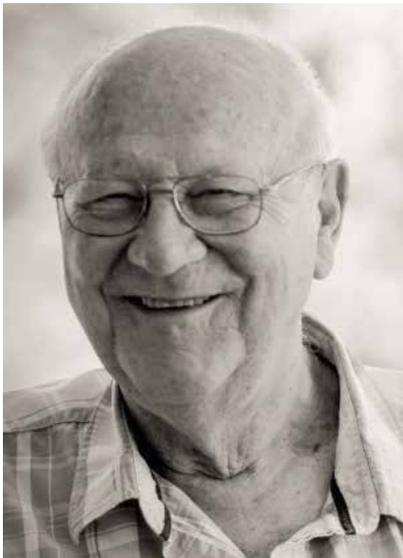


OBITUARY



Dirk Johannes Jacobus van Velden (1932 - 2013)

Dirk van Velden was born on 11 October 1932, as one of the six children of Dominee and Mrs Anthonie van Velden of Richmond in the Karoo. He was in good health when he passed away peacefully in his sleep on 1 December 2013 in Altena, Strand, Western Cape.

Dirk was an outstanding tutor and mentor and was loved and respected by his colleagues, friends and students alike. To celebrate his achievements, we present a short résumé of his remarkable career.

Dirk spent his early childhood years in Richmond before his father was called to lead the congregation in Somerset West, Western Cape, in 1936. His primary school and some of his high school years were spent

in Somerset West. When his father was called to Montagu he continued his schooling at Jan van Riebeeck High School in Cape Town, matriculating in 1949.

With the help of a substantial donation from friends in Richmond, Dirk was able to enrol as a medical student at the University of Cape Town, graduating there in 1955. He met his future wife Ria while on holiday with friends in Stilbaai, and they married on 6 July 1957.

After completing his internship under the tutelage of Dr Francie van Zyl at Groote Schuur Hospital, Dirk became the first intern in obstetrics and gynaecology in Professor Jannie de Villiers' unit at Karl Bremer Hospital. Appointments in Sutherland, Touw's River and Franschoek followed before he and Ria left for Mkar in Nigeria,

where he formed part of a team that worked at a mission hospital. After a few months there Ria developed a low-grade fever while pregnant, and they decided to cut short their planned 6-month stay.

On returning to South Africa, Dirk bought into a practice in Ceres where he worked until a desire to return to academia resulted in his obtaining a post as registrar in obstetrics and gynaecology, once again in the unit of Professor De Villiers. A year later he applied for and was successful in obtaining a post in the Department of Anatomical Pathology, a career move that would change the course of his professional life. He graduated with distinction as a clinical pathologist in 1967, and then undertook a fellowship as a research scientist at the Roswell Cancer Memorial Institute in Buffalo, New York, USA, where he spent a year with his young family.

On his return to South Africa, Dirk was invited to apply for and obtained the post of Professor and Head of the Department of Anatomical Pathology in the newly established

Faculty of Medicine in Bloemfontein. There he planned and commissioned an anatomical pathology laboratory with service and academic functions. Various trips overseas followed and helped to ensure maintenance of the highest professional standards in the department.

After eight years in academia, Dirk accepted an opportunity to join a private practice in Bloemfontein with part-time involvement in the Department of Anatomical Pathology. His last professional appointment completed a circle that had begun in Cape Town many years previously: he was appointed Professor in the Department of Anatomical Pathology in the Faculty of Medicine at Stellenbosch University, where his main responsibility was running the surgical pathology service as well as the teaching and training of personnel, registrars and students.

At the end of 1998, Dirk and Ria retired to Glentana, where they spent ten very happy years before temporarily retiring to Oude Westhof retirement village in Bellville and finally settling in Strand.

Dirk leaves a rich legacy that will live on in his wife, children, grandchildren, colleagues and many others, with whom he enjoyed a wonderful relationship. He will be remembered for his love of and kindness to his fellow-man, for his honesty, integrity and keen sense of humour, for his jovial nature, and for his unshakeable belief in his Creator.

Ave atque vale!

Peter Wranz

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