

Jules Kieser - 1950 - 2014

BSc BDS PhD DSc FLS FDSRCS(Ed) FFSSoc

Professor Jules Kieser, alumnus of Wits and of South African Dentistry, passed away suddenly on Wednesday 10th June 2014. He had led a remarkably full life, replete with high achievement in his many fields of interest. Qualifying BDS in 1975, Jules practised in London and Johannesburg, continued his studies and received a PhD in 1989. He was appointed as Reader in Craniofacial Biology and also Honorary Professor of Anatomy at Wits. Then in 1996 he ascended to the Chair, and Head of the Department of Oral Sciences, University of Otago in Dunedin, New Zealand. Wits awarded him a DSc in 2001. Professor Kieser held an *ad hominem* Fellowship in Dental Surgery from the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh and had been elected as a professional Fellow of the Forensic Science Society (UK). He was the inaugural Director of the Sir John Walsh Research Institute, a position he held at Otago at the time of his tragic passing.

Jules Kieser described his research commitments as including Craniofacial Biomechanics, Forensic Biology and Education Research. He sought to understand the biomechanics of mastication and swallowing, to develop novel restorative paradigms and to develop new food products that combat obesity. In the field of Forensic Biology his investigations focused on the biomechanics of trauma, bacteriology of bite-marks and bacterial decomposition. Indeed, there was hardly a topic which did not intrigue Jules and in which he made huge strides.

A TRIBUTE BY A STUDENT:

Jules Kieser may best be described as a scientist with a finger in every pie and a master at baking each of them. His dynamic and innovative approach to research in general fostered collaborations across New Zealand, South Africa, Australia and Europe and further abroad. His research interests spanned the fields of forensic biomechanics, craniofacial biology and oral sciences. These research interests culminated in more than 150 scientific peer-reviewed publications as well as a variety of book chapters and books. As a postgraduate supervisor, Jules always encouraged his students to push boundaries and to question every facet of their projects. His unswerving enthusiasm and meticulous approach to both supervising and research resulted in his receiving numerous academic awards, accolades and commendations within both the academic and public sectors. He was simultaneously a guiding force and an inspiration, with a sharp and exceptionally witty sense of humour. It was not at all uncommon for Jules to be the life of the party. Jules also commanded the highest level of respect amongst his students both for his exceptional knowledge and his open minded approach to teaching. His "larger than life" personality and insatiable thirst for knowledge made him an exciting collaborator, respected colleague and much loved friend.

Erin Hutchinson,
a PhD student supervised by Jules.



Of a giant I write... of a towering intellect.... of an unbounded enthusiasm... of a constant and unassuming friend... of major contributions to biological knowledge...of an outstanding teacher....for such was Jules Kieser. The accolades flooding in on the internet feature the multiple facets of this man who encompassed so many interests. Recognised by prestigious awards, yes, and remembered for his totally unassuming demeanour at all times, no matter with whom he met. Jules was held in the highest reverence by colleagues, students, acquaintances and friends.. a thorough gentleman with a mischievous but never malicious sense of humour. Together with all those whose lives he touched so warmly, and together with his dearly loved family... we deeply mourn the loss of a colossus who so cogently bestrode our disciplines. Thank you, Jules, for a tremendous life.

Prof WG Evans,
Managing editor, SADJ