

Phoebus Perdikis

(1 July 1933 - 3 June 2011)



Phoebus Perdikis ('Fifi') died of a major stroke on 3 June 2011. With his passing we lost not only one of the remaining giants of the 'golden age' when general surgery began to be firmly established as a specialty in South Africa, but also a colleague and for many a dear friend. Phoebus qualified M.B. B.Ch. at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1957 and after his housemanship proceeded to the UK, as was the custom at that time, to obtain the F.R.C.S. He worked at Orpington Hospital as a registrar, and was so respected that the Chief of Surgery wanted him to stay. He returned to South Africa in 1969 and worked at Baragwanath Hospital and Johannesburg General Hospital. Although he was an academic at heart, he went into private practice at the request of the Greek community in Johannesburg.

Subsequently a dedicated part-time surgeon attached to the Department of Surgery at Wits, he became one of South Africa's most well-known and esteemed surgeons. He worked until the time of his death and never took retirement. Always a loyal supporter of the Department of Surgery, he generated substantial research funds from his association with the Freemasons and participated unfailingly in weekly meetings and ward rounds. His teaching sessions were inspirational and he was a regular examiner in surgery at the annual final M.B. B.Ch. examinations. Before paediatric surgery became a separate specialty in South Africa he also participated in the surgical care of children at the Children's Hospital in Johannesburg. This was typical of his wide-ranging interests. In 1991 Phoebus arranged and directed the first laparoscopic surgical course in Johannesburg and encouraged the participation of academic surgeons and the attendance of sceptics. Later he was a founding member and president of the South African Society for