



## IN MEMORIAM

### **Basil W Myers** (26/09/1914 - 14/06/2008)



Basil Myers died in Cape Town on 14 June 2008, succumbing to cardiac failure unresponsive to all that modern medicine and technology could offer. Up-to-date technology was in sharp contrast to Basil's old-style family practice he pursued in Cape Town for over 60 years.

Nevertheless, as an individual of exceptional enterprise, and possessing uniquely diverse skills and talents, he rose to the challenge of modern technology. Only months before his death he acquired a computer, and trained himself to become sufficiently literate to communicate with family members and friends with enthusiasm and great personal satisfaction.

Basil Walter Myers was born in Paarl on 26 September 1914, one of a family of two sisters and four brothers, the latter four ultimately qualifying as doctors and practising as GPs in various parts of the country. Our mutual uncle, the late Frankie Forman, served in no small measure as an inspirational role model for the direction we all pursued.

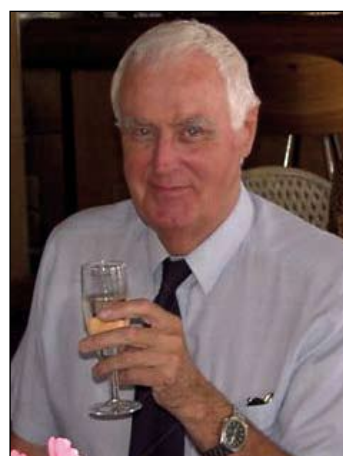
Basil's consulting rooms were initially located in an old Victorian building at the top of Long Street, Cape Town, the upper floor being occupied by as yet an unknown and struggling artist who would in the course of time emerge as a much sought-after South African artist – Gregoire Boonzaaier! From his premises opposite the Long Street Baths, Basil pursued his general practice from one end of the Peninsula to the other. The practice developed rapidly, and even in his latter few years, his devoted patients would consult him at his home in Kloof Nek Road.

Apart from his general practice, Basil was a 'generalist' in more senses than one. As a student and in his earlier years as a doctor he serviced his own motor vehicles, assembled complex electrical equipment, became an expert photographer, and took great joy in his photographic dark room. He also developed skills in carpentry, fretwork and wood-turning, the crafted objects he created being generously distributed among family members and friends. In his married years he became proficient in all culinary arts, baking breads and cakes, producing various jams, preserves and pickles, and in his back-yard lovingly nurturing his vast array of orchids – and he excelled at each of these activities.

Basil was a devoted and beloved family man and was always there for his daughter Sybil, son David, and their families of seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. With equal devotion he cared for his ailing wife, Sadie, year in and year out, until she died in May 2006.

Basil Myers was, as his son David and grandson Anthony lovingly expressed to a packed memorial service gathering, 'an amazing man'.

### **Mossie Silbert**



### **Willem Vlietstra** (28/10/1935 - 24/07/2008)

Wim Vlietstra came to South Africa in 1982 to start life here initially as a medical officer at Tygerberg Hospital, where he would serve in the casualty department for about 24 years. Soon he became known by the honorary name of 'Oom Wim', not only by his

staff but also by the many young colleagues in training. After retiring in 2000, he continued to work for a few years. His professional life had been dedicated to caring for and dealing with the thousands of patients brought into 'Trauma'. He was considered by those who worked for and with him to have been a legend in his lifetime.

Wim was born and educated in the Netherlands, obtaining his medical degree (Arts examen Nederland) at the University of Utrecht. He then qualified as a general surgeon, and served a number of years on the staff of the surgical department at the University Hospital in Rotterdam.

He had many talents, but was a very modest man. Apart from his care for and involvement with people as patients, he served in many roles in associations and at social gatherings, mainly in the Dutch community. One outstanding and colourful role he fulfilled for many years was that of Sint Nicolaas at the traditional Dutch festival for young and old, but he also officiated many times at cultural events.

I would venture to say that most of Wim's deeds benefited other people and only a small part served his own enjoyment, for example his painting hobby, other activities often being shared with others.

Wim had to leave his family in the Netherlands but was, in later years, able to maintain a very close relationship with his three children. Their mother died a few years before he was





struck, in 2007, by a rare form of carcinoma. After an operation, initially with good result, he lived a fairly normal life until the beginning of this year, when metastases had spread widely. A palliative operation to relieve pain, followed by a period in a rehabilitation centre, barely enabled him to return home.

There, after his children had stayed with him for a while but had to return to the Netherlands, some very good friends took over until he died in peace and in his own bed on 24 July 2008.

It has been a privilege to know Wim as a friend and be called friends by him. Our condolences go out to his children and grandchildren in Holland.

**Han and Thea Mets and South African friends**

## BOOK REVIEW

### Lupus. Second edition: Fact series

*By David Isenberg and Susan Manzi. Pp. vii + 101. Illustrated. R225. Oxford University Press, Southern Africa. 2008. ISBN 978-0-19-921387-0.*

People encountering lupus for the first time, whether they are patients given the diagnosis, or friends or relatives of patients, are frequently bewildered by the confusing information provided, puzzled by the concept of autoimmunity and fearful of possible treatments and outcomes. This small book is aimed at this group and will inform and support patients and their families.

Individual chapters provide fairly detailed information on causes, early presenting symptoms, clinical signs and the use of tests in diagnosis and management. Treatment is discussed fully and there is an excellent chapter directed at non-drug treatment, including sun avoidance, treatment adherence, and life-style activities to reduce premature vascular disease and osteopenia.

Although brief, the sections on living with lupus and on lupus in pregnancy are very helpful and the discussion of the problems facing children and adolescents with lupus is particularly well written and insightful. Many of the chapters

are enriched by the inclusion of text boxes summarising key points or describing problems from the perspective of individual patients, which makes it appealing to read.

The appendix lists World Lupus Support Groups. The index is comprehensive.

The book would be easier to handle if the binding were of higher quality and unfortunately there are a number of spelling and typing errors. There are inconsistencies in the way drugs (such as corticosteroids) are described, with mixes of generic and trade names, and also factual inaccuracies in places (such as the rigid application of classification criteria for diagnosis, the description of skin lesions as being caused by vasculitis and the statement that window glass will protect from harmful rays). However, on the whole, I would recommend this book to anyone coming to terms with the alarming and perplexing diagnosis of lupus.

**Sue Jessop**