

Brian Charles Preston

19 November 1937 - 25 March 2015

Brian Charles Preston, also known as "CBP", was born, grew up and was schooled in Johannesburg, South Africa. He took a momentous decision to become a dentist and studied at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. Graduating in 1961 with the degree Bachelor of Dental Surgery from the Faculty of Dentistry, he then spent a few years in London where he opened a general dental practice. After gaining that experience, Brian returned to South Africa in the mid-1960's and entered private practice in the Northern Cape. However, academe called and it was not long before Brian assumed a post as Junior Lecturer in his Alma Mater in 1967. That was the start of an illustrious academic career. He soon focussed on the discipline of Orthodontics and successfully applied to become an Orthodontic Registrar, completing the degrees Diploma in Orthodontics in 1973 and Master of Dentistry in the branch of Orthodontics in 1974.

CBP established an orthodontic practice which he operated on a part-time basis as he retained an intense interest in the academic challenges and continued to hold a post at the Faculty. By 1978 Brian had been appointed Head of the Department of Orthodontics and held the Chair as Professor. His research commitments focused on growth and were directed towards a doctorate, studies which he continued despite his assuming ever greater administrative responsibilities in the Faculty, for in 1987 Professor Preston was appointed Dean of the Faculty of Dentistry and Director of the Oral and Dental Hospital, a joint position between the University and the Gauteng Department of Health. The PhD was successfully achieved in 1988 and was awarded by the Faculty of Medicine, University of the Witwatersrand. Brian conducted with distinction the affairs of the Faculty of Dentistry through to his retirement from Wits when his service and achievements were recognised by conferment of the title Emeritus Professor.

"CBP" was far from abandoning academe, however, and in 1997 he joined the faculty of the State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo as Chairman and Professor, Department of Orthodontics, within the School of Dental Medicine. He soon brought to bear his considerable commitment and foresight and his Department has become a highly sought-after centre for postgraduate studies by national and international students. Over the last several years, Professor Preston travelled extensively as an acclaimed lecturer, visiting and conducting courses in the Middle East, China, Japan, Australia, and South Africa. He relied on evidence-based material, largely his own work, and drawn from his comprehensive list of publications.

Just how many students, dentists and orthodontists are indebted to Brian, for his enthusiasm, his mentorship, his guidance and his example? How many families, how many patients, how many friends? His is a legacy which will remain firm in their memories.

As may be expected, Brian's alert and ever enquiring intellect lead him into many pursuits beyond orthodontics... he was a player of the piano, an incisive, but constructive, critic of professional papers, a Fellow of the College of Surgeons (South Africa), a builder, an accomplished tennis player (University teams), an avid cyclist. Whilst in the UK he took up flying as a hobby, held a Private Pilots Licence and was President of the Wits Flying Club for many years. Speed was obviously a fascination and he revelled in the sport of skiing, where he became an Instructor. Not satisfied with above the ground action, Brian dived into the world of scuba ...and he and daughter Bridgette enjoyed many hours of entrancement under water.

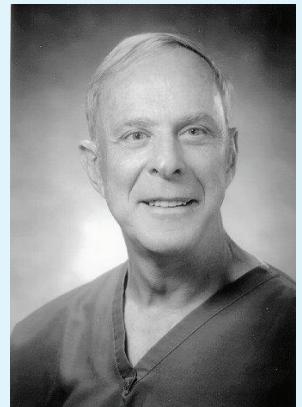
Brian was a constant and reliable friend, one who could arrive unannounced but would always be welcome, one whose intuitive advice was invaluable, one who would lend support and succour whatever the circumstances. He combined insight and foresight to a remarkable degree, characteristics which took him to the top of the Orthodontic tree.

He was also courageous and determined...and his struggle to sustain his life was evidence of his total commitment in all his endeavours.

It has been a signal privilege to have known and worked with Brian. For all those who knew him, but especially for Joy, his wife and for Bridgette, life with Brian was one of constant surprises as he opened new pathways, of sharing new opportunities, of close companionship and love. Their wonderful support over the last months of his final illness was testimony to that commitment together.

So many in so many places will deeply miss Brian and his impact on their lives. He was, quite simply, my true friend.

Bridgette Preston, Bill Evans



Brian Charles Preston