

OBITUARIES

Hymie Gaylis



surgical faculty in San Diego with the rank of Clinical Professor and was actively involved in the undergraduate teaching programme for many years.

During my 2013 visit with him we enjoyed many laughs and reminiscences. Despite physical frailty, Hymie had remained mentally razor sharp, and drawing from his vast experience in publishing he gave me invaluable advice and suggestions for a book that I am working on.

Sincere condolences are extended to Rhoda, Franklin, Brendan and their families.

A giant has fallen.

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It was with great sadness that I learned of Hymie's death at age 92 in San Diego, in early December 2013. He and I were among the last surviving residents of Resdoc from 1951. He was a groomsman at my wedding and we remained close friends for more than 60 years. Maureen and I spent a quality week with Hymie and Rhoda in San Diego just a few months ago.

There will undoubtedly be many tributes to Hymie's surgical prowess: he was a towering figure, and a pioneer among South African surgeons. I believe that he was the father of vascular surgery in Johannesburg, if not the whole country. Hymie refined his surgical training and expertise at the Postgraduate School at Hammersmith Hospital in London in the 1950s, where he served as a surgical registrar under the late Ian Aird, then one of the world's surgical giants, and later trained in Boston under Robert Linton. Hymie was temperamentally well suited to the merciless demands of the vascular surgical subspecialty. He was unhurried, patient and a meticulous operator. He conducted a huge and demanding private practice in addition to heading a surgical unit at Wits.

A modest and humble man, Hymie never talked about his exceptional talents as a 'do-it-yourselfer' – he could make or repair anything. He was also an exceptional swimmer, spotted once swimming across False Bay at Muizenberg, sharks be damned.

When Hymie retired he emigrated to the USA to be close to his two sons, both Wits medical graduates. It was not in his nature to be idle, and he soon joined the