

# Dr Stan Weakley

27 July 1953–10 February 2023

Dr Stan Weakley, a popular and much-loved general surgeon in East London, died on 10 February of metastatic thyroid carcinoma. Stan did his schooling in Queenstown and did well to allow admission to the University of Cape Town Medical Faculty where, while absorbing vast amounts of knowledge, he played hooker in the heart of the scrum for the medical school rugby team. Housemanship at Frere followed with National Service in the Navy where he said that he was proof that persistent heavy drinking did not lead to pancreatitis. He also met Anne Weare, a nurse in training who would become his wife and lifelong companion.

His early foray into surgery at Frere Hospital was as a medical officer, rubbing shoulders and guided by old school surgeons. Stan returned, after this initiation to more than the basics of surgical experience, to the Department of Surgery at Groote Schuur Hospital in 1984 to train as a surgeon. He enjoyed the discipline and rigours of the surgical rotation under the mentorship of Professors Terblanche, De Villiers, Immelmann and Dent. In his rotation through the Gastrointestinal Clinic, he was guided by Professors Bornman, Marks and Krige to emerge at the completion of his training as a real general surgeon of old, with abilities embracing gastrointestinal and vascular surgery among the gamut of skills needed to tackle the surgical needs of the East London community. At Frere Hospital, he taught students and medical officers and ultimately devoted time to private practice with Peter Comfort, Claude Schultz and later Neil Comley.

Stan was a man of stalwart soul. He was staunchly loyal and never afraid to tackle opposition head-on. He was involved in ATLS training and the boards of Frere Hospital and the local Life Healthcare Hospitals with great commitment. His note-keeping was impeccable and his patient management was highly organised down to the last dotted i and crossed t. He enjoyed the thrust and parry of debate and a smile would crease his face with a rumbling chuckle at the onset of adversity. When operating with Stan in theatre and offering him spurious advice, he would stop and bark, “Who is doing this operation?”



At the time of his retirement, Stan left a long and dedicated life to surgery at the age of 60 years – with no glancing back – to tackle his wide interests in cross-country 4x4 adventures, especially his long-planned trip across 45 000 km of Africa to Sudan at the edge of the Red Sea and back. His account of his journey with his loyal wife Anne in his ‘Slow Donkey’ was documented in the 4x4 annals to great acclaim. Stan had a superb knowledge of birds and was a keen fisherman. Many stories emitted from Round Table and his life experiences. Stan revelled in the anecdotes of the complexity and follies and triumphs of all the people around him in society.

He loved his family beyond anything. He and Anne raised wonderful children and his pride in his children Sarah, Kate and Peter was evident as well as son-in-law, Gideon, who got a big nod from Stan. Stan’s face creased with great delight at any mention of his grandson, Theo, who gave Stan great joy. Stan died amidst the support and love of his family. Rest in peace, friend and colleague.

**Neil Comley and Kate van Tonder**