



## Farewell to Barney Hurwitz

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*Philanthropist, top businessman, family man, Dr Barney Hurwitz, died in mid October at the age of 95; he was described by family and friends as "a giant among men,"..... "who played a major role in the advancement of medical facilities in South Africa".*

While this was well known to many, not all knew that he was also a successful property developer and farmer; he held directorships and served on the Boards of over 90 companies, locally and internationally. He was honoured in 1997 with honorary doctorates by both the Universities of the Free State and Unisa, and he was for several years a member of the PSSA Branch Committee of the Southern Transvaal and later the PSSA Southern Gauteng Branch.

Born in 1922 in a small Polish town close to the Russian border, Hurwitz arrived in South Africa in 1934, speaking no English. He later excelled at Forest Hill High School, where he was elected

a prefect in his matric year, but which he declined as his family couldn't afford the compulsory prefect's tie!

Although he wished to become a medical doctor, lack of funds led him to study pharmacy, and he qualified in 1946, registering as a 'Chemist and Druggist' with the SA Pharmacy Board, and later studied pharmacology, biochemistry and bacteriology in the UK. His business career began with the opening of the popular landmark Highbree Pharmacy in Fordsburg, Johannesburg, later to include a wholesale depot for supplying his hospitals, and where he once hid anti-apartheid activists Yusuf Dadoo, Nelson Mandela and Ahmed Kathrada, who were on the run from security police, until it was safe for them to emerge!

Seeing a gap in the private hospital market in the fifties and sixties, Barney bought the Rand Clinic in Hillbrow, the beginnings of the extensive Clinic Holdings Group of hospitals and clinics, distinguished by their accessibility, and the most modern and innovative medical equipment and technology; he felt that these could best be implemented by highly-trained, motivated and efficient staff, leading to his establishment of a nurses' training college in Durban and later also at the Rand Afrikaans University (now University of Johannesburg), whose degrees were recognised locally and internationally.

Philanthropically, many in the Jewish community, particularly in Emmarentia and Greenside, benefitted greatly from his work, where the congregants will miss his active participation.

Barney Hurwitz leaves his wife Leah, children Charmian Roffey and Jeffery and Arlene Hurwitz, as well as eight grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren; he made a significant impression on the private hospital scene, and left a legacy in the lives of many.