



# Obituaries

## Pieter Retief (Boet) van der Merwe 1933–2020



Pieter Retief van der Merwe matriculated at the “Hoerskool De Aar” in 1949, where he was headboy and Dux medalist, already showing initiative and leadership skills. This talented young man elected to study pharmacy and graduated with a Dip Pharm from the Natal Technical College in 1955.

Boet joined the Pharmaceutical Society of South Africa (PSSA) early in his career and immersed himself in pharmacy activities in community pharmacy in Bloemfontein and Worcester over the next approximately 15 years. He was a committee member of the PSSA Free State Branch and Branch Chairman, before moving to Worcester, where he again immersed himself in community pharmacy issues there.

In 1971, he was appointed to the position of Professional Officer by the PSSA and soon thereafter as Executive Director. At that time, the health professions were in a state of flux, including the various sectors of pharmacy. The Executive Committee of the PSSA mandated Boet to travel overseas to negotiate a better financial arrangement with the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP). With his diplomatic skills and gracious manner, this was successfully accomplished. He was elected a Council Member of FIP in 1974, which position he held until his retirement. In addition, he was appointed Chairman of FIP’s International World Group on Public Relations.

During his tenure as Executive Director, Boet travelled extensively to many countries to establish and maintain contacts with pharmacy organisations, to the benefit of pharmacy in South Africa. He was also appointed as Vice Chairman of the Associated Pharmaceutical Societies of Southern, Eastern and Central Africa (APSSECA).

In 1984, Boet was elected a Fellow of the PSSA. For his outstanding contribution to pharmacy, he received the Peter Donnelly Award in 1992. He was also honoured with Honorary Life membership of the Pharmaceutical Society of SA and also by the PSSA Southern Gauteng branch.

His passion and dedication are hallmarks of his commitment to pharmacy and he will always be remembered for the gentleman he was.

Boet is survived by a son and daughter, three grandsons and one granddaughter.

Neville Lyne and Ray Pogir