THE BUS STOP DOCTOR

DR SOLLY KAYE'S STORY, A MEMOIR SHARED BY HIS DAUGHTER, BRENDA KERBEL

Medicine, memories, and one helluva mensch

My dad would be enormously proud of me. I finally completed writing a book about him in the year of his 100th birthday. It would be the centerpiece on the glass coffee table in his lounge and he would show it to everyone who popped in to visit. If it were the only copy, he would say: "Take it home and read it." And, of course, it would disappear forever. That's just who my dad was. Admire something of his and it was yours. I would buy him a painstakingly selected clothing item only to find that he had "given" it away. When questioned he would say: "It was a little too big for me," and that it really suited his friend. I miss that about him. Much like the other quirks and idiosyncrasies that made him the wonderfully distinctive person he was and continues, in our memories, to be. Sadly, my dad is not around anymore, but his spirit certainly lives on in those who loved and cared for him. – Brenda

DEDICATION: IN MEMORY OF OUR LOVING PARENTS, SOLLY AND GOULDA KAYE

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MEMORIES

Memories are fascinating. They are like fragments that come together, inviting, evoking us sometimes reluctantly, always inevitably, into the past. At best, our memories revive moments of joy, take us to places of insight and hope. We observe and often, as our thoughts and emotions linger, we become engaged. Just as they enter those unfiltered spaces in our being, so too they dissolve, leaving a fleeting touch of connection behind.

Mom, dad, Richard and me in Blouberg Strand, January 2004.

The word 'nostalgia' derives from two Greek words that essentially mean a longing for home. And often our memories, both the welcome and jarring, take us there. It is not that we want to return, but there is comfort and reassurance there. It is not that we are stuck in what our vision and version of the past provide, but there is meaning there in the fragments that remain an integral part of who we are.

Cape Town is in my blood. To me, it is the most beautiful city in the world. When I return, I always feel that the city nestling between a rightfully imposing mountain and a tempestuously beautiful sea is home. I left in the late 1970s but have visited annually ever since.

The city has changed, just as I have, living in another hemisphere on another continent, in another city, an 18- to 24-hour flight away. I live a deeply fulfilling life. I don't feel disconnected or perpetually exiled but something profound happens every time that plane circles to land. As the memory of home begins to take shape, fragments collide and remind.

Driving in from the airport towards the city, I am always struck by the stark disparities, years after the official end of Apartheid. The highway into Cape Town is flanked by an ever-present reminder of the ravages of poverty. Just a short ride longer, the slopes of the aptly named Table Mountain come into view.

The mountain may look impressive on internet searches or in coffee table tourist books, but nothing prepares you for its solid, majestic presence giving the impression that Cape Town is in the mountain's embrace.

When you have grown up with the mountain ever-present as the backdrop to your life, it holds a significant place. That is not just where my story began, where my memory takes me. It is on the slopes of that very mountain, where numerous fragments often, gently, sometimes with a touch of sadness, collide.

Cape Town has a fascinating history, at best described as a city of rich diversity and welcoming inclusivity before the divisive, destructive imposition of an Apartheid regime. History itself is a collection of selected fragments, a view that can never by its very nature be complete. Inevitably, it is a reflection of those who wish to share that piece of the past. And so too, my 'history' of a city and some of the remarkable people who were welcomed into its home.

Solly in his natural habit, his medical practice in Belmor, 2004.

In my case, my father touched not just my own but the hearts of all those with whom he engaged. Solly Kaye, doctor, husband, father, grandfather; how do you even begin to define someone who is so much more than the words we use to describe them?

Solly Kaye was more than a medical practitioner; he was a presence, truly passionate about his profession, and totally committed to his purpose. This is his story as much as it is mine.

I can still picture him vividly, and his warmth is forever visible, not just in the fading photographs of a bygone era, but also in the electronic galleries readily accessible on my phone. His life spanned many decades, countless patients, and impacted innumerable lives.

Memories are most intriguing. Yes, I know people change but, from my perspective, my dad did not change his physical looks much. Even into his ninth decade and despite the effects of declining health, the fountain of youth clearly ran deep within him.

My dad had a healthy mop of dark, curly brown hair. In his early days, he greased it down with a popular hairstyling brand, a far less sophisticated version of the gels and mousses which promise wonders to all manner of hair and a multitude of styles. He later dropped the product and replaced it with his natural look. Over the years, the hue might have changed to distinguished salt and pepper but there was never a hint of a receding hairline.

Solly and Russell, 2008.

My dad's piercing blue eyes were his defining feature. He always claimed he was sensitive to bright light. That gave him a valid license, or so he thought, to turn off the lights often and sit in a darkened room. I can appreciate that '*mishigas*' (a delightful term for a 'crazy' view or mannerism) as I too have light eyes. I find myself doing the same thing on occasions.

My father also wore sunglasses throughout the year, long before it became a celebrity fashion statement of sorts. When dad got excited, his eyes would seemingly protrude, those large orbital saucers just staring at you. This was both comical and terrifying. When the emotion subsided, his eyes would retract.

