

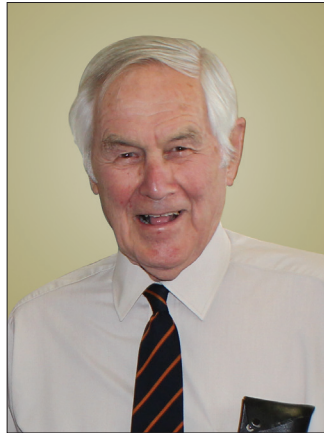
Prof. Tony (JCA) Davies: 28 August 1931–3 March 2024

Worker advocate, mentor, and an inspiration to many

Gill Nelson: University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa; MMPA honorary life member

It is with sadness that we share the news of the passing of Professor Emeritus Tony Davies after a short illness. Born in Scotland, schooled at St John's College in Johannesburg, and trained in medicine at Guy's Hospital in London, he moved to Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia) in 1958. There, he worked at Mpilo Hospital in Bulawayo, and later was stationed at Shangani from where he ran the public hospital and satellite rural clinics. In 1962, he moved to Gweru where he was appointed as the Provincial Medical Officer of Health (MOH) for Midlands Province. During this time, he developed a nationwide TB register, which enabled the discharge of inpatients back into their communities (he emptied the sanatoriums), and follow up and supply of treatment at local clinics. He was the first TB officer in Zimbabwe, and his interest in TB – both preventive and curative – continued throughout and beyond his career in occupational medicine. In 1974, he moved to Harare to take up the MOH position for Harare City.

Nine years later, in 1983, Tony moved to Johannesburg and was appointed as the Professor of Occupational Health at Wits (in a joint post with the Department of Health), and as the Director of the



Professor Emeritus Tony Davies

National Centre for Occupational Health (NCOH), now the National Institute for Occupational Health (NIOH) – a position he held until 1996, although he continued in an honorary position for a further 19 years until his retirement to Kenton-on-Sea in the Eastern Cape, with his wife, Deirdre, in 2015.

Tony's experience in mine occupational health led him to being selected as one of four members of the Commission of Inquiry into Safety and Health in the Mining Industry, headed by Judge Leon in the 1990s. Throughout his career, he supported many researchers to undertake research of neglected but pressing occupational health issues. He was an active player in investigations into several cases of worker exposure to hazardous substances, including the mercury contamination at Thor Chemicals in the 1990s. His work with asbestos miners contributed to the establishment of two trusts to compensate asbestos workers with disease and their dependants. Several of his many papers were published in the *Adler Museum Bulletin*, where he was the co-editor from 2005 to 2014.

Tony is survived by his wife, Deirdre, and their six children. 

Johann Beukes: 6 October 1941–11 March 2022

Deon Jansen van Vuuren: SAIOH General Manager

Almost two years have passed since Johann's death. In acknowledging the huge contribution that he made to the occupational hygiene profession in southern Africa, I was not sure if I should call this a tribute or an obituary. The words, 'gratitude' and 'admiration' came to mind, as did 'announcement of his death' and 'a short biography'. But let me not waste any more time on this – it is a mix of a tribute and an obituary.

Johann (JDR) Beukes was a giant of a man, not just in physical size, but also in his work and family – a true gentleman. In 2022, we notified you of his death by e-mail notification and in our newsletters. But I feel the need to acknowledge him and share something of this gentle giant or, rather, gentleman. His family summed it up accurately as a "life celebration".

Johann Beukes was our much-loved and admired friend and colleague, who sadly passed away on 11 March 2022. His knowledge of the industry and his many roles within the Southern African Institute for Occupational Hygiene (SAIOH) and its Professional Certification Committee (PCC) are well known. His positive attitude and desire to be of service to others, even during his darkest hours, touched



Johann Beukes

Photograph: courtesy of Juanita Meyer (Johann's daughter)

us all. On a personal level, we enjoyed his sense of humour, love of life and, above all, his deep love for his family and God.

I am not going to bore you with details of Johann's life, e.g. date and place of birth, where he grew up, schooling, etc. Let us rather celebrate the time we had with him.

Johann was not always the retired, elderly person we knew. He was extremely proud of being an occupational hygienist, and championed the profession in the mining industry and wherever else he worked.

