

Charl Dreyer 1957 – 2015



Charl Dreyer died suddenly in Cape Town on the evening of 13th August 2015 while watching his favourite sport, tennis, on television. His untimely death has been a great loss to the surgical community of Cape Town. His journey in Medicine started in 1974 when, after matriculating, he enrolled at the Medical Faculty at the University of Pretoria and graduated MBChB in 1980. His internship at George Provincial Hospital was followed by compulsory military medical service and a senior medical officer post in Orthopaedic Surgery at Tembisa hospital. In 1986 he started his surgical training in the Department of Surgery at the University of Cape Town, first learning to operate in the trenches at Cecilia Makiwane Hospital and a year later as a registrar at Groote Schuur Hospital. In March 1991 he passed his final surgical examinations and became a Fellow of the College of Surgeons of South Africa.

In the same year he joined the vascular firm at Groote Schuur Hospital where he, like many before him, was trained in the finer details of vascular surgery by Professor Ed Immelman. He subsequently honed his skills as a visiting Surgical Fellow at Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge. On his return to Cape Town, after completing his vascular apprenticeship, he established his private practice at the Christiaan Barnard Memorial Hospital. He remained closely affiliated to the Department of Surgery and the vascular unit at Groote Schuur Hospital as a Senior Consultant Surgeon and lecturer.

Although Charl had excellent all-round surgical abilities, his foremost passion remained vascular surgery. He was one of the local pioneers of endovascular interventions and, in particular, advanced the cause and techniques of catheter-directed thrombolysis for arterial and venous thrombosis and the endovascular treatment of arterial aneurysms. His bedside manner was exemplary and his innate talents in the operating theatre were superb. He was a longstanding member of the Association of International Vascular Surgeons. At their annual congresses, often held at exotic Alpine venues, he not only further developed his vascular repertoire but also learnt to ski.

Charl had wide-ranging knowledge in medicine, but also loved art, wild life and sport, especially tennis, where, when playing doubles, he would relish volleying at the net and was a wily master at disguising a variety of cunning and impish cross-court drop-shots to the consternation and chagrin of the opposition.

He was the doting father to his beautiful and talented daughter, Simone. Our condolences go to Simone, Helen, Jane, his friends and family.

Dr Kris Michalowski
Surgeon in private practice
Mediclinic Milnerton