

ALEC SINGER
1912-1973

Dr Alec Singer practised as an orthopaedic surgeon in Cape Town. His academic standards were set high by the Mastership degree (M.Ch.Orth.) of Liverpool University he obtained in 1940, and the quality of his surgical work was undisputed. He also had a sense of humour, and the ability to blend comprehensive surgical skill with happy relationships with his fellow men. He was thought-provoking and his views were always pertinent to the theme in question.



Dr Singer was in private practice for many years, at first alone and subsequently with his brother Martin. Both men did part-time work for Groote Schuur Hospital and shared the care of paediatric orthopaedic patients in the Maitland Cottage Homes. Both brothers also had appointments at the New Somerset Hospital.

Two and a half years ago Dr Alec Singer was seriously disabled by a neuropathy that forced him to give up his surgical practice. Slowly his condition improved and he was able to join the orthopaedic department of the Groote Schuur Hospital on a full-time basis to develop the rehabilitation service. His wisdom, philosophy and outlook were of immense value to the department.

Typical of the man was his willingness to take on additional duties. He was always ready to serve where he could be most effective. It was difficult at times to prevent him from overworking. Sharing with him the affairs of administration and control of a complex teaching department was indeed a rare and interesting experience. The seniors found in Alec a man with a humorous anecdote when nerves were on edge, and a bolstering philosophy whenever the campaign had turned tenuous. He was at his best during the ward rounds on Thursday mornings. The wise head on the old shoulders characterised his gift to bridge the gap in thinking and in development between the orthopaedic surgical procedures of the late 1930's and the present-day activities of 1973. His sudden death has brought an acute sense of loss.

Our sympathy goes to his wife Matine, who stood by him so loyally, and to his three daughters, the eldest of whom is now studying medicine.

C. E. L.A.