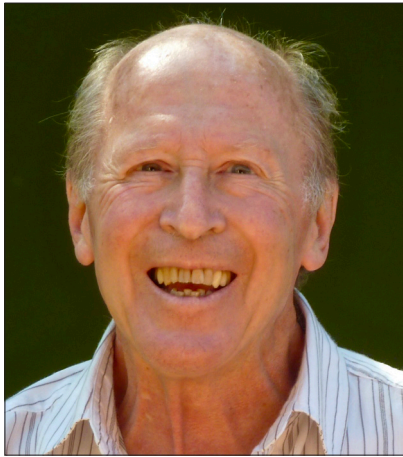


# OBITUARY

Beorn Cloete Uys, 21 August 1929 - 18 May 2021



Beorn was born in Amersfoort in the old Transvaal in 1929 at the start of the Great Depression. His father, Adriaan Uys, was a paediatrician who had trained in Holland. His mother, Edna, was an educator who enrolled at Stellenbosch University at the age of 14 and attained her MEd. Beorn knew by the age of 5 that he would follow in his father's footsteps.

He matriculated with distinction in 1946 at Parktown Boys' High, and then headed off to Wits Medical School with his good friend Rae Glyn Thomas. During the holidays, he spent time learning nursing skills at Addington Hospital. This was an experience that taught him to value nursing and nurses. Beorn completed his MB ChB in 1952, and was awarded the Abelheim Prize and Medal for Obstetrics and the Horace Wells Medal in anaesthetics. He completed postgraduate training at Johannesburg Gen, Baragwanath, Queen Vic and Edenvale hospitals.

In 1955, Beorn left for England with Midge, his newlywed midwife. He spent three years at St Mary's in Manchester and in the 'Canterbury and Isle of Thanet Group'

in Kent. He gained his MRCOG in 1958 and completed his training at King Edward VIII in Durban under the tutelage of Derk Crichton.

Beorn entered Johannesburg private practice in 1961 with Dela de la Hunt and was joined later by Louis Coetzee. In 1968, while working at Marymount Maternity Home, he was approached to build a new maternity home. This subsequently gave birth to a new concept of integrated medicine at an upmarket clinic, and led to the construction of the Sandton Clinic in 1975.

Those were the heady days of the early seventies, and following seven years of hard work, Beorn realised his dream with the help of his brother Deryck. The clinic was later acquired by the Rembrandt Group under Dr Edwin Hertzog. Sandton Clinic became the foundation stone of the Mediclinic private hospital group.

The legacy of Sandton Clinic (in Beorn's words) was that it was 'The first fully integrated purpose-designed hospital in SA, to have all theatres with laminar flow. It was the first to be licensed to carry out legal terminations of pregnancy. It was also the first carpeted hospital, the first to incorporate a Montessori school, and one of the first early units dedicated to reproductive surgery. It was also the first hospital acquired by Mediclinic.'

After 25 years of practising in Johannesburg, Beorn relocated to East London in the Eastern Cape, heading up the maternity unit at Frere Hospital. He was appointed honorary senior lecturer and mentored many young doctors for eleven fruitful years. Beorn was always ready for change, and he embraced the then-new technology of ultrasound, taking on the role of chief ultrasonographer in the unit.

His humble attitude, ability to listen, exceptional skills and boundless enthusiasm

made him very popular. Many young doctors were mentored by Beorn, and he took a personal interest in everyone. Under him, the obstetrics unit at Frere Hospital thrived.

Beorn joined the then Medical Association of South Africa in 1959. He was a branch councillor on the Border Coastal Branch for 14 years, and Branch President in 1993. He received the Branch Award for Meritorious Service in 1997, and he was editor of the Branch Newsletter for many years, for which he received the President's floating trophy. He played a significant part in the life of the Border Coastal Branch, and was very popular and respected by colleagues. He acted as MC at a number of BCB annual dinners. Beorn also assisted in the development of the UCT-affiliated Resource Centre attached to Frere Hospital.

Among Beorn's achievements was the writing of two books, *The History of Obstetrics and Gynaecology in South Africa* and *History of the South African Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists*. Writing was a passion for him. He even tried his hand at sonnets. He was a humble man of science and history, a teacher, a philosopher, and a dedicated husband and father.

Beorn enjoyed his twilight years in the Eastern Cape after finally retiring at 85. He is survived by his loving wife Midge, his four children, Amanda, Chris, Gus and Sue, and five grandchildren.

It is hoped that this obituary will encourage young doctors to emulate this amazing man and bring back memories for those of us privileged to have been touched by his professionalism and enduring optimism.

**Andre du Plessis**

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