

Appointment of Deputy Editor



We extend a hearty welcome to Dr Razaan Davis who joins the editorial board of the *SAJR* as Deputy Editor. Razaan became a Fellow of the College of Diagnostic Radiologists of South Africa in October 2009, qualifying as a Master of Medicine, specialising in radiology, at the University of Cape Town. She commenced duties as a senior consultant in the Division of Diagnostic Radiology at Tygerberg Hospital

in August 2010. She is an excellent teacher and competent administrator, and also at present a moderator for the Stellenbosch University modular course in diagnostic radiology.

At the time of assuming the *SAJR* editorship with Volume 12, Issue 1 in 2008, I alluded to the necessity of always being aware of the need to bring in new blood, and am delighted at Razaan's appointment accordingly. At the time, I drew on a line from the *Aeneid* by Virgil (70 - 19 BC): *Vires acquirit eundo* [Gathering strength as it goes.]. I wish to reconfirm this, and we look forward to ongoing gathering of strength as we proceed into the next half-decade.

Jan Lotz
Editor-in-Chief

IN MEMORIAM

Bryan Joseph Cremin

Bryan Cremin was a great friend and a phenomenal teacher. I could easily write a series of articles about a trip to the Okavango Delta with Bryan and Richard Hewlett – an experience that I'd never wish to repeat, but that I wouldn't want to have missed for all the money in the world. Kindly allow me to dedicate this issue of the *SAJR* to an exceptional man and a great radiologist.

The following is a tribute from one Irishman to another. Let others recall his academic achievements, but here let us listen to Sean Conway on Bryan Cremin, the man.

Jan Lotz
Editor-in-chief

Tribute to Bryan Cremin

By Sean Conway

Bryan Joseph Cremin was born in London on 2 September 1929 to a Limerick GP father and a Kerry mother, both of the province of Munster, Ireland. He was the baby of the family, with 2 elder sisters and an older brother, Desmond, who is 92. Having an eye for detail, he noted that he was conceived in Ireland though born in England ('of Irish insertion but English extraction', in his own words) as his family had emigrated to London during this period.

By his admission, his father's one failing was a penchant for gambling on the horses, which contributed to Bryan's fairly shrewd financial sense in life. He went to prep school in London – possibly the Oratory – and I recall a photograph he had of himself in his house in school uniform with lopsided school cap and a cheeky, somewhat pugnacious grin.

He attended Guy's Hospital for his medical training and represented the hospital in both boxing and rugby football, at which he excelled; he also had a run with London Irish and a rugby trial for Ireland. On

qualification, he underwent his national service in the Royal Army Medical Corps of the British Army and was posted to Malaya, where I first came across him when I was about 4 years old, around the time of the Coronation (June 1953), while he was doing his national service as Captain Cremin in the 16th Field Ambulance in Kuala Lumpur, whose then CO was my father, Lieutenant-Colonel Steve Conway.

My first unknowing encounter with him was being thrown into the deep end of the swimming pool at the Selangore Club in KL on the instructions of my father – the order having been given for me to sink or swim; I've been doggy paddling ever since. During his time with the Field Ambulance, my father had him pegged as a most competent and ambitious officer with great charm, and both my parents became very fond of him; there were many hilarious and enjoyable sessions in the Officers' Mess and elsewhere. He also tried his hand at ear piercing and charmed his way into my mother's ear lobes which, apparently, was not immediately successful as the first attempt became slightly septic but with no lasting ill-effect.

He was of adventurous spirit and, for the latter half of his national service, was attached to the SAS as a Medical Officer. During this time my father, not lacking in spirit himself, underwent parachute training in the jungle. On one of these jumps, Cremin and the others landed safely on the jungle floor, but my father was trapped and suspended up high from the branch of a tree. Although uninjured, my father called out, 'Cremin [Kreeman], have you



got the medicinal brandy? Pass it along now, if you please.' – which Bryan managed to achieve by means of a jungle vine. It took another 40 minutes to extricate my Dad from the tree, but everyone was most relaxed and stress free – I'm told.

An interesting sequela of the parachute jumps was the first article written by Bryan: on the medical aspects of parachuting into the jungle from very low height – a technique pioneered in Malaya at the time. It was the only article entirely written by Cremin himself – but in which he appeared as second author, my father achieving first author status merely by virtue of army rank: (1). *Lt. Col. S.M.P. Conway, MC, RAMC;* (2). *Capt. B.J. Cremin, RAMC.*

Following his national service, our family lost contact with Bryan for many years. During this time he held a number of positions including GP work in the UK and an extended sojourn as ship's surgeon on the P & O line. During one of these trips, he had a liaison with his nursing staff sister, which resulted in the birth of his daughter – although he was not aware of these details until much later in life when contact was made with him by her in the mid- to late-1990s. Then and since, he made every effort to erase the time lost.