My dad had very fair skin that hardly saw the sun. He did not take to being out in the sun as the rest of the family did. He loved shade but not cold. His toes could never tolerate the cold, so it was socks and sandals for him, which the 'fashion police' would clearly abhor. Despite avoiding the sun, my dad developed solar keratosis. Even in his later years, when he had far more trying medical ailments to be concerned with, he would get his friend, the dermatologist, himself well in his 80s, to bring his little freezer can of liquid nitrogen to the house.

My dad was of average height and slim. His legs were thin and we used to joke that he had 'lucky legs' in that they did not break. He was not into bodybuilding of any kind and hardly wore shorts. He also never owned a pair of jeans. In the early days of his practice, he enjoyed wearing practical, wash-and-wear, non-iron, long pants with a shirt, tie and jacket.

He was never one for formal suits and only wore them on special occasions under duress. When the safari suit came into fashion in the early 1970s, my dad soon adopted this form of dress that became popular with doctors. He was only too happy to drop the tie. This leisure suit fell from fashion in the early 1980s. My dad reverted to wearing his comfortable slacks, checked or striped shirt, and a sweater.

Blue was clearly my dad's color, his palette ranging from pale blue to deep navy. He had the largest collection of blue apparel I have ever known. Although cleanly shaven, my dad always wore a mustache. He liked the clean-shaven look and would be quick to point out to those closest to him that they needed a shave. He would indeed be horrified at the now rugged, unshaven look fashionable today.

Solly and Jeremy, March 2011.

With his distinctive physical features, dad bore an uncanny resemblance to the late Peter Sellers, the English comedian who so distinctively portrayed the role of chief inspector Jacques Clouseau in the *Pink Panther* movies that won my father's heart. On a rainy day, my dad would quite unintentionally look the part in a vintage-style brimmed fedora hat and his long beige trench coat as he set about his house calls.

Vivid memories remain, not just of how I remember what he looked like. He made far more of an impression than his mere physical appearance, but also through the character of the man.

Solly was punctual, always wanting to ensure good parking when going to an appointment, and extra early to make a flight. He got irritated if people kept him waiting. Reliability was important to him and he did not like people who did not turn up or who were late. Solly had his own unique systems for patient records and bookkeeping, an expression of his affinity for neatness and order.

Solly was honest; he would never evade a license payment and paid promptly for every service. He appreciated people who spoke the truth. He was enormously proud of his children and other family members or friends who were successful. He was passionate about his family and interests, confident in his treatment of his patients, and always reassuringly optimistic in his demeanor.

Solly was greatly appreciative of any little thing done for him. He was a prolific writer of acknowledgment letters. While to a large extent set in his ways in what was comfortable and worked for him, he was open-minded to new ideas.

He loved people. He was unfailingly compassionate in his dealing with patients, but unforgiving if someone crossed him or his children. Solly was content and more than happy with his lot in life. He was not the adventurous type; a walk on the beachfront would be his limit. His cautious bent in no way curtailed his generosity of spirit and giving nature.

By no means one-dimensional, Solly was a man of nuance and depth, much like the city in which he practiced.

It is easy to romanticize, to look back with approving eyes on those aspects of a person or place we wish to remember in a particular way. Many cities across the world seem to have a place that is celebrated for what it represents in terms of diversity and is a welcoming haven for all. In Cape Town, District Six was such a place.

District Six was once a major residential area in the heart of Cape Town, named because it was the sixth municipal district in the city. It was a poor but vibrant community. The largest population was of 'mixed' race. During its day, it was a cosmopolitan brew with Russian Jews, Indians, Chinese, Muslims, and even people from Britain residing there. There appeared to be a sense of genuine coexistence and no overt racial antagonism. The area had a soul.

Sadly, District Six became victim to the racist ideology of the Apartheid regime that came to power in South Africa in 1948. Over the years, the area had deteriorated and was ultimately

designated a ‘slum’. In 1966, when it was proclaimed a ‘white’ group area, people who had called this place home were forced to move to outlying areas of Cape Town. Those relegated by law to the status of 'other' were forcibly removed. Many dwellings were bulldozed to the ground. People’s lives were disrupted and, in many instances, destroyed.

A few structures were left standing in the scar that remained on the slopes of Table Mountain. For years, people refused to build on this barren piece of land, and the area largely remains vacant.

The soul of the area refused to die. It has been immortalized in numerous books, artwork, movies, songs, and musicals, *District Six – The Musical*, as well as in the memories of former residents. The District Six Museum that opened in 1994 now houses memorabilia, photographs, maps and some interactive videos, which help to keep the memory alive.

It was in Hanover Street, District Six that my dad opened his first office or ‘surgery’. There were already about 14 doctors in Hanover Street, most of whom he remained in contact with all his life. In his own words, it was not a fancy practice. It began by him walking up Hanover Street and knocking on a few doors until someone was willing to rent him space. The room was up a small flight of stairs, cordoned off from a dining room. He had only a washbasin, an examination couch and a desk. For these facilities, he paid the owner £5 a month – a substantial sum in those days. His consultation rates were 7 shillings and 6 pence per visit.

