

In Memoriam

Dr Pascale Raine Cooper 06.07.88 – 03.02.22

The flame that burns twice as bright burns half as long



On 3rd February 2022, the South African veterinary community lost one of its brightest young stars as Dr Pascale Cooper tragically passed away following a heart attack at age 33 (post-partum cardiomyopathy as she had recently given birth to her second child).

Pascale graduated from Onderstepoort in 2013, the third generation of vets in the Cooper line. Great-grandfather Dr Vincent Cooper was one of the first classes to graduate from OP. Pascale's father, Dr Dave Cooper (1979), is well known as a leading wildlife veterinarian still employed by Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, the provincial conservation organisation.

While living in a game reserve and always at her father's heels, the young Pascale revealed her natural instincts toward animals. From owls and other birds to buffalo and rhino, she had an inborn aptitude and empathy for all living things. After school, it was a natural progression for her to join OP and heed her calling (however, her fierce independence was such that she resisted telling anyone of her veterinary lineage, preferring to make her own mark). At university, Pascale made lifelong friendships, burnt the candle at both ends with a busy social life, yet still managed to obtain excellent results. The words 'loyalty, passion, determination, fiercely protective, opinionated and sense of humour' keep cropping up in the memories of colleagues who have described her as having the heart of a lion in a tiny frame.

No challenge was declined, no task impossible for this dynamic young woman. She excelled at the annual Zimbabwean Wildlife Capture Course, where she expanded on her natural skills with wild animals. However, her career path was with small animals. She focused on improving her knowledge with stints at veterinary practices in Mtubatuba, Milnerton, Hout Bay and most recently, Vet Point in Sea Point, where she worked until the recent birth of her son.

Pascale is survived by her husband, Jamey Lipschitz, in Cape Town, daughter Micaela (20 months) and baby Daniel (3 months). Her family deeply mourns her tragic and unimaginable loss, friends and veterinary colleagues, one of whom aptly quoted: "The flame that burns twice as bright burns half as long".

Dave Cooper