



## **MAURICE CONRADIE**



**DOB 03<sup>rd</sup> June 1936    DIED: 05<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

Maurice was passionate about his profession and was a well-respected and recognized expert in the discipline of Haematology which he practiced at Groote Schuur Hospital. He had qualified at Groote Schuur Hospital laboratories at a time when the Pathologist in charge deemed you proficient enough to be called a qualified Medical Technologist. Maurice gained this love for blood and bone marrow morphology when he worked in New York for a short while.

His expertise and knowledge of morphology, and particularly of haematological malignancy, was highly regarded not only by his peers but all professionals including clinicians who often asked his opinion on difficult cases. Maurice was also an exceptional teacher and would sit with students and technologists around a multi-header microscope discussing a blood or bone marrow smear, explaining their origin and their significance, in the context of the diagnosis. This often stimulated staff and students to want to study further and nurtured a culture of curiosity and lifelong learning.

When the Medical Technology course was formalised at the Cape Technical College, the forerunner of CPUT, he was appointed as a part time lecturer in Haematology. Many of the senior Medical Technologists still around today were taught by him. He was also appointed by the Department of Education as the National Examiner in Haematology.

Maurice had a unique ability to see the big picture and had a vision not only for the profession, but for laboratory medicine in South Africa and Africa. He was a founding member of the SMLTSA. He was a long standing member of the Cape branch of the SMLTSA and played a leading role in the growth of the branch. He actively participated at Congresses presenting papers, chairing sessions and was an excellent raconteur of the history of Medical Technology in SA.

He was nominated and appointed on the PBMT of the HPCSA where he also served a term as Chairperson.

Maurice was known as being “colour blind” and was a pioneer for equal education for all and together with Mr’s P De Benedictis and John MacGregor they were instrumental to ensure that there was equal pay for equal work irrespective of gender and race. They were also instrumental in gaining the right for medical technologists to open their own private practices. This was an exceptional achievement as prior to this; medical technologists were required to work under the supervision of a pathologist. During this time the concept of CPD was also introduced for Medical Technologists.

Maurice was appointed as the National Director of Medical laboratories within the National Department of Health where he influenced the formalized establishment of accreditation of medical laboratories under the auspices of SANAS in 1999. During this time he was also part of the initial team that led to the establishment of the National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS).

In his personal capacity he was interested in Mineralogy and was well known for his knowledge in SA. Maurice was also a keen gardener.

Maurice was a great hiker and walked the Fish River collecting specimens for the National Cultural Museum.

His vision, knowledge and wisdom will be missed in many circles as he acted as a mentor to many young technologists and professionals who are the current leaders and managers in laboratories.

Maurice had a unique ability to push boundaries and felt that nothing was impossible. He always believed that the profession of medical technology should be the leaders in laboratory medicine and be at the fore front of new innovations, quality assurance and the drivers of change. Let us keep this vision alive as we bid farewell to a true professional.

**Compiled by Mr P de Benedictis and Prof G Davison**

**Some further contributions..**

*"I met Maurice in 1980 when I moved from Queenstown to Cape Town to work in the haematology laboratory at Groote Schuur Hospital. Maurice was a proud medical technologist and worked very hard to advance the image of medical technologists and the recognition of Medical Technology as a profession.*

*I will always remember Maurice for the times we sat around the multi-header microscope; he had a special interest in morphology, and he would talk us through the blood or bone marrow smear, explaining all the details of the cells, their origin and their significance in the context of the diagnosis. He influenced me to think more about the identification of the cells and how to go about it. This led to my interest in the identification and diagnosis of leukemia and other blood disorders which resulted in a thesis.*

*It was a privilege to experience that kind of teaching; the experience of someone with such a wealth of knowledge on morphology built up over many years; possibly rare in the laboratory setting today. I am grateful for the years spent with Maurice"* **Gail McLellan**

*"I joined the Haematology team at Groote Schuur Hospital in April 1991. Maurice Conradie was the Laboratory Manager at the time. Not only was he the best morphologist I have ever had the privilege to encounter, he was also a father figure to all of us. His Haematology approach was beyond his time, filling the 1983 the Haematology Board Examination with questions about leukaemia phenotyping, in its basic form, a groundbreaking field beyond immunochemical staining. We were enthralled by his leukaemia lectures when doing our higher diplomas, Myelodysplastic Syndrome being his passion at the time. He never failed to enlighten and share with us his vast accumulation of knowledge. Maurice was, and is a legend in my eyes and an inspiration to where I am today."*

**Jill Blackbeard**



**REST IN PEACE**