

OBITUARIES



Bernard Mandell

My father Bernard Mandell was born in Johannesburg on 22 May 1927. He attended King Edward VII School, matriculating in 1943 at the age of sixteen. He joined the South African Air Force in 1944 as a pupil pilot and graduated from Wits University Medical School in 1952.

After completion of his preregistration he left for the UK, where he held several posts in orthopaedic departments at the St James Hospital for Children and the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital in London and became a fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons in May 1959.

He married in 1962, and returned to South Africa in 1963 and started private practice. It was then that he assumed his responsibility

as an elderly and wise person and in so doing created a better life for all those lucky enough to have known him. He taught not by words, but by example.

Dad was well aware that it was not the years in his life that mattered, but the life in his years. He knew that every moment should be used wisely and every day well lived, and that the gift of life is precious. The Hippocratic Oath was the benchmark by which my father lived his life.

Mahatma Gandhi said: 'The secret to living is giving. All that is not given is lost. Service is the rent we pay for living here.' Dissatisfied with the direction medical politics was taking, Dad decided to become an active participant in the then Medical Association of South Africa (MASA) and in

1968 was elected to the Border Coastal Branch Council. He played an active leadership role and in 1987 was elected Chairman of MASA, a position he held until 1996, when he was inaugurated as President of the World Medical Association. He was a Border Coastal Branch federal councillor from 1993 to 2000, and President of the Branch in 2001.

Dad led MASA through the process of giving evidence to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, at which the Association admitted past errors of commission and omission under the apartheid regime. He played an instrumental role in the transformation that led to the establishment of the new united South African Medical Association.

In his career of more than 45 years, Dad rendered service far beyond the call of duty. He was the recipient of many awards, the most prestigious being the Gold Medal award from MASA in 1996 for services to the medical profession.

As his family we admired Dad's patience, kindness, sincerity, honesty and integrity. Always a gentleman, he could smooth ruffled feathers, tactfully diffuse difficult situations, and firmly stand his ground when he felt that his principles were being challenged.

Dad, rest in peace.

David Mandell

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