



Dr Freddie Nel

23 March 1926–19 July 2021

Most urologists in South Africa will remember the gentle soul and always smiling face of Dr Freddie Nel. He passed away peacefully at home with his wife and close family by his side on Monday 19 July 2021.

Freddie was born on 23 March 1926 in Marquard in the Free State. He grew up in a humble household in Harrismith, where he spent most of his free time in the library founded by Andrew Carnegie. He often used to say that it was much warmer in the library than at home in the winter. There was also constant access to numerous newspapers bringing fresh news from all over the world, apart from a virtually unlimited number of books covering all that he wanted to know.

With the support of a scholarship, Freddie graduated from the Pretoria Medical School in April 1952. After a few years in general practice, he decided to specialise in urology.

He completed his training in Pretoria under Prof. Jordaan in 1959.

After his South African training in urology, he spent a year in Bristol, UK at the Bristol Medical School and a further year in the United States, some of it in New York and some in Northern Carolina. In spite of many offers of work in America, he decided to come back to his beloved South Africa and her people with whom he wanted to live and build the country. He nevertheless remained a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons and a Member of the American Urological Association until the end of his life. A new AUA Journal was always on his desk.

Freddie was also past Secretary of SAUA and member of the SIU.

He opened a private practice in Durban in 1962 and joined Parklands Hospital in 1965 where he retired three years ago.

Freddie was a bright, creative man and an outstanding surgeon. His favourite procedure was the open Millin's prostatectomy and he



often joked with other senior urologists that TURP was for someone who did not know how to do open prostatectomy. At the same time, he was a great supporter of minimally invasive surgery in urology and requested Prof. Arthur Smith from America, his close friend, to support the development of this kind of work in South Africa.

He mastered flexible ureteroscopy and laparoscopic surgery in his late seventies and eighties. He did the first renal transplant in Durban with Dr Roy Wise and the first laparoscopic nephrectomy with Dr Graham Dawber many years before Clayman reported it in America. He however never wished for pride or fame and these facts remained unpublished.

Freddie trained, mentored and supported several generations of urologists and while in private practice was also engaged in work in the public sector.

The South African urological community mourns the loss of our eminent colleague.

Dr R Mierzwinski
Urological Surgeon, South Africa