He was in those Hanover Street premises for a relatively short while before taking off to London for a year. On his return, he reopened a practice in District Six, this time at 32 Upper Darling Street, as his letterhead notepads displayed. Here, the surgery was a little more substantial. He continued to build up his clientele for about 10 years before being forced to shut that location and move back to his surgery in his family home in Vredehoek.

MY DAD - SOLLY

Before he became my distinguished dad, Solly Kaye was born Solomon Kaimowitz on November 14, 1922, in Cape Town, South Africa. The year of his arrival saw the successful use of insulin for diabetes and the formation of the USSR. He also shared his special day with Britain's Prince Charles. His father, Morris Kaimowitz, the family patriarch, and my paternal grandfather, was born in Lodz, Poland. As a young man, he saw action in the Czar's army and then emigrated to London, England where three of his sons: Jack, Issy, and Max were born.

Patriarch Morris Kaimowitz with sons (l-r) Bennie, Issy, Max, Solly and Jack.

He subsequently returned to Poland, fought in World War I and was held captive for three years in Germany. In 1919, Morris arrived in Cape Town in search of work opportunities. His wife, Bella, followed shortly thereafter with their three boys. Two further additions to the family – my dad, Solly, and his younger sibling, Bennie – were both born in their newly settled city.

Morris began as most immigrants of the time certainly did, at the lowest rungs of the economic ladder. With his skill and brilliant craftsmanship as a bookbinder, he established *The Universal Bookbinding Works*. For more than 60 years, it flourished with many spin-off companies under the auspices of what became known as the *Belmor* group.

The family initially lived in a small house in Buitenkant Street, where a fair number of immigrant Jewish families dwelled. Their next home was a similarly compact house with an outhouse toilet in the Gardens area, not too far away. The three older brothers shared a bedroom, as did Solly and Bennie.

Morris and Bella were a strict, no-nonsense couple, who were fiercely respected by their sons who never questioned a word. My dad never failed to remind his own children of this when we expressed an opinion contrary to his.

Solly attended the South African College School (SACS), which in those days, was in the Gardens suburb, well within walking distance of their home. He also attended Hebrew school along with all the other Jewish boys in the neighborhood. This was not an option.

He was not a sportsman nor ever passionate about sports. He did try his hand at golf and was excited at the prospect. However, this interest was short-lived, once he realized he had inadvertently purchased a set of left-handed clubs.

Stately Belmor, 1 Bradwell Road, Vredehoek, Cape Town.

He also tried playing an instrument for a brief period – a ukulele, of all things! But that was him and something we always teased him about. While he may have had limited talent in playing a musical instrument, my dad did enjoy listening to music on the radio and had quite a colorful CD collection.

The family then moved for a short period to a flat in Yeoville Road. This was substantially larger than what they had. During my school years, the Davidowitz family had occupied the property and, while dropping me off at a birthday party one day, he casually mentioned that his family had lived in the downstairs part of the complex.

According to my dad, his mom, Bella (for whom I am named, had one day taken a walk along the road and was curious about a new home that was being built on the corner of Bradwell and Denholm Road. This was around 1935, and the builder was a certain Major Boylen. The style was unique to that period. It was double-storied and had a white, faux-Spanish facade with bright red, brick trim. The walkway to the front door was also painted red. Shortly after completion, the house went up for public auction. Bella and my grandfather Morris acquired it at the auction for the sum of £2500, the South African currency at the time.

It was customary in those days to name one's home and, given their first names, *Belmor* made perfect sense. It became synonymous with the Kaimowitz family, and was trademarked in the family printing business.

Jack and Max were already married and living independently, so, it was Bella, Morris, Issy, Bennie and Solly who moved into the newly acquired home. This was in 1935, just prior to the

Second World War, and both my dad and Uncle Bennie were completing high school. Issy was considerably older but still lived in the house until his marriage to Rita Kohn in 1941, when they moved into their own flat.

The three oldest sons were already in the family printing business. When World War 2 broke out and South Africa joined the allied forces, Bennie enlisted and soon shipped off. My dad's dream was to become a doctor and his father relented. Morris was going to give him the opportunity, if he studied hard and passed each year. There were to be no second chances. My dad entered the University of Cape Town Medical School in 1941 for the start of what was then a six-year program.

Although physically far away from all the immediacy of the war, South Africa certainly felt the effects. Many young men enlisted. There were blackouts and rations. Cape Town was an essential port for the naval fleet and, thus, the city could be a prime target. My grandparents were hosts to scores of soldiers, sailors, and airmen who were either stationed at or passing through the port of Cape Town at the time. Their hospitality was legendary. Displaying a kind, warm, and welcoming home open was just their way. Their children inherited this trait.

Portrait of Morris Kaimowitz.

Morris was a humble, charitable man who supported Hebrew education and charities, regardless of denomination. Morris and Bella established one of the first scholarships at The Herzlia School in Cape Town and hosted the school's first communal Passover seder.

Although very loving toward family, they would still be quite formal. For example, Morris was always addressed as "father" by his daughters-in-law, and I believe Bella was referred to as "mother". Morris was "grandpa" to all his grandchildren.

