

Obituary

Lynne Wilson Pearson van den Bosch

Lynne van den Bosch, one of this country's most distinguished mining engineers, lived a full, productive and happy life. He died peacefully at his home in the retirement village of Highbrook, Lonehill on 3 June 2014 at the fine age of 93.

Lynne was the third of four children and the only son. He was born in Senekal in the Free State in 1921 to Eelco and Kate (nee Spilsbury) van den Bosch. His father was a bank manager in various towns, including Kestell and Frankfort, finishing his career in Heidelberg where Lynne completed his schooling. He was justifiably proud of being the first member of his immediate family to attend university. He graduated from the University of the Witwatersrand in 1942 with a degree in mining engineering.

Lynne began his lifelong career with Union Corporation in 1943 when he joined Marievale Gold Mine as a learner official. He spent the next 13 years rising through the ranks, working underground at the Marievale, Geduld, and East Geduld mines.

In 1946, he married Thelma Mary Kempthorne. They had two children, Bruce Eelco (born 1951) and Glynis Mary (born 1954). In 1956 Lynne was appointed mine manager underground at St Helena Gold Mine and the family moved from the Springs area to Welkom. In 1961 he took up a position in head office in Johannesburg as technical assistant. The family moved back onto the mines at Leslie in 1964, where Lynne was general manager. Just over a year later, in 1965, he came back to Johannesburg after promotion to consulting engineer. Promotions continued, and Lynne finished his Union Corporation career as the director in charge of all of the company's mines. He retired in 1983.

Lynne also served on the board of the nationally - important Chamber of Mines for many years, and he was elected and served as the Chamber's President twice, once in 1978 and again in 1982. He was a member of South Africa's premier professional mining association, the South African Institute for Mining and Metallurgy, from 1960 and was elected an Honorary Life Fellow in 1990.

These career achievements of this remarkable man tell only a small part of the story. Lynne was an imposing individual – he was nearly 6 ft 2 in in the old units – with a somewhat stern demeanour which could be intimidating. But underneath this sometimes gruff exterior was a man of immense compassion and integrity. He was absolutely and unflinchingly honest. First and foremost, he was a family man. His devotion to his wife of 67 years, Thelma, was obvious to all. He was proud of both his children and especially proud that both graduated from his alma mater, Wits. He firmly believed that a good education was an important foundation for life. He provided financial support to all six of his grandchildren so that they could attend private schools. All six went on to university – five have graduated, one is still a student.

The most commonly used word to describe Lynne by the people he knew and met was 'gentleman'. Lynne was a true gentleman in the old-fashioned sense of the word. He cared deeply about people and their welfare. One demonstration of this from his working life was that he became an industry champion for mine safety. In his private life he was generous, not just to his immediate and extended family but also to many of the people with whom he came in contact who needed a helping hand. Those who knew him and loved him will forever remember Lynne Wilson Pearson van den Bosch with much fondness and affection.

Contributed by Bruce van den Bosch and Glynis Hood