

# In Memoriam

## Tobias George Spies: 1958 – 2024



Tobias George Spies, fondly known as “Tobie,” lived a life filled with service, love, and devotion. His story is one of deep faith, professional excellence, and an enduring passion for the natural world and his community. His legacy will continue to inspire those fortunate enough to have known him.

Tobie earned his BVSc degree in Veterinary Science in 1988, after completing a BSc and BSc Honours in Nature Conservation Management. After completing two years of military service, he gained acceptance into Veterinary School—a testament to his determination and work ethic.

For nearly two decades, Tobie owned a mixed veterinary practice in Witbank, becoming a cornerstone of the community. His compassion and selfless service earned him the admiration of many. In 2015, he sold his practice to focus on game farming, a pursuit that also allowed him to engage in wildlife-related veterinary work.

In 2018, he returned to the Highveld, where he ran a small-animal and mixed practice in Middelburg for four years. In the last three years of his life, he worked as a rural veterinarian in the Middelburg area, continuing to leave an indelible mark on the community.

Tobie was more than a veterinarian—he was a man of profound faith, character, and passion. His life embodied the message of Psalm 1:3: *“He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither.”* His faith was a living testimony, and his peace was contagious to those around him.

He was a man of extraordinary love and respect, treasuring every relationship—from his family to his clients and the community he so faithfully served. His heart was free of bitterness but full of grace.

Tobie’s passions defined him. He adored his wife, children, and grandchildren, who brought immense joy to his life. He had a deep love for farming, cycads, and the natural world, which he admired with the keen eye of a true scientist.

He found joy in life’s simplest pleasures: a warm cup of tea, the comfort of a handkerchief, and the nostalgia of stories from his youth. His tales of student escapades, farm adventures, and love of sports—especially athletics and rugby—brought warmth and humour to those around him.

His knowledge of the environment was unparalleled; decades after his botany studies, he could still identify trees by their scientific names. He was not just a veterinarian; he was a steward of the land and a man deeply connected to its rhythms.

Tobie’s life serves as a guide for all who knew him: live selflessly, treat others with respect, and find joy in the everyday. He showed us that success is measured not only in achievements but in the love and honour we extend to others.

As his son Barend so beautifully expressed: *“Dad, may the thunder roll where you now sit by your bushveld fire. May the bushveld sun set gently over your heavenly farm as you explore new trees with the Lord.”*

Tobie Spies, a hero, a rock, and a light to so many, lives on through his family, his friends, and everyone whose life he touched. May we all strive to live as he did: with peace in our hearts, love in our souls, and selflessness in our actions.

Rest in peace, Tobie. Your legacy lives on in love and pride.

Peet Schutte

