

INGRID WOLLESCHAK (Class of 1958)

I was born in Johannesburg on 4th May 1936, the eldest of three daughters. Schooling was at the German School Johannesburg, where I matriculated in 1953 in the First Class with a distinction in German.

I started the then 5 year Veterinary Course at Pretoria University in 1954. During the 4 years' study at Onderstepoort I was the only lady in the first "big" class of 30 students. At the end of 1958 I qualified with distinctions in Surgery, Gynaecology and Special Hygiene of Meat and Milk. I was awarded the ICI Prize for Surgery and Gynaecology. In 1959 I joined the practice of Drs. Paine, Solomon and Canham in Pietermaritzburg as assistant.

On the 31st October 1959 I married my classmate, Cornelis Johannes (Neels) Roos, who later became the first veterinarian to obtain the Masters Degrees in both Surgery and Radiology. At that time there was no course in Radiology at OP, so he attended lectures and practicals with the medical post-graduated students in human Radiology. After our marriage I did various locums in Johannesburg and for a short time worked at the SPCA. We then moved to Pietermaritzburg where I worked at Allerton Laboratories as a State Veterinarian until early 1962 when we relocated back to Johannesburg where our first child was born in September. In the interests of the well-being of our children I opted to become a housewife for the next 17 years

In January 1979, at the request of the then Dean of the Faculty, Prof C.F.B. Hofmeyr, I started working again part-time at the Faculty of Veterinary Science, Onderstepoort where I was entrusted with the overall administration of the Veterinary Nursing Course (DIP CUR ANIM, later renamed DIP VET NUR) which had been started in 1977, and also lectured and supervised practicals in the subjects Theatre Practice, General Nursing and partly in Surgical Nursing. Although the nursing students considered me to be too strict, they soon realised the value of high standards when they started working! Retirement followed 15 years later at the end of 1993. I look back on this period of my professional life as most fulfilling.

We had three daughters who all matriculated at the German School Pretoria. Subsequently one obtained a Masters in Limnology, one a Masters in Applied Mathematics, and one became a dentist. We now have 9 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren. Our family life was characterised inter alia by much pleasure from classical music. One daughter played the violin, one the 'cello and one the clarinet. I accompanied them on the piano and Neels was our much-appreciated critic! Nature featured very prominently too and during school holidays we camped or hiked in many parts of our country's most beautiful mountainous surroundings. Neels is interested in grasses and in birding (and long-standing member of BirdLife SA). I enjoy our indigenous trees (and was a long-standing member of the Dendrological Society). Today our large indigenous garden in Pretoria-North, where we have now been staying for 55 years, attracts numerous bird species, land snails and a variety of other small creatures.

We have travelled in Europe and Southern Africa. Our birding tours to Ecuador, Malawi, Madagascar, Thailand, Borneo and Malaysia were highlights. We especially enjoyed the few remaining primary rain-forests and nature in general.

In our 60 years together, we can truly look back on a fulfilled life which had fair and equal proportions of rewarding professional duty and a pleasurable and interesting family life!

PUBLICATIONS / REFERENCES:

Wolleschak, I. 2010. Veterinary nursing in South Africa (1977-2000). Journal of the South African Veterinary Association-Tydskrif Van Die Suid-Afrikaanse Veterinere Vereniging 81(2):71-74.