

This summer I set off to South Africa to attend the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and Reunion of the University of Pretoria Onderstepoort Veterinary class of 1971. Five years ago I attended the 40<sup>th</sup> Reunion which was a great success. This year's "happening" will be held in South Africa in the mountainous region of the Drakensberg, a part of Zululand at a unique hotel the "Cathedral Peak".

I have decided to dedicate this editorial to my class and in so doing go back some 45 years to relate something about this very important stage in my life and the lives of my class mates, at one of the top veterinary schools in the world.

Some background: The establishment of "The Onderstepoort Veterinary Research Institute" was motivated in 1896 by the advance of Rinderpest into South Africa from the north. This led to the appointment of the famous Arnold Theiler as a government veterinary surgeon. Sir Arnold Theiler is considered the father of veterinary science in South Africa. It is therefore not surprising that a large portion of our veterinary studies was founded on and dedicated to infectious diseases.

Our class consisted of 45 hand-chosen students who had successfully completed their first year science studies at any university. In contrast to the situation today our class of 45 consisted of 2 females and the rest 43 males. Clearly in those days the veterinary profession was considered almost a career for men only. Today classes all over the world are dominated by females, probably among other reasons, due to the shift of emphasis from farm animal medicine to small animal pet medicine by veterinary practitioners. The class consisted of only two Jewish students with the rest divided between English and Afrikaans speakers.

The lectures were given in either English or Afrikaans, the local official languages of South Africa at the time. The veterinary school was situated adjacent to the Veterinary Institute so that most of our lecturers were researchers, some famous from the Institute. Pathology was a central theme of our studies with strict attention being placed on post mortem examinations and diagnostics.

My class proved to be exceptional with many completing their second and third degrees, and several of them contributing internationally to knowledge in veterinary medicine in a number of specialties such as radiology, wild life medicine, anatomy, infectious diseases, pathology, clinical pathology and laboratory animal medicine.

I will be proud to attend this reunion after 45 years of completion of our Bachelor of Veterinary Science (B.V.Sc) degrees and to be among those with whom I spent some of the most trying but adventurous years of my life.

Wishing everyone a pleasant summer and lots of travel all over the globe. Take care.

Sincerely  
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