I still have vivid memories of his imposing, distinguished presence. He was very dapper; always impeccably dressed in a suit with a hat. He had an array of stylish walking sticks that complemented his dress. I was nine when he passed away after a short illness at age 87. I can only imagine the inconsolable grief that he suffered when his beloved wife, Bella, passed away suddenly in 1946. With the support and loving care of his family and community, he continued to lead a productive life for another 16 years.

Issy, Rita and their two children, Alan and Laraine, moved into *Belmor* to take care of Morris. Morris was given the larger of the two kid's bedrooms, while Laraine slept in the smaller one. Alan was assigned to a porch room directly off the master bedroom. There was one toilet

upstairs and one bathroom. This arrangement got increasingly more difficult as Alan approached his teenage years and wanted more privacy.

A decision was reached that Rita, Issy and the children would relocate to a flat in Sea Point, a nearby coastal suburb. Morris would move in with Max and Golda (aka Big Golda) and their family who had a large home in Oranjezicht. My dad then bought the home from his brother, Issy, in 1959 and we were able to move back into the family residence, *Belmor*.

What a privilege it was for us to live in the family home and be a part of his legacy. Solly always felt Morris's presence and the portrait of his dad hung proudly on the wall beside his bed until he died. It was always a gentle reminder of who this great man was.

MEDICAL SCHOOL

My dad entered the University of Cape Town Medical school in 1941. It was an iconic building located on the notoriously dangerous hospital 'bend' on De Waal Drive. My dad always pointed it out to us as we rounded that bend.

The building remained somewhat untouched for many years until the 1970s, when I was in one of the first classes to attend lectures in a newly constructed anatomy building.

My dad always proudly displayed his final-year photograph in his surgery (office). He was able to identify all his classmates, and mentioned their achievements since graduating. One who was conspicuous by his absence in the photograph, was Professor Christiaan Barnard, who had performed the world's first heart transplant at Groote Schuur Hospital on December 3, 1967.

The years 1941 to 1946 were tumultuous times. World War 2 was looming. While there was no conscription for South Africans, many of the hospital staff volunteered to do active service with the allied forces.

The hospital and the university were accommodating to those who did so during that time. They would be able to retain their jobs or continue their degrees upon their return.

My dad was inspired by many of the great teachers and clinicians he had during his years at UCT Medical School. The one person he most admired was the Chairman of the Department of Surgery, Prof Charles Saint. Prof Saint was truly one of the greats and had international recognition.

My dad always quoted aphorisms that he attributed to his late professor. These popped up so frequently during our conversions that we began to refer to them as 'Sollyisms'.

One of his favorites was: "It's the stayers and not the sprinters that count." We heard this countless times growing up. This has now become the mantra of my son, Russell.

Another classic of his was, "A theory is a line to action."

Solly, UCT, December 1946.

MY MOM - GOULDA

My dad was not materialistic and believed one should live within one's means. The only 'gold' that he cherished was my late mom, Goulda (pronounced Golda), also known in the family as "Little Goulda".

They met when she was still in Std 9 (Grade 11) at Good Hope Seminary School (my alma mater) and he was a final-year medical student. He was living at *Belmor* and my mom, Goulda Ospovat, with her parents at 21 Virginia Avenue, Gardens, a five-minute walk down the road from his home. I don't know too many details about their courtship, but my dad graduated in December 1946 and my mom matriculated from high school that same year. She was 18 years old.

Mom and me.

My mom was eager to do music as a career and was accepted and enrolled into the UCT Bachelor of Arts music program. She did not complete the course as she and my dad married in December 1947. They were a devoted couple for 58 years.

While my dad was the hardworking doctor who was the breadwinner, my mom played her crucial role as queen of our household. In those early days, my mom even copied Queen Elizabeth's coiffed hairdo. She did, however, eventually give that up for the more fashionable blow-dry.

My mom was always the epitome of elegance. She loved clothes and was always beautifully turned out, though not in an extravagant way. Her nails were perfectly manicured in a bright red hue. I supposedly bear a striking resemblance both to my mom and my grandma, Jenny. The genes are strong. I regard that as the ultimate compliment.

Mom had golden hands. When I was a child, she took pride in sewing all my dresses. I remember the trips to the store to buy the Simplicity patterns. She would then choose a fabric. My mom was mostly into bright colors for me, as she said that it suited my complexion. I was never a pastel type of person and even today choose colors that brighten me up. Red was clearly a favorite of mine.

She usually started the project on the dining room table, where she would meticulously lay out the pattern and then trace and cut the fabric. While I did appreciate what she was doing, I was not big on the fittings and always moaned at having to be pinned.

My mom was a perfectionist at her craft. If she ran into any problems, she always had her backup sewing teacher, Mrs. Crofton, who would come to the rescue. Her prize sewing machine was a built-in Singer. The mahogany cabinet would stand in its designated spot on our upstairs landing. There, she would bring all the prepared swatches and puzzle them together. I always had a beautiful wardrobe of clothes, mostly handmade.

She even sewed my school uniforms as the store-bought ones were a poor fit on me. The style was quite simple. In my junior school, the summer dress was a button-down green and white gingham check and in the high school, it was a solid emerald green 'shirt-waister'.

