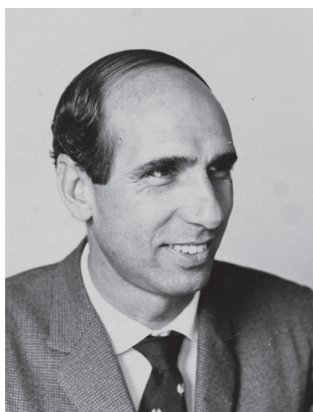




IN MEMORIAM

J M L Klopper, OBE
BA, BSc, MB BCh, DPH (London), FFCM
(RCP London), FFPHM (London)
(1 July 1928 - 19 October 2007)



Jack and I started studying medicine on the same day in February 1949 at Wits Medical School. Thus began a wonderful friendship that lasted for more than 58 years. Jack had already graduated with a BA (Psych) and dreamt of becoming a psychiatrist, but did not pursue this dream.

Having completed our 2nd year, we spent a further year studying for a Medical BSc in anatomy and neuroanatomy,

during which we learned excellent research skills. Jack had a well-rounded personality, with a keen interest in extramural activities such as the Diogenes Society, Debating Society, Students' Christian Association, and Classical Studies Society. He was passionate about sport, and captained the Medical School 1st XV rugby team in 1955.

He qualified in medicine in 1956, and after internships at Coronation and Baragwanath hospitals he joined the colonial service in Swaziland, where he progressed from his position as a medical officer in Hlatikulu Hospital to chief medical officer in the Swaziland Government in Mbabane in 1968, moving from a clinical post to the field of community medicine.

He furthered his studies in public health in London and was honoured to receive World Health fellowships, which enabled him to broaden his field of vision in Norway, in Yugoslavia and at Johns Hopkins in the USA. His leadership in pioneering work in the health service of Swaziland was recognised by the OBE awarded to him by Queen Elizabeth in 1971.

He moved to London in 1973, working in the Department of Health and Social Services. However, he missed the sunshine, veld and wildlife in South Africa, and was glad when an opportunity came to return in 1976 with an invitation to join the South African Department of Health to establish health and welfare services in the Ciskei. Once again he put his shoulder to the wheel with remarkable enthusiasm, establishing a fine system of clinics and health workers throughout the region. He enthusiastically enlisted collaboration with medical schools and visiting specialists, to the mutual benefit of everyone.

A short spell in 1980 in Pretoria as Director of Preventive Services was the prelude in 1981 to his appointment as Senior

Lecturer in the Department of Community Health at UCT Medical School. As always, he threw himself into this post with great enthusiasm and effort, and was rewarded with the appointment as Professor and Head of Department in 1985.

He identified himself with the stand of UCT against racial discrimination, much to the chagrin of the then Department of Health, and put forward the idea of a national health service in his inaugural lecture. He believed that community health should be a major contributor to the well-being of the poorest of the poor, and as a corollary established a health economics unit. Many of the graduates in his Department became leaders in the field and professors of public health in South Africa.

Jack was elected as a Fellow of the Faculty of Community Health of the Royal College of Physicians of the UK, and chaired the Faculty of Community Health of the College of Medicine of South Africa among many other honours, including in 1992 being visiting professor to the United Medical and Dental Schools of Guy's and St Thomas's Hospitals in the UK. He was author/co-author of at least 37 articles in national and international journals.

Jack numbered among his close friends those from every creed, tribe and nation and contributing to these relationships was a remarkable gift for hospitality that he shared with his dear wife Meryl, and 4 children. As a result they have good friends all over the world, who hold them in the highest regard. He had a highly developed and spontaneous sense of humour which made contact with him a tonic: it was always a joy to be in his company.

He was a very loving husband and father, and as a result a remarkable bond of loyalty, quite uncommon in this day and age, exists between the members of the whole family. The bond is so strong that he and Meryl have always kept almost daily contact with their children and grandchildren, even when continents apart. This portrays the true picture of a man of great love and compassion, extended to any or all in need.

Jack was scrupulously honest, so much so that it got him into trouble with dyed-in-the-wool politicians on more than one occasion. These attributes arose from and were part of his long and intimate relationship with the Lord. Jack was a committee member of the Christian Medical Fellowship. Always an ambassador for his Master in any situation, after retiring he and Meryl worked tirelessly for 10 years for the Meadowridge Baptist Church as counsellors.

Pancreatic carcinoma robbed us of a great son of South Africa – true to type he suffered in silence, and passed away in dignity, nursed at home by Meryl and his eldest daughter, Anthea, a GP in East London. All 4 of his children and 2 of his 5 grandchildren gathered around his bedside to bid him *au revoir*.

W K Andrew