

HONORARY GRADUATE

Johannes Albertus Myburgh

Johannes Albertus Myburgh was born on 31 May 1928 in Lindley in the Orange Free State. He matriculated from the Parys High School with distinctions in all subjects. From there he went to the University of Cape Town on an entrance scholarship and graduated Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery in 1950 with first-class honours and distinctions in Surgery, Medicine and Obstetrics and Gynaecology. He received the Gold Medal for the most distinguished graduate of the year. While an undergraduate he played first XV rugby for the University of Cape Town and was awarded his Springbok colours for athletics in 1950.

After serving his internship at Groote Schuur Hospital he proceeded in 1952 to New College, Oxford on a Rhodes Scholarship. While in Oxford he worked initially as a senior house surgeon and later as a surgical registrar. He became a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons (England) in 1955 and returned to South Africa in 1956. In 1959 he was admitted to the Specialist Register of the South African Medical and Dental Council and in 1966 he was awarded the degree of Master of Surgery of the University of the Witwatersrand, the highest degree in surgery.

After working in a number of the Wits teaching hospitals initially as a surgical registrar and later as a specialist surgeon, Bert Myburgh was appointed *ad hominem* Professor of Surgery in 1967 and Head of the Department of Surgery in 1977. He held this position until his retirement from the Chair at the end of 1994. He is presently Professor Emeritus of Surgery in his old department. During his seventeen years as Professor of Surgery he was awarded seven Honorary Fellowships, and an honorary degree of Doctor of Medicine, the Hans Snyckers Memorial Award, the Claude Harris Leon Foundation Award of Merit, Fellowship of the Royal Society of South Africa, the Inaugural South African Sims Travelling Professorship and the South African Medical Research Council Silver Medal for Research.

Bert Myburgh has been a Visiting Professor at twenty-one different universities and was a member of ten different local and international professional societies. He has been President of the College of Medicine of South Africa, President of the local Association of Surgeons, President of the Southern African Transplantation Society and the President of the Surgical Research Society. Furthermore, he was a member of the South African Medical Research Council, and served on the councils of a number of international surgical and transplantation bodies. He was also on the editorial board of nine surgical journals. Mention must be made of his service on numerous University boards and committees and on committees at the Johannesburg Hospital.

Throughout Bert Myburgh's career, basic and applied research have been his overriding passions. His clinical research interests have included aetiology of the common bile duct, the dumping syndrome after gastric surgery, iron deficiency after gastric surgery, wound sepsis, the effects of gastric freezing, diverticular disease of the colon, portal hypertension, pancreatic cysts and strictures of the bile ducts. His most important contributions in the international field, however, have been in the area of organ transplantation. A major focus of this work, which has been conducted on laboratory animals and on patients undergoing kidney transplantation, has been in the area of immunological monitoring before and after transplantation. In addition, he has determined the role of pretransplantation total lymphoid irradiation in the induction of immune tolerance and has been in the forefront of research into renal xenotransplantation, which is the transplantation of donor organs into recipient animals of different species. If this became practical in humans it would revolutionise clinical transplantation, which is limited by the shortage of human donor organs.

Bert Myburgh's organ transplantation research was recognised by the establishment of a Medical Research Council Unit, the Transplantation Research Unit - under his directorship eleven members of the unit have received higher degrees by thesis, one Master of Surgery, three Doctors of Philosophy and eleven Masters of Science. Bert Myburgh has also published one hundred and seventy scientific articles in local and inter-

national journals, delivered a number of named lectures, given numerous presentations at local and international scientific congresses and acted as chairman at many of these congresses - truly a magnificent record.

Bert Myburgh has contributed immensely to our university, the Medical Faculty, the Department of Surgery and the Johannesburg Hospital. He has taught generations of undergraduate and postgraduate students. This contribution was recognised by a special teaching prize awarded to him by the Faculty in 1995. His research achievements are widely recognised and he has brought singular honour to the University and the Department of Surgery, of which, for all his high international standing and the fact that he is sought after by several great universities of the world, he has remained a loyal and steadfast member. As Professor Emeritus and Honorary Professorial Research Fellow, he remains active in the Department.

In recognition of his distinguished academic career, which has placed him at the very pinnacle of his profession, the University takes great pride in conferring the degree of Doctor of Science in Medicine *honoris causa* on Johannes Albertus Myburgh.