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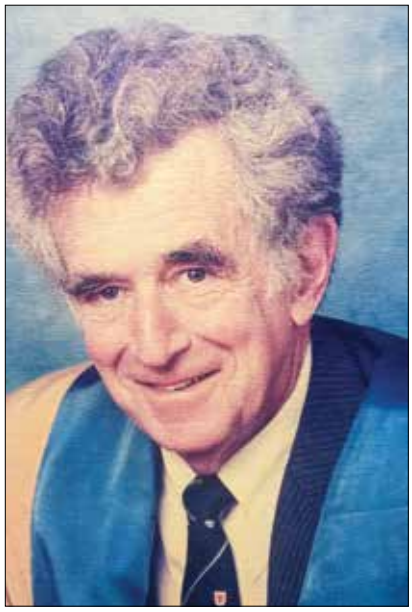
# OBITUARY

## Maurice Aaron Kibel (14 November 1929 - 9 October 2016)



Emeritus Professor Maurice Aaron Kibel passed away peacefully on 9 October after a short period of declining health. He was an icon and a pioneer in paediatrics and child health in southern Africa.

A medical graduate of the University of the Witwatersrand, he undertook paediatrics training in Edinburgh before moving to practise in Zimbabwe, where his clinical skills, teaching, innovation and experience gained globally were given full rein in a distinctly African setting. After a distinguished career as a paediatrician in Bulawayo for more than 20 years and then professor at the Boston Children's Floating Hospital in the USA, he established the Child Health Unit as the first Stella and Paul Lowenstein Professor of Child Health in the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health at the University of Cape Town in 1979.

Since the 1980s, Maurice was associated with the South African Tuberculosis Vaccine Initiative and was instrumental in the establishment of the clinical trial site in Worcester – now the largest in the world – where he mentored many clinicians. He was actively involved in a number of clinical trials, in particular the first trial that compared percutaneous v. intradermal BCG vaccine, one of the largest conducted to date at the site.

Maurice was the author of more than 120 peer-reviewed publications on wide-ranging topics in paediatrics, as well as architect and lead editor of the now-classic textbook *Child Health for All*, contributor to *Fofar's Textbook of Paediatrics*, and co-author with David Bass of the popular *First Aid for Babies and Children*.

For several years Maurice served as the official University Orator, and he will also be remembered as an excellent singer who had a remarkable talent for writing lyrics to well-known tunes and then performing the songs at many academic events and conferences across the world. His witty ditties have been immortalised in a book treasured by many colleagues, and some were published in 2010 as *General Tso's Chicken and the Seven Deadly Sins: A Collection of Rhyme and Reason*, described as 'a celebration of a lifetime of words, music and medicine, written with good humour and an empathetic pen'.

Prof. Heather Zar speaks of Maurice as an extraordinary man – a great paediatrician, a visionary and leader in child health, a brilliant teacher and clinician, and an inspirational and deeply humble human being who continued to contribute to the health of the most disadvantaged children and their families long after his retirement.

His legacy lives on in the many child health academics and practitioners who were touched and inspired by him, and in his family: his wife, Leonora, his children, Owen, Shelley and David, and his grandchildren.

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