On rare occasions, she did make her own clothes, but during her young married years, she was loyal to her dressmaker, Ruth Stern, who was a master seamstress. In those days, my mom also wore hats. No outfit was complete without a matching hat. She had her favorite milliner in the city. I remember her coming home with the hat all propped, boxed up and then stored in one of the top closets which were out of everyone's reach. When a certain occasion arose, she would unveil these creations.

Hats were not my thing as we were forced to wear Panama hats as part of our school uniform. We did resurrect the 'hat thing' years later when she attended our son, Jeremy's Bar Mitzvah. I, too, wore a hat to mark that auspicious occasion.

What really defined my mom was her talent for knitting. She was a knitter, par excellence. Everyone benefited from her knitting. She never used a knitting machine; everything was by hand. From baby layettes to men's sweaters, she was up for the challenge. She said that she found knitting relaxing and could concentrate on other things while doing it. Once she mastered the stitch, it became second nature to her.

The same with her crocheting. She could do it with her eyes closed. She churned out blankets, throws, shawls, handbags, and dresses. My mom donated her time and creativity to local charities.

While my mom could cook, it was not her favorite thing; she far preferred to bake. She liked to follow a recipe. I think I inherited my obsession with recipe books from her. She baked from scratch. There were no boxed, processed cake ingredients in those days. While I attempted to emulate her masterpieces in the kitchen, I often failed, even if the recipe was foolproof. She just had the eye for detail.

My mom enjoyed the arts and never missed a ballet or a musical show. My dad was selective in his shows. He enjoyed a good comedy. On one of his visits to New York, he went to see *A Chorus Line* on Broadway. He did not stop talking about it for years. He said that he waited all night for the show to begin. Too much talking!

My dad was happy to stay at home while my mom enjoyed cultural activities. He would rather choose to go to a medical talk.

Solly and Goulda at a ball in Cape Town in honor of Britain's Princess Elizabeth (soon to be Queen), 1947.

While my dad was always there for us, it was our mom who did most of the parenting during those formative years. However, when we were sick, it was a different story. We did not dare wake up my mom and would always wake up my dad. In fact, he always seemed awake to me, no matter the time of night or wee hours of the morning. He would then rush downstairs, unlock the surgery and get medicines for us.

For the rest, Goulda made the rules. If my mom said it was okay to do things, then it was fine with my dad. He valued and trusted her judgment. She had some rigid rules when it came to raising her only daughter. Not that she did not trust me, but she knew the temptations out there.

My mom was also a skilled bridge player and managed to play standing games each week with her friends. My dad never showed any interest in learning the game. She also became quite the computer whizz, emailing us regularly, but sadly passed away before the advent of all social media. She owned an entry-level cell phone and a fax machine. My dad did become proficient in using the latter as it became a necessity in his practice for specialist and laboratory reports.

My mom was a prolific correspondent. Over the years, she chronicled every detail of their lives back home in Cape Town to us, initially in the form of aerogram letters that arrived almost daily. She was ultra-organized and kept a daily calendar of her events and appointments. She only used the small soft-covered red or blue diary that was given out by the Bnoth Zion Organization. This was her lifeline. She could not function without it. I would say it was today's equivalent of a smartphone.

My mom had this very distinctive script. It always looked neat and just flowed on the page. Going through her possessions after she passed away, I came across her latest diary. It was sad to see how her distinctive handwriting and planning skills had regressed. My mom knew in her heart that she was forgetting things and she specifically bought a little notebook called 'Where is it?' She showed this to me on numerous occasions for me to know where her important stuff was. Of course, I found this very difficult to accept at the time.

The doctors were reluctant to label my mom with a diagnosis, for fear of having to break the news to my dad. However, it was clear to both my brother Trevor and me that our mom exhibited the early signs of Lewy Body Dementia. This condition, together with the chronic back pain she suffered, made it deeply distressing for our family. It was just heartbreaking to see our mom like this.

All we could do was to give her the most loving care and support that we could. This was the point that the guilt really kicked in for me living so far away. I visited as often as I could, at least once or even sometimes twice in a year. It never got any easier.

Solly's 80th birthday party, The Radisson Blu, Cape Town, 2002

Both parents liked to be organized and, therefore, they were the perfect team. My mom's packing was legendary. She could fit an extraordinary amount of stuff into the two suitcases allowed on the flights to the United States. Not only did they pack all their clothes, but also thoughtful gifts for all the children and grandchildren. Visiting us in the States was an expedition and there were master lists and then some.

My dad never felt comfortable leaving his practice for an extended period. For this reason, he did not accompany her on every trip to visit with us in Boston. I think his concern was that the practice would die when he was away. This was unfounded as all the patients returned.

My dad segued into my mom's role as her condition deteriorated. He signed and mailed the birthday cards. He started answering the telephone more. He began to do more things for himself although it did not really hit him until after she was gone.

I will never forget that early morning call from my dad that Tuesday, September 20, 2005. All I heard was: "I have some very, very bad news for you. Mom passed away suddenly." I sat up in bed stunned and numbed. My beautiful mom was gone.

