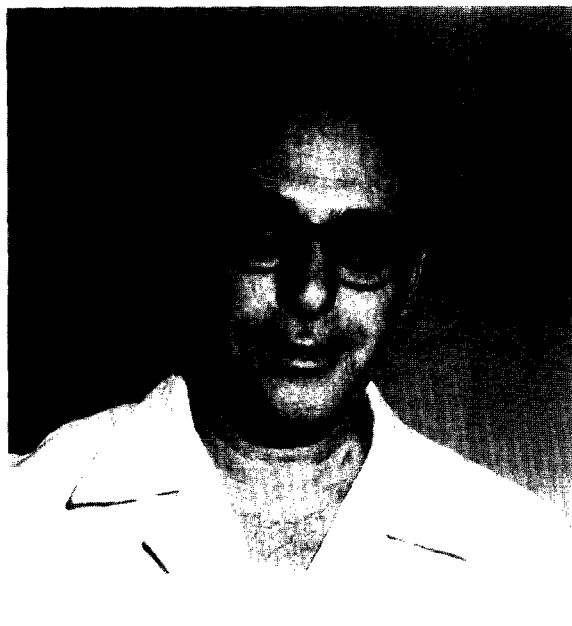


Obituary

Michael Harris, MB, FRCS(Ed). 1915–1986.

Michael Harris, an Associate Member of the British Association of Plastic Surgeons and one of the fathers of Plastic Surgery in South Africa died suddenly at home on 24 February 1986. He was born and educated in Johannesburg at the Boksburg High School and studied Medicine at the University of the Witwatersrand, qualifying MB, ChB in 1937. As an undergraduate he obtained a full blue, representing the University in swimming and water polo. After house jobs at Boksburg-Benoni hospital and Addington Hospital, in 1940 he volunteered for service in the East African Medical Corps. Shortly afterwards he was transferred to the South African Medical Corps until demobilisation in 1947. During the war he saw active service in East Africa and the Abyssinian campaign with the King's African Rifles. While in East Africa he met Dr Francis Copley, a maxillo-facial surgeon, and Mr "Barney" Bishop, a plastic surgeon, with both of whom he later worked. He was later transferred to Springfield Military Hospital in Durban, a military extension of King George V Hospital. Here he worked in the surgical division under Lieut.-Colonel Norman Peterson, a plastic surgeon who had been sent to England to learn Plastic Surgery from Sir Harold Gillies. This was the beginning of plastic surgery in Natal.

In 1948 he worked in general practice in the Transvaal, but in 1956 he decided to specialise in plastic surgery and returned to Durban as registrar under Mr "Barney" Franklin Bishop who had just started work at the Addington and Wentworth Hospitals. In 1957, he participated in the first clinical meeting of the Association of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeons of Southern Africa in Durban, which was attended by Professor Kilner. He completed his plastic surgery training at Churchill Hospital in Oxford between 1959–1961 under Mr E. Peet and Mr T. Patterson. He returned



to Durban to join Mr Bishop in practice. In 1967 he took over running the Plastic Surgery unit which, under his guidance, was incorporated as a sub-department in the University of Natal Medical School. He remained head of the unit until 1974 but continued working sessions in the department and in private practice until his death.

As a plastic surgeon, he was innovative, a good technician and a popular teacher. His fortes were cleft lip repair, rhinoplasty and extensive tube pedicle reconstruction. He pioneered plastic surgery services among the Indian community in Durban at St Aidan's Mission Hospital and the R. K. Khan Hospital. He was much loved by patients and staff, indeed the love in which he was held was indicated by the wide cross-section of religions and races who attended him in his final illness and came to his funeral, a touching sight in this divided country.

He married Anita Stuart, also a doctor, in 1947. She died a year before him following a long illness. He is survived by two sons; one is an immunologist and the other an architect.

E. J. BOWEN-JONES