He then underwent radiology training in London and further postgraduate radiology in Australia. Around 1967 he went to Rhodesia, to Mpilo Hospital in Bulawayo, where by chance I myself went in 1972 to do my internship followed by paediatrics, but I was unaware of his movements. He moved to South Africa in 1968 to the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital as a Senior Radiologist, and it was there that he made his mark as a paediatric radiologist of world renown.

It was purely by chance that I ended up as a trainee radiologist at Groote Schuur Hospital in June 1976, having finished my own national service in Rhodesia and having started radiology in Harare Hospital, Salisbury. At the time, Bryan had established a worldwide reputation in paediatric radiology. He was honoured with the position of the Chair of Radiology at UCT/Groote Schuur concurrent with his position as Head of Radiology at Red Cross Hospital. As already said, he was ambitious but he deserved to be as this drive was backed up by enormous talent, hard work, academia and excellent organisation. Groote Schuur and Red Cross were staffed at the time by very talented and bright radiologists – I refer to the consultant staff specifically. These consultants were attracted from elsewhere largely on the reputation that Bryan had established in international radiology. He was the author and co-author of literally hundreds of articles in the radiological literature.

A criticism was that some of the co-authored articles were penned by his more junior staff, but he was indeed the sole author of many articles and a number of specialised paediatric textbooks and the genuine co-author of others including, with Professor Jannie Louw, on neonatal paediatric GIT, and with Aaronson on paediatric urology, among others.

In the early 1980s he relinquished his position as Professor of Radiology at UCT and returned to his first love of paediatric radiology at Red Cross Hospital, maintaining his position as Head of Department. He continued to be an innovator and to attract doctors from all corners to the hospital. He had a special soft spot for the underdog and so-called 'outsiders' – he had not a trace of academic xenophobia and welcomed

the fresh air that others could introduce into his department, and he went to great lengths to welcome, be hospitable to, and to discourse with, them at his house. He was still penning articles when he retired from Red Cross in 1995.

He had a reputation as a lady's man and was the master of well-chosen phrases; women seemed to treat him well. His companion in the most ambitious period of his life was Sybil, whom I met only once or twice, and she passed on in the mid-1980s. But the love and stalwart of his life was Edwina, whom I first met in 1988 shortly after they got together. At this time my parents had come to live in South Africa and renewed their friendship. They saw quite a lot of Bryan and Edwina and always thoroughly enjoyed their company.

After retiring from Red Cross, Bryan and Edwina maintained their adventurous spirit and lifestyle, travelling locally and abroad in a camper van. Bryan also volunteered to do occasional unpaid Saturday morning locums in our practice, which he did (and we paid him).

He had a talent for occasionally saying or doing the somewhat outlandish, which antagonised some but which those of us who knew him learnt to take in our stride. I think Edwina's family had some initial reservations about him but soon welcomed him into their hearts. He was always most kind to me but never shy to state his mind. He stepped into the breach on several occasions:

- He gave a best-man-type speech at 2 minutes' notice at my chaotic garden wedding many years ago.
- He kept a watching brief over me during the short and somewhat peculiar divorce period.
- He gave an oration at my former wife's funeral.
- He also accepted gracefully when I hijacked him to be godfather to Giselle.

He was gentle and kind to Giselle and was never short of a packet of jelly tots – she describes him as having an eccentric sense of humour and a kind fondness in his eyes. She always had a familiar and special feeling when stepping over the threshold of Conor Close to visit Bryan and Edwina and to play with the tabby cat and tortoise in the garden – a feature for many years.

Bryan maintained a beautiful garden and took delight in nurturing and seeing things grow and develop. He had the same attitude in life: never stopping still, erudite, eloquent, inquisitive, and questioning the why and the whereto. He had great humanity, was a brilliant orator, and entertaining company at all times. In recent years, when his mobility was reduced and he was losing some of his faculties, particularly memory, he was very lucky to have Edwina who nurtured and looked after him with tremendous personal effort but, even as these faculties dwindled, he would always pop up out of the blue with an appreciative gesture or meaningful statement of his love and gratitude to her.

I was not present at his passing in April, but Edwina tells me he still mustered all his dignity as he died in her arms. He was succinct and direct to the last. This ends my somewhat personal contribution to the Life of Bryan – Bryan Joseph Cremin – with apologies where indicated. We shall miss his indomitable nature, but his generous spirit lives on.