



# OBITUARIES

## David Hirschowitz

Ivan Hirschowitz



David Hirschowitz was a leading orthopaedic surgeon in the north London and Hertfordshire area. Born in Johannesburg, he was raised in South Africa and Zimbabwe. In 1961 he started medical training at Cape Town University and was based at Groote Schuur Hospital. He graduated in 1967, coincidentally on the same day that Christiaan Barnard performed the world's first heart transplant at Groote Schuur.

At the time, institutionalised racial segregation was prevalent in South Africa. David and his girlfriend, Lynette, found the political and social atmosphere intolerable, and, after he had completed his house jobs, the couple decided to move to England in 1968. They enjoyed the freedom and excitement of living in London and made it their home, marrying the following year.

David began training as a general surgeon, and over a four year period he rotated between hospitals in Bethnal Green, North Middlesex, Hackney, Hampstead, Ascot, and Slough. He started to specialise in orthopaedics.

In 1975-76 he spent a year on a surgical research fellowship at the University of California in Los Angeles (UCLA). He worked under the guidance of Professor Harlan C Amstutz, who pioneered total hip resurfacing procedures ('THARIES') in the USA. The very first procedure was performed in June 1976. David worked closely with Amstutz on this new hip resurfacing technique, performing surgeries, clinicals, and teaching how-to seminars. He also participated with Amstutz using UCLA's newly designed, cemented, total hip replacement called T-28.

Returning to England in 1977, David started working as a consultant orthopaedic surgeon at hospitals in St Albans and Hemel Hempstead. He would continue in that area for the next 20 years. He developed a reputation as a fast and skilful surgeon, substantially reducing waiting times at the NHS hospitals where he worked.

Jonathan Beacon, a fellow consultant who worked alongside David throughout that period, said: "He was extremely popular among his colleagues. In theatre, he was very fast and accurate. He was always interested in trying new ideas and techniques, but only when the right care was being taken—he had a clear sense of direction and was very aware of what was right for the patient. He had gravitas as a surgeon, but also a very warm bedside manner for his patients. And he was an inspirational figure for the junior doctors."

As the digital age dawned, David became interested in computer programming. He wrote his own software for running medical practices, which was widely used.

He had many passions away from his career, including photography, cooking, horticulture, and scuba diving.

In 2009 David discovered he had prostate cancer. He fought the illness successfully for nine years, but in 2018 he was diagnosed with lymphoma. He remained relentlessly positive and tolerant during bouts of chemotherapy and radiotherapy, but he could not beat the disease. David died peacefully at home in Harpenden, surrounded by his family.

He leaves Lynette, his wife of 50 years; sons, Anton and Ivan; and grandchildren, Isobel, Emily, Filip, and Jacob.

### Biography

Orthopaedic surgeon (b 1943; q Cape Town University, 1961; FRCS), died from cancer on 11 February 2019

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