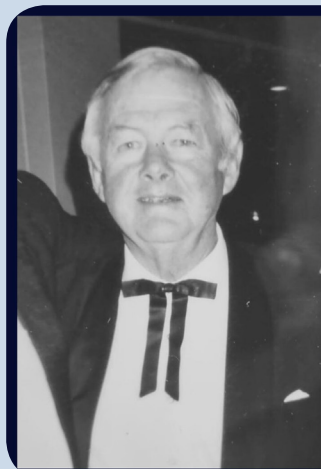


# In Memoriam

## BRIAN DE BURGH BAKER

### 1936 - 2022



IN MEMORY OF A  
DEAR FRIEND

### Brian Baker

1936 - 2022

*"Kind Hearts and Gentle people",  
as he would say ...raise your glasses  
tonight and toast the man that was  
Dr B de B and pray that our lives  
be as well lived as his.*

Brian Baker was born on 11 November 1936 in Johannesburg to parents Margaret Helen and Francis de Burgh Baker. Brian married Janet and they had 3 sons, James, David and Patrick.

After graduating from the University of Pretoria, Onderstepoort BVSc in 1959.

Brian practised for a year in Pretoria and then joined Jack Boswell and Hempsted, before being sent to Fred Day and Bob Crowhurst in Newmarket, Durban for 6 months, and to Hagyard, Davidson and McGee in Kentucky for the rest of the year. He then started his own practice in Randburg.

Brian and Janet Baker moved to 'Summerveld' in Natal in about 1965, where in addition to farming and his racing practice, he became increasingly involved in all aspects of Thoroughbred breeding, particularly in the Natal Midlands where he was known as 'the horse king' for the next 2 decades.

His first major break was when the Saunders family of Tongaat Sugar asked him to take care of the 800 mules that worked in the sugar cane fields. According to his son Patrick, Brian loved and treated all animals, but horses in all forms were always his passion.

Eventually, the Baker-McVeigh group that he founded would develop into 8 practices around the world, with close to 60 equine veterinary surgeons.

Three practices were in South Africa (Summerveld, Johannesburg and Cape Town), three in Britain (Newmarket, Yorkshire and Lambourn), one in France (Chantilly) and one in Bahrain (Riffa), but consultations are offered worldwide. In 1964, several equine-orientated veterinarians – Brian Baker, John O'Grady, Philip Boyazoglu, Maurice Azzie, Robin Rous, Frank Freeman and others, with HP Steyn in the chair – met at the Witwatersrand Agricultural Society Showgrounds at Milner Park to form the Equine Practitioners Group (EPG) of the SAVA, a forum to share ideas and discuss matters of common interest and concern.

Brian later served a term as chairman of the EPG. The EPG rapidly went from strength to strength and to its credit, always invited overseas veterinarians, experts in their respective fields, to be the main speakers at the well-attended annual congresses. During 2005 the name of the EPG was changed to SAEVA (South African Equine Veterinary Association).

Brian not only built one of the earliest equine operating theatres and hospitals, but he also created a state-of-the-art blood laboratory and was pioneering revolutionary procedures like the tie-back wind ops before they were written up in the journals. In his later life, he spent some time with Monty Roberts, the horse whisperer in America, and he was the pioneer of equine acupuncture in South Africa in his retirement years.

Brian loved the bush and animals of the wild, loved his home and feeding the birds, loved his friends and a good braai, and was an incredible father to his 3 sons and a loving grandfather to his 9 grandchildren. His kindness, concern for animals and humans, and unwavering care and support are deeply appreciated. He died at peace in June 2022.

Gareth Bath