

In Memoriam

Dr Kok of the Westfort Institution, Pretoria, Union of South Africa has informed us of the death of Dr A. R. Davison, well known among the older generation of leprologists for his independent and outspoken approach to leprosy and its problems. Dr Davison gave many years of his life as Superintendent at Westfort to the care of sufferers from leprosy, and we add our tribute to the memory of a distinguished and devoted colleague. The following appreciation is reprinted with permission from the South African Medical Journal of 21 December, 1974.

ARTHUR RUSCOE DAVISON M.R.C.S. (ENG.), L.R.C.P. (LOND.)

Dr J. H. Struthers, of Pretoria, writes:

Dr Davison was born in March 1901 in Queenstown. He attended Rondebosch Boys' High School and the University of Cape Town, then furthered his studies in London.

In 1926 he accepted a temporary appointment as Medical Officer at the Robben Island Leprosy Institution. Thereafter he became Medical Officer at the Leprosy Institution at Emjanyana in the Transkei, where he worked for 13 years. In 1939 he was promoted to the post of Medical Superintendent of the Westfort Institution in Pretoria, where he worked for a further 25 years, until he retired to Durban in March 1964.

Dr Davison devoted his life to work in this field, and became a well-known leprologist. He attended international congresses on leprosy in Madrid, Cuba and Japan, and visited leprosy institutions in South America as well. He was privileged to see the results of diaminodiphenyl sulphone treatment, which was first used in 1943*, and which changed the institutions from places of desolation to places of hope. Whereas before there had been only isolation and expectation of eventual death in these institutions, patients could look forward to the promise of a cure, and the hope of a return to their homes.

Dr Davison died on 18 October 1974, at the age of 73 years. He will especially be remembered for his great kindness, and for the wonderful sense of humour that meant so much to his patients during his 39 years of devoted service to them.

Our deepest sympathy goes to his wife Doris, to his daughter Mrs D. Tovey and family, and to his son Dr John Davison and family.

* The correct year was 1947 – Ed.