertson Boys' High School in 1937 and together with three close friends, Sam Behrman, Julian Sennett, and Louis Blumberg from Robertson and Worcester started studying medicine in 1938. This group of friends jointly owned an old Chevrolet which they used to travel to lectures. As a similarly displaced 'country boy' I was fortunate to become part of their group, forging close and lifelong friendships.



Max, although a diligent and serious student, also had a deep and abiding interest in mathematics, science, history and literature and was in my opinion more inclined towards academia. He graduated MB ChB (UCT) in 1943, and went to London in 1946 to pursue his postgraduate studies in obstetrics and gynaecology, obtaining the MRCOG in 1949. He was on the staff of the Charing Cross Hospital from 1949 to 1953, first as resident registrar and tutor, and later senior registrar. On his return to Cape Town he commenced private specialist practice from 1954 until his retirement in 1985. He contributed articles and letters to the *SAMJ* and was held in high regard by his colleagues across the spectrum of medical practice. He was awarded the FRCOG in 1966 and was on the consultant staff of Groote Schuur, Somerset, Woodstock, and Peninsula Maternity hospitals.

He married Kayda Blumberg (Louis's sister) in 1945. They had two children – Michael, who lives in London, and Laura who lives in Cape Town. Kayda sadly died in 1979. He had one grand-daughter, Kayda, named after her late grandmother, and one grandson, Gideon, who tragically died in April 2008 at the age of 20.

After his wife's death Max distanced himself more socially and could not abide idle chatter and 'small talk'. I have no doubt that much of his social withdrawal might also have been exaggerated by his progressive hearing loss. He was, in fact, very scholarly with a sharp and enquiring mind, and could at times be very witty. Because he was inherently a very private person many thought him to be distant and abrupt, but those who came to know him better found him to be warm and sincere with an unwavering integrity and independence of mind.

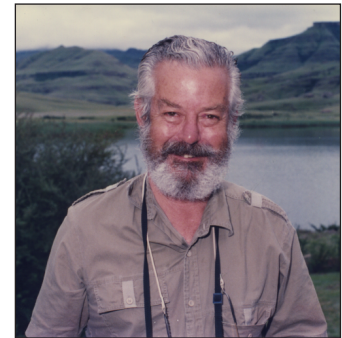
Max was well-known in book-collecting circles and built up a large personal library although he allowed very few to view his collection. His library embraced among other subjects medical history, Jewish history (even though he disliked the practice of organised religion), and most particularly Africana and the Afrikaans language. He frequently lectured on these subjects, and published a book *Dear Dr Bolus* of the letters written by C Louis Leipoldt to Dr Bolus during his medical studies from 1897 to 1911. Of his great pleasures for many years was to study together with a colleague on Saturday nights, and original medical texts written in Latin. He was a leading member of numerous cultural societies, notably the Owl Club, the Medical History Club, and the Society of Bibliophiles.

We extend our condolences to his daughter Laura, his son Michael, and his granddaughter Kayda. We shall miss you, Max.

Morris Cohen

### Eric John Sanders

Eric John Sanders, born in Bloemfontein and educated in Johannesburg and Marist Brothers College, Rondebosch, joined the ICCT medical class which graduated in 1948 after serving in the South African Air Force in World War II. And so began a friendship which lasted 62 years during which I was greatly privileged to be his close friend, his anaesthesiologist, and even occasionally his patient.



He specialised with an Edinburgh surgical fellowship, adding to his surgical experience at Highgate and Romford hospitals in London. However, his deep enduring love for Africa ensured his return to 8 happy years as a general surgeon in many disciplines at the Nkana Mine Hospital in Kitwe, Northern Rhodesia as it was then known.

In 1964 he joined the surgical team at the King Edward VIII Hospital, Durban prior to entering private practice 2 years later, but still retaining his teaching post in the Department of Surgery for a further 25 years, during which time he adjudicated surgical Saturday morning seminars with Professors John Robbs and Haffejes.

In May 1998 he retired from private practice but continued teaching at the medical school, where the Department of Surgery awarded him the Distinguished Service Award in December 2006.



