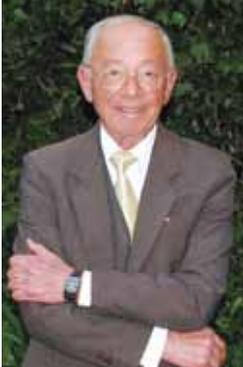


## IN MEMORIAM

**Phoebus Perdikis  
(1 July 1933 - 3 June 2011)**

Phoebus Perdikis ('Fifi') died of a stroke on 3 June 2011. We lost a giant of the 'golden age' of surgery, when general surgery became established as a specialty in South Africa, and a colleague and dear friend to many.

He qualified MB BCh at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1957. After his housemanship he proceeded to the UK to gain the FRCS. He worked as a registrar at Orpington Hospital, where the Chief of Surgery wanted him to stay.

On his return to South Africa in 1969 he worked at the Baragwanath and Johannesburg General hospitals. Although an academic at heart Phoebus responded to the request of the Johannesburg Greek community by going into private practice. He was subsequently a dedicated part-time surgeon at the Department of Surgery at Wits and became one of South Africa's most well-known and esteemed surgeons. He never retired and worked until the time of his death. Phoebus was a loyal supporter of the Department of Surgery for which he generated substantial research funds from his Freemasons association. He participated unfailingly at the weekly meetings and ward rounds. His inspirational teaching sessions were appreciated by medical students and registrars and he regularly examined in surgery at the final MB BCh examinations. Typical of his wide-ranging interests, he participated in the surgical care of children at the Children's Hospital in Johannesburg before paediatric surgery became a specialty in South Africa.

In 1991 he arranged and directed the first laparoscopic surgical course in Johannesburg at the private Kenridge Hospital and encouraged academic surgeons to participate and sceptics to attend. A founding member and president of the South African Society for Endoscopic Surgeons and an office holder of the Association of Surgeons of South Africa, he was unbiased in his support of 'town' and 'gown' in their deliberations.

Phoebus had an enquiring mind, interests including publishing on the medical acute abdomen and paralytic ileus and a recent review on AIDS and the acute abdomen.

His dedication, honesty, respect and compassion for his patients earned him a special reputation, and many patients became life-long friends. Ine, his wife, and Richardine, his daughter, assisted him in his rooms, where patients received a warm welcome. His motive to

serve his patients is exemplified by his first patient encounter when the patient insisted on immediately paying for the service. Baffled, Phoebus excused himself to ask Ine, his nurse/office manager for advice. She had also never considered the finances of practice and together they came up with a nominal sum. In disbelief the patient wrote a check for double the amount! He was a great raconteur, often telling self-deprecatory stories such as when in empathy to an Afrikaans-speaking lady with haemorrhoids he explained to her that she had 'verskriklike aarbe!'!

Phoebus and Ine generously entertained the examiners in surgery each year in their home – special evenings that became a tradition of fun and friendship. They also entertained visitors to the Department of Surgery and years later we would hear from prominent surgeons around the world how much they had enjoyed the Perdikis' home hospitality.

Phoebus was meticulous and thorough in whatever he did. Rising at 5am every day, he spent these hours on his interests before going to work. A renaissance man, his interests included philately, birding and architecture. His definitive illustrated book on the forgeries of British stamps will be published in the UK. It was his idea to colour-code bird books, successfully collating and pasting drawings of thousands of birds from twelve copies of a popular bird book to confirm the concept. This resulted in a bestselling colour-coded book of South African birds, an idea that has subsequently been adopted in Australia, the UK and USA. He collected many items including chess sets, model motor cars and figures of traditional people. He designed his own home *Aynsford* (based on a Tudor home he had appreciated during his training in England), and which his father-in-law built. His interest in architecture continued throughout his life and recently he had been writing a book on Cape gables. He also compiled illustrations and plans of many Karoo homes.

In the late 1950s he played professional soccer for the Corinthians team, and his enthusiasm for sport continued throughout his life.

He loved his family and the doll house he built for his granddaughters with specially imported items illustrates his ingenuity and thoroughness.

Phoebus touched many lives, made many friends, frequently gave advice and assistance to colleagues and was a true surgeon's surgeon. Those close to him were privileged to have known such a person.

He leaves Ine, his loving and devoted wife of 49 years, his children Galen (a plastic surgeon at the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, Florida, USA) and Richardine, and grandchildren Luke, Tatiana, Blake and Sasha. He will be sorely missed by us all.

**C G Bremner, R A Hinder, G Perdikis**