

## IN MEMORIAM



**Des Dall (10 July 1936 - 29 August 2010)**

Des Dall died in Hermanus on 29 August 2010 after a long battle with cancer of the oesophagus.

Des was a giant in every sense of the word, and made a major contribution to orthopaedic surgery, not only in South Africa, but also internationally. He qualified at UCT in 1959, and followed up with an FRCS (Edin) in 1964, and MCh (Liverpool) in 1968. His interest

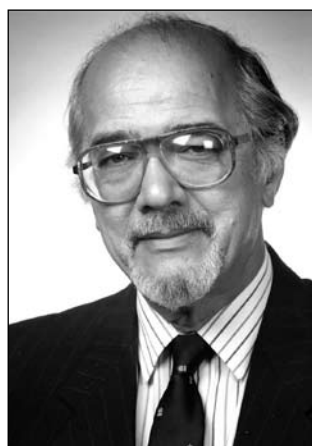
in hip replacement led him to work with Sir John Charnley in 1969, who pioneered hip replacement surgery.

Des was one of the very first people to confine his practice exclusively to the hip, particularly joint replacement. He designed and patented a trochanter cable grip system, which was a considerable improvement on the original wires used by Charnley. He also published extensively, particularly, but not exclusively, on hip surgery. With the worldwide success of his cable grip system there also came significant financial reward. In 1987 Des was appointed Professor of Orthopaedics in Los Angeles, USA, a position he held for 10 years. He retired in 1997, and moved back to Hermanus, which remained one of his favourite places despite extensive travelling to introduce the cable grip system worldwide.

Des spent his last years enjoying the fruits of his success. He and his wife, Kinki, travelled extensively, and he also tried hard to improve his golf handicap! Sadly, his health started failing three years ago, but with typical tenacity and grit he faced the inevitable with great fortitude. In this he was lucky to have had his wonderful wife of nearly 50 years at his side.

Des is survived by Kinki, three daughters, and six grandchildren.

C P van der Merwe



**Ralph George Hendrickse (5 November 1926 - 6 May 2010)**  
(MD, DSc (*honoris causa*), FRCPE, FRCPCH (Founder Fellow), FMC (Nigeria) Foundation Fellow))

Ralph Hendrickse was born in Cape Town on 5 November 1926. He was the son of William and Johanah (née Dennis)

Hendrickse. He was raised in a coloured community of richly educated teachers who regarded teaching and learning as pathways to upliftment. He matriculated first class from Livingstone High, a coloured school, at the age of 15 years. Ralph was accepted by

the University of Cape Town to study medicine but his parents did not have the money for university fees. Their family doctor, Dr Drummond, offered to pay the fees for the first two years. An Oppenheimer Scholarship enabled Ralph to continue his studies, and he graduated MB ChB in 1948. He was one of the top two students in his class and was later informed that he had been the top student but was not given such recognition because he was coloured.

As a student he met a trainee midwife, Begum Abdurahman. She was the daughter of Dr Abdullah Abdurahman, a third-generation Malay South African whose grandparents had been brought as slaves from the Dutch East Indies, now Indonesia, to work as craftsmen in the Dutch colonial settlement at the Cape. Abdurahman graduated in Glasgow and had a thriving private practice in Cape Town. He entered politics and founded the African Peoples Organisation with the aim of resisting racial discrimination. Begum's mother was a white South African, Margaret Stansfield, whose family ostracised her when she married the Cape Malay doctor. Ralph was white enough to be classified as white, an easy task if you moved elsewhere and merged into privilege and power in white society. This shift occurred commonly in individuals and communities before the Nationalist Government came to power and rigidly enforced racially discriminatory laws such as the Population Registration Bill, the Immorality Act and the Mixed Marriages Act.

Ralph and Begum Hendrickse moved to Durban to McCord Zulu Hospital, a Methodist Mission Hospital, where Ralph developed his abiding interest in paediatrics. Begum, a certified midwife, took charge of the obstetrics ward. As it was not possible at that time to obtain specialist qualifications in South Africa, Ralph and Begum with their three young children travelled to the UK. He took the examination in paediatrics for Membership of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh. There was no question of returning to South Africa to pursue a specialist career, as State and provincial hospitals and non-European hospitals would not have employed non-white doctors. At the time many nurses in black hospitals were white. A committed Africanist, Ralph, like many non-white South African medical graduates with specialist qualifications, moved to appointments in newly established university hospitals in colonial West and East African countries. At University College Hospital, Ibadan, Nigeria, Ralph gained extensive experience with regard to sickle cell disease, which formed the basis of the MD degree awarded to him on a return visit to Cape Town in 1957. He was appointed as a Senior Lecturer, later Professor and Head of the Department of Paediatrics in Ibadan and subsequently Director of the Institute of Child Health at the University of Ibadan. He continued his research on malaria in pregnancy, protein-calorie malnutrition and kwashiorkor, and did a pioneering study on the role of aflatoxin and its damaging effects on stored grain.

In 1969 Ralph was invited to the School of Tropical Medicine in Liverpool to take up Chairmanship of a newly established Department of Tropical Paediatrics, where he developed a course towards a diploma in tropical paediatric medicine. At Liverpool he was appointed Dean of the School of Tropical Medicine, an appointment he held jointly with a Professorship in Tropical Paediatrics until his retirement in 1991. He received several honours, including Senior Heinz Fellow of the British Paediatric Society in 1961; Visiting Professor with the Rockefeller Foundation, providing the opportunity of visiting and lecturing in a number of paediatric centres including Makerere University in Uganda; and the Frederick Murgatroyd Memorial Prize of the Royal College of Physicians in 1970. After the political transformation in South Africa his Alma Mater awarded him the degree of Doctor of Science *honoris causa*.