His attitude to his work was one of total integrity in every aspect and absolute devotion to the needs of his patients, setting an example which many students would hopefully follow. His enthusiasm extended far beyond the bounds of medicine, as many could testify who have seen his wildlife and particularly wild bird photographic efforts which are nothing short of masterpieces and which could be the envy of any professional.

Cruelly struck with Parkinson's disease 20 years ago, Eric accepted its inexorable progression with exemplary fortitude until his passing on 4 October 2008 in his 84th year.

A great family man and friend has gone.

We extend deepest sympathy to Margaret, his beloved wife of 56 years, and to their daughters Helen, Caroline and Natalie and their families which include 5 grandchildren.

**Peter Maytom**

## BOOK REVIEWS

### At the Heart of Healing: Groote Schuur Hospital 1938 - 2008

*By Anne Digby and Howard Phillips, with Harriet Deacon and Kirsten Thomson. Pp. 398. Jacana, 2008. ISBN: 9781770096424.*

Groote Schuur Hospital (GSH) opened 70 years ago as the main hospital for Cape Town and the teaching hospital for the University of Cape Town. The visionary professors at the opening ceremony on 31 January 1938 would have cherished thoughts that the institution would meet the ideals of Flexner for a teaching hospital, but others could scarcely have imagined that its name would become known to virtually everyone, in South Africa and abroad.

The authors, historians Anne Digby and Howard Phillips with Harriet Deacon and Kirsten Thomson, have comprehensively researched, seeking to examine fairly, even-handedly and critically its travails and successes. Credit is given for its numerous special achievements while confronting the difficulties – administrative, bureaucratic, political and financial. Most particularly, the book examines both the complicity with and determined opposition to the segregation and subsequent apartheid policies in force in South Africa throughout many of those years.

An aspect that seems to have taken the authors by surprise is the sense of loyalty, pride and ownership shared by virtually all members of staff, including those serving in menial roles, and the millions of patients admitted over the years to its beds

and clinics. Quoting a senior matron, it is explained that 'The hospital on the hill: everybody saw it, everybody looked at it. It was like – with its arms – embracing us, embracing the whole of Cape Town'. This allegiance among patients and staff has arguably been the hospital's most singular achievement.

Five broad themes emerge from the book:

- the administrative and bureaucratic complexities in running a modern hospital, and the dedication with which it has been done in the case of GSH, that has been served by many exceptionally competent chief administrators
- the impact on its operations of apartheid policies and the bitterness and anger they fostered, particularly among students and staff who were subjected to such hurtful discrimination
- the sense of family referred to above, notwithstanding the hurt
- the scientific and clinical excellence that was achieved (and sometimes brilliance), including those surrounding the world's first heart transplant
- the financial constraints, particularly in the post-apartheid era since 1994 when government insisted on more equitable allocation of health resources in strengthening primary health care at the expense of tertiary hospitals.

A special feature and critical success factor of the partnership between GSH and the University of Cape Town (UCT) was the joint agreement between the provincial hospital authority and the university. At the heart of that contractual arrangement lay the mutual acceptance that teaching, clinical services and research are inextricably linked and interdependent. It was understood that clinical research often translates immediately to practical benefit at the bedside and clinic, and that excellent clinical services and teaching can only happen where research is robust and flourishing. The early clinical professors were insistent on this, by word and deed. The best teachers, in their version, were also accomplished research workers. With modern financial constraints, the joint agreement and the principles that it espoused have fallen away. The authors, drawing on many sources, report on how regrettable that has proven to be.

The jewel in the historical crown of GSH, and one of its defining moments, was the world's first heart transplant by Christiaan Barnard and his team on 3 December 1967. The authors do not over-emphasise the event, while acknowledging that it was the general culture of excellence that made it possible. The anaesthetists, cardiology team, nurses and exceptional standards of postoperative care enabled the build-up to the famous operation. The book judiciously balances this with the heartache and suffering caused by South Africa's racial policies as played out in health and in the hospital's policies. Recognition is given to the efforts of numerous individuals, divisions and departments to adapt to the changing demands placed on teaching hospitals by the need