



Passing of Emeritus Professor Jonathan C Peter

It is with sadness that we share news of the passing of a much-loved and deeply respected former president of our society, Emeritus Professor Jonathan C Peter, on 02 April 2018. We were privileged to have him as our teacher, mentor and friend.

Jonathan was born in East London, South Africa in 1942 and followed his father's career in studying medicine at the University of Cape Town. His own career was shaped by a patient he cared for- a young man who had suffered an extradural haematoma following a fall, leading to severe brain injury as there had been no neurosurgeon available to treat him. This left a deep impression on Jonathan, who retained a commitment to improve the care of patients young and old throughout his career.

Following internship at Groote Schuur Hospital and a year of neurology, he proceeded to the Banting-Best Institute in Toronto as a Scott-Playfair Neurosurgical Research Fellow. Inspired by the founding generation of pediatric neurosurgeons- Don Matson in Boston and Harold Hoffman and Bruce Hendrick in Toronto- he was accepted onto the prestigious Gallie surgical training course to train as a surgeon in Toronto, but decided to return to South Africa.

After admission as a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons, Jonathan commenced neurosurgical training under the guidance of Professor JC "Kay" de Villiers at UCT where he formed lifelong friendships with his fellow trainees. The newly qualified neurosurgeon's interest in music had however not abated and a remark by his piano teacher Professor Laura Searle that he needed to devote 10 full years to the piano to see how good he could be led him to do just that in 1976, supported by Elizabeth. After obtaining a Bachelor of Music degree in 1985, he decided it was time to return to neurosurgery- once again as a trainee!

One of Jonathan's defining characteristics was his incredible enthusiasm for his work- which he always ascribed to having had a second chance. He soon found himself running the paediatric neurosurgery service at Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital, established by his close friend Warwick Peacock upon his return from a fellowship at Sick Kids in 1979. Paediatric neurosurgery was to define the rest of his career, and he made important scientific contributions to the treatment of congenital disorders, spasticity, hydrocephalus and brain injury.

Without doubt his favourite organisation was the International Society for Paediatric Neurosurgery (ISPN), and he was honoured to wear the illustrious red poncho as president in Kyoto in 2002 and host the 36th Annual Meeting in Cape Town in 2008. He inspired a generation of paediatric neurosurgeons in Africa, including Graham Fieggen, Tony Figaji, Llewellyn Padayachy and Nico Enslin in South Africa, John Mugamba, Peter Ssenyonga and Emmanuel Wegoye in Uganda and Kachinga Sichizya in Zambia.

Jonathan's appointment as the second incumbent of the Helen and Morris Mauerberger Chair of Neurosurgery in 1994 allowed him to build a much-admired department. He particularly encouraged the growth of sub-specialties, enabling many of his trainees to achieve international reputations in their fields. He was also able to make a major contribution to neurosurgery nationally, serving as president of the College of Neurosurgeons of SA, the Society of Neurosurgeons of SA and representing Africa as 2nd Vice President in the World Federation. Following retirement in 2007, Jonathan found great joy in teaching and continued innovating- working with Tony and Francesco Sala to establish a world-class IOM service in Cape Town.

With an astonishing breadth of talents and a deep interest in humanity and all forms of cultural expression, Jonathan was truly a renaissance man and his tremendous sense of humour, love of music, comedy and magic, made for very good company.

Remarkably, Jonathan's children and grandchildren have also pursued careers in medicine at UCT. We send condolences to Agnes, and to Elizabeth, Larissa and Jonny and their families, to Kim and Daniel Peter and wish they find comfort in the many happy memories they have of Jonathan. We will all miss him.

Graham Fieggen *President, ISPN*

Tony Figaji *Scientific Chair, ISPN*