ENGLAND

In 1946, there was no mandatory internship for newly qualified doctors and my dad decided to squat as a doctor in District Six. The practice was slow; there were 14 other doctors on the same street. He saw an advertisement in the newspaper for a ship's doctor. He went to see the agent, Dr. Morris Zion, who eventually emigrated to Boston, worked as an anesthesiologist and lived until the ripe old age of 99. For a small fee, my dad got the position. The agreement was £30 a month until he returned to Cape Town. Then he would receive another £60.

It was a cargo ship with 100 sailors. The ship could not sail without a doctor on board. The original doctor got drunk and disembarked in Durban. It was a coal ship and took 30 days to sail from Cape Town to Liverpool. There was no radio, except for Morse code, which kept them informed of outside news events.

On arrival in Liverpool, he had to contact a Mr. Holt, the head of the company, in order to get paid. He told my dad that the rate for a ship's doctor was two shillings a day, and that he need not have bought penicillin on board as they had an adequate number of old drugs to be used if needed.

My dad did eventually receive his promised £60, but only after he brought in a master negotiator to the table in the form of his future father-in-law, Isaac Ospovat. Truth be told, my dad did not handle the cruise well and was seasick. Thankfully, he did not have to oversee any medical emergencies onboard.

During his stay in London, he furthered his studies by taking medical courses at St Peter's and St Paul's hospitals. There he met Dr. Alexander Brown. "Sandy" Brown, as he was known by my family, became a very prominent and popular surgeon in Cape Town. He oozed personality and made everyone feel confident and safe in his hands. He was our personal surgeon and he did a successful cholecystectomy (gallbladder removal) on my mom. He did house calls on several occasions. Which surgeon would even dream of doing that today?

Through Sandy, my dad also struck up a working relationship with his more serious and brilliant sister, Dr. Helen Brown. Helen Brown was legendary at Groote Schuur Hospital. She had her own prestigious medical firm. She was a brilliant diagnostician. She did not live far from our home and became our house doctor. When summonsed, she arrived promptly with her little black bag. There was no messing around with Helen Brown. She did not have her brother's sense of humor.

I remember her coming one day to the house when my younger brother, Martin, had a severe headache. After examining him thoroughly, she determined that a lumbar puncture or spinal tap was necessary. There would be no hospital admission. There at the bedside, Dr. Helen Brown, assisted by her brother, Sandy, dexterously performed the procedure. Strangely enough, Martin's headache subsided soon after that.

Before my dad left for London, he had proposed to my mom and the plan was to marry when he returned to Cape Town. I guess that the separation was just too much for my mom. She decided to drop out of university. My grandfather, Isaac Ospovat, said he would fly with her to London, and they would marry there. Air travel was not like it is today. The equipment was a propeller seaplane with multiple layovers, including Khartoum. This sounds so exotic!

Solly and Goulda, December 23, 1947.

Morris Kaimowitz still had his sister and other family living in London. I am not sure of the exact connection, but I know Sir Isaac Wolfson, a businessman and philanthropist, was on the wedding guest list. My dad had one of his classmates, Dr. Morris Cheifitz, as his best man. They were married at a shul in London.

The wedding reception was held at the beautiful Savoy Hotel. My mom looked magnificent in her wedding gown. The wedding made the social page of the Cape Times. It was sad that my grandma, Jenny Ospovat, was not at the wedding, nor Morris and all my uncles. However, on their return to Cape Town, my mom dressed up again and had a second reception. My parents honeymooned in picturesque Arosa, Switzerland. I have photos of my dad wearing skis, but am not sure if any skiing was done.

OTHER 'ROOMS'

After completing his work in London, my dad returned to Cape Town to begin his GP practice. He started off doing locums for a doctor in Woodstock. His parking skills with the doctor did not go down well. He was still an inexperienced driver. Perhaps his parking obsession began in those early days. He always wanted to be assured of good parking, hence his arrival at least half an hour before an appointment. He tried to avoid places that did not have good parking.

Supposedly, he once chose a particular hospital for an operation. When my brother, Trevor, asked, "Why that hospital?", he replied that it was because the parking was more accessible, and not because the surgeon was particularly skillful.

At about this time, my dad made the decision to stop working for others. His mantra became: "Always be your own boss". He scouted out another set of rooms in District Six. This time it was Upper Darling Street that became his permanent surgery for about 10 years.

At first, he shared the consultation room with a lecturer in venereal diseases, who once had a thriving practice treating patients with intravenous arsenic and potassium permanganate washouts for gonorrhea. As soon as penicillin was routinely used, his practice slowly came to an end. He still insisted that arsenic was the treatment of choice. After he closed his practice, he became a dermatologist.

My dad always claimed that most of the drugs he was taught to prescribe in 1946 were later banned. As my son, Russell, so aptly stated while he was at Tufts Medical School, "Grandpa Solly's pharmacology course is my toxicology course."

