

In Memoriam

Alain John Carter: 1959 – 2024



How can anyone begin to express the tragedy at the loss of a colleague and friend who can only be described as outstanding in every sphere of life, just at the time when life should have been giving back.

Alain will be remembered by the veterinary community as always excelling in the profession, having achieved his M Med Vet in 1996, specializing in medicine, and taking over the reins from George Frost and establishing Fourways Veterinary Hospital as a state of the art referral facility of world class standard.

However, behind such a professional facade is a story of a man who never settled for second best, in all walks of life.

Alain went to Saint Stithians College, matriculating there in 1977, going on to study at Onderstepoort and qualifying as a veterinarian in 1983.

During his school years, he developed a passion for the Drakensberg mountains and would spend many a night or four in a tent on the top of the 'berg with friends and family members. It was on one such hike that I realised his tenacity - I could barely keep up as he strode across the Mweni Cutback, never appearing to break into a sweat.

We will miss Alain's enormous contribution to the profession, in which he generously gave of his time, serving as chairman of the Johannesburg branch of the SAVA in the late '90s as well as chairing the NVCG for some time. For a number of years he was an external examiner for the medicine department at OP, and he lectured at numerous symposia both locally and internationally, in various topics.

A keen sportsman, Alain had to decide between a career as a professional tennis player or a veterinarian - in my opinion choosing the more noble avenue, but his passion for competition never flagged. A golfer of note, which became one of his life's passions. Back in the day, still a student and classmate, I remember playing a round of beer golf with him at Champagne Castle. The more holes he won, the more beers he downed, and the better he played! I was totally demoralized and dehydrated by the end of the game. Back in 2012 he took up boxing at Smiths Boxing Gym with local colleagues and friends, but his running shoes - not his boxing gloves - were probably his most noteworthy sports gear. Alain finished numerous Comrades Marathons, and he took his love for the road overseas, completing the New York Marathon, the Berlin Marathon And the London Marathon, all with consummate ease.

No mountain too high, having conquered the Drakensberg, Alain embarked upon a trip to the Himalayas in recent years with his brothers, spending time at Base Camp.

A man of many facets - he will be sorely missed by his family, recently becoming a grandfather to Lyra, daughter of Greg and Desi.

Alain's positive outlook in the face of an awful diagnosis, and his ability to accept input from all parties willing to give support, shows the strength of a true hero.

The veterinary world, your family, and your friends will miss you, but we will forever remember you as a one-of-a-kind legend.

May you soar high with the eagles.

Jeremy McKenna