



## Professor Peter Eagles

Prof Hans Myburgh

It is with a heavy heart but keen mind that I write this tribute. A heavy heart, because a tried and trusted friend of 46 years is no more, and a keen mind because I do not have to conjure up instances to embellish the memories of a very successful and committed professional career.

Our association started when Peter was a senior student and I was the first post-graduate at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) School of Pharmacy. During practical sessions, his keen interest in pursuing further studies shone through and he subsequently registered as the second post-graduate student in pharmacy.

This was at a time when nobody believed that UWC could or should train post-graduate pharmacists because there was no place for them in the then apartheid society. This was a time when our *alma mater* still had separate facilities for coloureds and whites.

Those first two years of post-graduate studies were difficult because he was basically doing the literature surveys for a lecturer registered for a higher degree at another institute. These surveys would afford you a mark of 60% at most. However he persevered and succeeded – and I had an ally for life.

To bring about change to the *status quo* was always on his agenda. Together we attended the passing of the University of the Western Cape Act, which determined the autonomy of the institute. The detection of opportunities to grow was paramount to him and to achieve it, the Act had to be fully understood.

The great support and advice he gave me as the UWC representative on the tripartite committee when the State decreed that that there should be only one school of pharmacy in the Western Cape, will always be remembered. The choice of the sole university to offer pharmacy involved the three universities that offered undergraduate training in pharmacy, at that time being UWC, the University of Cape Town and Stellenbosch University. His astute advice to me led to our *alma mater* being afforded the opportunity to be the University chosen to continue offering pharmacy education.

In the early 1990s, Peter chaired the ANC's National Drug Policy Commission that recommended the implementation of the country's current pharmaceutical policy.

When Peter was nominated to be a member of the South African Pharmacy Council representing the institutes offering pharmacy, I wholeheartedly supported his appointment because I knew that transformation was a primary objective of his. After Peter's appointment, transformation at Council became a reality. With him, there was no tokenism – transformation was based on ability. Peter served for 10 years as president of Council.

*Professor Peter Eagles passed away on 17 May 2018. The PSSA sends sincere condolences to Peter's wife Maureen, his son and daughter and their families and his many friends and colleagues.*



With his appointment as the Chairperson of the MCC, Peter did UWC and indeed South Africa proud. The exploitation of African countries with respect to the dumping of medicines due to inefficient controls well as the absence of an equitable pharmaceutical service were high on the agenda.

Peter engaged on a transformation process in that arena as well. It operated more efficiently and successfully by appointing capable people irrespective of colour or creed. He also grew the reference base by giving younger scientists an opportunity to be part of the medicine registration process. Some of them are still there today because appointments were made on ability and commitment.

Peter's involvement in addressing these issues brought the UWC School of Pharmacy to the international stage because these were areas of concern to the World Health Organisation. A number of UWC staff members were subsequently appointed to various WHO committees.

The School of Pharmacy in became part of a WHO Collaboration Centre concerning the provision of equitable health services on the African Continent. Unfortunately this initiative could not be sustained to lack of funds and infrastructure.

As an expert on the WHO Committee for Traditional Medicines, Peter was requested to initiate and drive a programme to write monographs for plants used in traditional medicines. This progressed very well and a number of monographs were written. Peter also developed a young scientist to such a degree that he assumed higher honours elsewhere.

Peter's commitment to the success and future of his students was shown by his dedication to his lecturing and practical obligations even when he had national and international demands on his time.

My friend, I watched you almost on a daily basis taking leave of what was near and dear to you and when you said goodbye to me and your eyes fell closed, I knew you were prepared to meet our Lord and Saviour.