Examples of the drugs used in those days and later banned or contraindicated were:

- arsenical mouthwash wash
- tetracycline given to children under six
- chloromycetin palmitate for diarrhea or bronchitis
- belladonna for duodenal ulcer
- Dexedrine
- benzedrine ephedrine- for asthma
- intramuscular mersalyl (an organic mercury compound) for cardiac failure
- barbiturates
- bromides
- chloral hydrate
- aminopyrine - an analgesic indicated for headaches
- Butazolidin - an anti-inflammatory later banned as causes agranulocytosis
- mercury eye ointment - a regular, old panacea for eye ailments

All these remedies were given in good faith by the doctor. Over the years, my dad kept an open mind to new forms of therapy. He kept up to date with the potentially harmful effects of drugs as they emerged in the medical literature.

When he established himself in District Six, he became acquainted with many of the residents and store owners. Isaac Shrand's *Shoe Corner* was one of them. The Shrand family were not only patients but also became lifelong friends. My dad fondly remembered these vendors who, like himself, were forced out of the area.

Over the years, the buildings had fallen into disrepair, and the gangs had moved in. My dad himself never felt threatened. During this period, he also rented rooms in Westminster House in the Cape Town 'city bowl' area. In those days, people mainly used buses to come into town, so perhaps parking was not an issue for the patients.

We lived for the first five years of my life in Virginia Avenue, Gardens. It was 33a, a semi-detached house about five houses up from my maternal grandparents. In 33b lived the Bravo family, and they too became lifelong loyal friends. In 1959, just before I started Sub A (First Grade), we moved to a newly constructed house in Marmion Road, Oranjezicht. It was there that the idea of a home surgery came to mind.

Our rental home was located right next to the bus stop. It was the end of the Oranjezicht bus route. The bus then rounded the rotary and stopped again on the other side of the road. That was technically the terminus, where buses would linger for at least five minutes. The name of that house was *Blue Bay* and boasted a beautiful view of the Cape Town harbor. There was a small den that would suffice as my dad's surgery.

My dad proudly hung his doctor's shingle on the low wall outside the house: *Dr. S. Kaimowitz MB.ChB*. The letterheads with his name and office hours etc. were all printed at *Universal Bookbinding*. There was never a shortage of stationery in our home. Fortunately, we never had to buy an exercise book, diary, file, or envelope while the factory was a going concern.

We stayed in that location for two years and the practice slowly picked up. We had one telephone and my mom did the accounts every month. I remember stuffing the envelopes and licking the stamps. It was only after some years that my dad hired a 'nurse' to answer calls and do all the paperwork.

My dad had a Studebaker. During the week, my mom shared a car with her brother, Ruby, that my grandpa, Isaac, owned. It was a little green Prefect, and perfect for my mom's needs. The arrangement somehow worked, before my Uncle Ruby married and moved to Sea Point.

The owner and builder of our home decided that his daughter should now live in the house, so we had to make plans to move. Fortunately, the stars were aligned. My dad's older brother, Issy, decided to sell *Belmor* as he was moving to Sea Point. Sea Point was located on the Atlantic seaboard and had several flats or apartment buildings on the beachfront. It was a cool place to live. My dad jumped at the offer and a deal was negotiated. It was something like £6,000. However, it still had to be made viable for a doctor's practice.

The location was perfect, directly opposite the Vredehoek bus terminus, but the house lacked a potential surgery (doctor's office). An architect, Dennis Tavill, was hired, and appropriate plans were drawn up. The contractor was David Trojeski. His father-in-law, Nathan 'Nissen'

Milner, was the plumber. They were all relatives, and soon the project was underway. A couple of obstacles in the plans had to be dealt with. The corner basin in the surgery could only supply cold water as the hot water heater was located at the other end of the property. There were also no toilet facilities in the surgery, which was a problem, and the house toilet located downstairs had to be always accessible.

The office suite consisted of an 8- by 8-foot surgery and a 4- by 8-foot waiting room/reception area. The open stoep of our house would also serve as a waiting area. It was not unusual to see strangers sitting on the stoep outside the front door. It was a barn-style front door that was often kept open for fresh air – my dad was a great believer! Nothing was ever locked in those days. We moved into a new family home and surgery in 1960.

Dad outside Belmor.

It was the best and most embracing of family homes, literally and figuratively. There was a huge family bed that we would all climb into often, adults and children – even when we visited from the States! It had a beautiful unobstructed view of Table Bay – until thoughtless neighbors in front built a 'McMansion' that partially blocked the view. My dad was too nice about it, but that being nice was in his DNA.

At about the same time, my dad decided he wanted to shorten his last name. There was another established doctor in the area who had a similar sounding name, Dr. Chaimowitz. The name Kaye was decided upon. He did not do this name change without the blessing of his dad, Morris. He had to go through a few legalities to do this officially. It was hard for me to adjust to my new name. The upside was that it was shorter and easier to spell, although we did always have to say, “Kaye with an 'e'.” When all was done and dusted, with the name change legalities, up went the new plate of Dr. S. Kaye MB.ChB at 1 Bradwell Road and the *Bus Stop* doctor began his long reign.

