

IN MEMORIAM

Nazier Khan



Dr Nazier Khan died tragically on 31 December 2011 at the age of 37.

Nazier matriculated with distinction from Alexander Sinton Senior Secondary School in Athlone in 1992. His strong sense of identity and social purpose began during these schooldays and time of great change in our political landscape. Nazier was an avid sportsman, participating in

first-team cricket, rugby, league tennis, swimming, long-distance running and shot put. His school years were some of his fondest memories and the beginning of lifelong friendships.

Nazier graduated MB ChB from Stellenbosch University in 1999, where he continued with cricket, running, and golf, and took a keen interest in university community outreach programmes. He completed his internship at Groote Schuur Hospital in 2000, and his community service in 2001 at Tygerberg Hospital and Vanguard Community Health Centre, where he became an adept surgeon. He spent some time as a senior house officer in medicine, and almost 2 years at G F Jooste Hospital. Nazier joined the UCT Department of Medicine in 2005 as a registrar and obtained his fellowship from the College of Physicians of South Africa in 2010. In 2011, having sourced private funding, he commenced his training under Professor Rayner in the Renal Unit at Groote Schuur Hospital to subspecialise in nephrology.

At the time of his death, he was working on many research projects, including the impact of 'tik' abuse on the development of severe hypertension and chronic kidney disease in the Western Cape. He was a strong advocate for a patient-centred approach to medicine and improving access to healthcare.

Obsessively thorough in every aspect of his work, Nazier never spared himself or lowered his standards. He worked with vigour and enthusiasm while displaying a most critical faculty.

Nazier's opinion was sought after by his colleagues and he gave his advice freely and in a forthright manner. He was a most popular member of staff, liked by nurses, doctors and staff in other disciplines. He spent time tutoring medical students.

Overcoming many personal difficulties, he demonstrated his indomitable spirit to reach personal and professional success. He embraced life, and enriched the lives of all with whom he came into contact. He was thoughtful and cared greatly for everyone he knew, giving his best, and spurring us on to do the same.

Nazier was an accomplished runner, having completed several marathons including the Comrades, the Two Oceans and the Mumbai marathon. His energy and intensity brought out the 'champ' in anyone who took to the road with him. He was an avid hiker and loved climbing Table Mountain – sadly coming to pass doing what he loved. He had excellent culinary skills and was also a high-quality dilettante barista.

He was a loving father to Farheen, whom he treasured, and a devoted son to Hamieda and Abdool Gafoor Khan. Nazier truly loved life and the people who shared it with him. He was a dedicated physician and his death is a loss to Groote Schuur Hospital and society at large. He lived a full life despite his untimely death. Peace be with him.

Shazia Peer

Groote Schuur Hospital
Cape Town

Hans de V Heese



In 1970, 'Boet' Heese succeeded Findlay Ford as second Professor of Paediatrics and Child Health at the University of Cape Town. During his stewardship, which ended in 1989, the Department grew to be one of the largest and most productive in the Faculty of Medicine. How was this achieved?

Boet was an adventurer and before his professorship he established the first intensive care unit for newborn babies in the country. It was one of a handful in the world, at a time when the word neonatology did not exist.

When problems were encountered he would say 'If it is in the books it can be done', but on this occasion the books had not yet been written. So he set about rectifying the omission and in the ensuing decade his protégés carried the word to all corners of the earth.

He constantly used his imagination and claimed that he got his bright ideas while meditating in the bath. These he would impart to his junior staff and challenge them to come up with answers. He stressed the importance of keeping their eyes and ears open for clues to discoveries, no matter how tenuous they may be.

Not all of his ideas were successful. On the contrary, some were spectacular failures. He fancied himself as an inventor, and the Heese Mark 1 and 2 infant respirators literally went up in smoke, fortunately before they were used on babies! His response to setbacks of this nature was to quote the headmaster of his old school: 'Every step backwards is an opportunity for greater achievement'.

In an earlier tribute, Professor Matt Haus wrote: 'He was a brave decision-maker'. How true! But not all decisions were popular. To quote Matt again: 'What he did, he did unequivocally for his Department and not for himself'. I would add 'You might dislike him but you could not disrespect him'.

Boet had an ability to befriend those with whom he worked – administrators, nursing staff, technicians, cleaners. They in turn would always go the extra mile to oblige him. Then too, his innumerable motivations for staff, equipment or research funds were so detailed and convincing that they were rarely declined.

He was not afraid of death and two weeks after his dear wife Margaret had died he quietly departed this earth.

Jake, Sue, Ashleigh and Abbey, we thank you for sharing your father and grandfather with us. We are all the richer for this honour.

Vincent Harrison