Johann started his career in the old South African Railways and Harbours, after which he moved to the coal mines, specialising in ventilation. He was an active and proud member of the mines' proto rescue teams for almost 20 years, which entailed working in dangerous environments, and being exposed to serious life-

threatening situations. Names like Grootvlei, Springfield, and Arnot came up in our conversations. At Arnot, he was the Mine Manager until he joined the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE), and then Multimesh. Eventually, he started his own occupational hygiene consultancy: Health and Occupational Hygiene Laboratories (HOHL).



Johann Beukes receiving the SAIOH Fellow award and medallion from Celia Keet (SAIOH President 2020/2021)

Photograph: courtesy of Deon Jansen van Vuuren

I met Johann before 1994, when he was the Deputy Director: Dept. of Minerals and Energy (Directorate: Mine Environmental Control). From the first day, I knew him to be a fair, honest, and extremely knowledgeable person. When I did the BEBOH (now BOHS) Certificate of Practical Competence in Occupational Hygiene, he also attended the theory classes and sat the exams (two three-hour written assessments and an oral assessment). He did not pass them the first time, but said, *“I will read and upskill my occupational hygiene competency”*. He was, by then, the owner and managing director of HOHL, which was also a Department of Employment and Labour Approved Inspection Authority (DoEL AIA).

Johann was one of the main motivators and a passionate spokesman for occupational hygiene in the mining industry. At all times, he carried the occupational hygiene flag, and served on several objective-setting DMRE committees. His contributions included actively participating in the setting of qualification standards in the mining industry, acting as an office bearer for the Mine Ventilation Society of South Africa (MVSSA) (where he was also a Fellow), and giving presentations at mining conferences.

Johann’s company, HOHL, was an Approved Training Provider (ATP) for the internationally recognised Occupational Hygiene Training Association (OHTA). Johann was also a certified technical occupational hygiene auditor for the South African National Accreditation System (SANAS).

Johann joined SAIOH in 1994, where he was an extremely active member. In 1999, he became a SAIOH Fellow – the 6th person to receive this honour at the time. He was a member of the PCC from 2004 to 2022, and PCC Chair from 2008 to 2010. He was elected to the SAIOH Council in 2003, served as the SAIOH Vice President from August 2009 to July 2011, and was the SAIOH President from August 2011 to August 2013. He was on the Council for many years, until

2018, either as an elected or a co-opted member, representing the Institute at mining industry events.

I had the honour and privilege to sit with Johann on many PCC oral assessments. His quiet authority and knowledge amazed me. I visited him at his home frequently, and had many conversations about occupational hygiene, SAIOH, and life. He enjoyed *“braaivleis, and boerewors en pap”*.

Hundreds of messages of condolence were sent after Johann passed away – a testament of how much he was loved and admired. Some are shared below.

“I am saddened to hear of the great loss!”

“Please convey my deepest condolences to Johan’s family, we often met at the SANAS STC meeting in Pretoria and his wisdom and knowledge and experience in occupational hygiene, will be greatly missed.”

“Such an epic loss. My heart goes out to his family.”

“This is truly devastating news. Johann was a giant of a man who had my deepest respect as a professional and human being. May his soul rest in peace. My sincerest condolences to his family, they have suffered a huge loss.”

“Please extend my deepest condolences to the family who have lost a giant of a human being.”

“That’s really a great loss.”

“I received the sad news of the departure of Johann with a heavy heart and sadness. I have known Johann for many years, and I have always been touched by his humility, experience and great knowledge of the occupational health and hygiene industry. Indeed, Johann has contributed immensely and in numerous ways to the field. When I was doing my doctoral studies, I turned to Johann for insights and contribution. He selflessly shared his leadership and entrepreneurial knowledge and experience without any reservation. His insights contributed immensely to the development of my research and achievement of my doctoral qualification. I pray that his family find comfort in the knowledge that Johann has run his race and is now resting. May his family be consoled in the good memories and times that they shared with Johann. May his soul rest in peace and rise in glory.”

“Very sad and a huge loss for occupational hygiene.”

“Johann was such a kind, gentle soul and I will always remember him as a true gentleman whose love for his wife Clara, and his family was a true inspiration. I cannot imagine how much we will miss Johann, who always saw the best in everyone because of his generous heart.” 🇿🇦