

## Carel Pieter de Ruyter van Gend

**MBChB, MRCP(Glas), FRACP**

CAREL VAN GEND died of bowel cancer at his home on the Clarence River, in northern New South Wales, on 18 June 2005, after 27 years as a Consultant Physician to Grafton Base Hospital.

Carel was born in South Africa on 24 March 1933. He distinguished himself at Rondebosch Boys' High School for winning the mile — but in the slowest winning time on record. He graduated from Cape Town University in 1957, at a high point in that medical school's fame. Among his anecdotes he recalls being instructed in donning surgical gloves by Christiaan Barnard, and notes that the link between dietary cholesterol and heart disease was clarified through Cape Town's racially segregated Groote Schuur Hospital.

Rejecting the prevailing racism, Carel spent his first decade working in black African hospitals. Two years after graduation, he was the sole doctor at a remote hospital in Northern Rhodesia. Five years there saw his marriage to Margaret Moffat and the births of two children. Over the next 14 years, he held hospital positions in South Africa, England, Scotland, Malawi, Canada and New Zealand.

In 1978, Carel moved to Grafton, New South Wales, where he worked as a private and hospital physician and obtained his



Fellowship of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians. He initiated a bowel-cancer screening campaign with support from the local Rotary Club and raised funds for the Life Education van. He also served on the NSW Medical Board's Area of Need Panel from 1999 to 2005, assessing overseas-trained doctors for hospital positions and giving valuable advice to those who would be working in coun-

try hospitals similar to his own. His down-to-earth approach to medical problems ensured that those recommended for registration would be adequately prepared for those jobs.

In his leisure time, Carel was a keen squash player, amateur actor, Rotary Club member, and president of the local arts festival. He dabbled in breeding exotic cattle, and for several years guided his own "Cattlemen's Study Tour" of Central Africa.

Carel will be deeply missed by colleagues, friends, and family around the world. He is survived by Margaret and their three children, Marie, David and Anne.

**David van Gend**

*(with thanks to Peter Arnold)*

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