VREDEHOEK

Vredehoek is a small suburb within the 'city bowl' of Cape Town. It nestles below the slopes of Table Mountain and borders Devil's Peak, Oranjezicht and Highlands Estate. The English translation of Vredehoek is 'peaceful or quiet corner'. The area where the Vredehoek, Devil's Peak, and Highlands bus routes met was the Vredehoek bus terminus. This was located directly opposite our home, in a small little area shaded by giant green oaks. On the outskirts of one corner was the Vredehoek substation that was securely enclosed.

For us living there, that focus on the map was often far from tranquil. Vredehoek is notorious for being one of the windiest areas in the Cape Peninsula. The air could be perfectly still on the other side of the mountain while in our corner, it howled relentlessly. The name for this often strong south-easterly wind that blows on this coast is called *the Cape Doctor*. The locals gave it the name believing that it helped clear the Cape Town area of smog. It is usually a dry wind and blows mainly in the spring to summer months followed by some warm weather.

Solly and Russell, 2008.

The creeping white clouds hanging over Table Mountain like a tablecloth heralds its arrival. When the clouds are black, the locals call it a *black southeaster*. It usually is accompanied by rain. Although this wind comes off the False Bay coast and Cape Flats, it eventually tunnels through Table Mountain and gets trapped in the City Bowl area. To us living there, Vredehoek always seemed to be the prime target.

The tranquility of our corner was also interrupted by the sound of the buses. In the mid-20th century, Cape Town had a trolley bus system, also referred to as trackless trams. This system was in operation from about 1935 until 1964. They were usually double-decker buses that were electrically operated. Often, the driver rounded the corner at speed while approaching the stops. Sparks would fly and the trolley poles would disengage from electrified overhead wires. Huge poles had to then be deployed to get the bus secured to the tracks. This was at least a daily occurrence and slowed the system down.

Ironically, I still see these trams in the Boston area with similar problems occurring.

In 1964, the overhead tracks were dismantled, the electric trolleys phased out and the Cape Town City Tramways introduced diesel buses. Not only did these buses create more noise, but also more air pollution. The buses needed to warm up and the hydraulics released. These were all outside our home, especially in the early hours of the morning. I never did require an alarm clock. The City Tramways did it for me.

At peak hours during the day, the buses would arrive every five minutes and they would just idle at the stop. I did get used to it over time as it became part of the background. However, I do remember my mom filing a complaint at one time when the hydraulic noise started at 6 am. The City Tramways were quite cooperative and dealt with the drivers. It was only during the off-peak periods that the bus drivers would shut off the engines entirely.

It was during these quiet times that the conductors and drivers became familiar visitors to our property. We were often the public restroom and refreshment station for the crew. Some even became patients. They took advantage of a quick diagnostic consultation while the buses were reloading passengers.

The cold, gray concrete shelter that was erected on the pavement (sidewalk) of the bus stop was the tabernacle of an evil system. You dared not cross the divide: Europeans only on one side, non-Europeans on the other. If you disobeyed these rules, there were consequences in the form of prosecution. It was ingrained in the population's psych. It was a compliant crowd that frequented the bus terminus. They knew where to queue.

The bus driver and bus conductor jobs were all reserved for Whites. The bus would arrive, and each person knew their spot. The lower levels of the double-deckers had two rows reserved for non-Whites and the remainder allotted to Whites. The non-Whites could go upstairs. On occasions, you could sometimes see non-Whites standing while rows of seats remained empty at the front of the bus. Segregation at its very worst. Bus inspectors would periodically board the bus to see that all rules were being strictly enforced. Any violations and you were thrown off the bus.

The 1960s and 1970s still saw one-car families and people were dependent on the public transportation system.

The early morning saw the school children in their neat school uniforms and heavy school bags lining up. Public transport was their only option. There were no yellow school buses reserved only for learners, as we know it here in the United States. Some kids were just taking the bus down to a local school, while others were on a longer commute to the suburban schools.

Our house was only about three stops away from my school, Good Hope Seminary High school. If I timed it well, I could just hop on the bus and make it to school. Often, I just elected to walk and would arrive at approximately the same time as the morning bell was rung. 'In addition to the heavy bookbag, we had to carry, it was compulsory to wear a hat as part of our school uniform when off the school grounds. If caught sans hat, then it was grounds for detention – a most ludicrous rule, as we were situated in the windiest part of the city.

The hats were boater style and would take off like a frisbee in the wind. You were lucky if you could retrieve it before it was flattened under the wheel of a car. The administration finally came to their senses many years later, when they scrapped the wearing of hats.

The morning commute always had a sense of urgency. People had school, jobs, appointments, or meetings to attend. The buses came frequently, but there was always a scramble for a seat.

The mid-morning was far more leisurely, and the commuters were mostly shoppers going to town.

From our house, one could hear idle talk and laughter at the bus stop. The pace usually picked up again midafternoon, when the schools came out and more buses were placed on the schedule. It was always a rowdy ride home on the bus. The bus route was rather tortuous on the way home, meandering through upper Vredehoek before cruising down Bradwell Road to its final stop. I was never a regular on the afternoon bus, but I do recall that I enjoyed the days that I elected to ride. I was never really part of the Vredehoek crowd, but I still had fun engaging in all the boy talk and gossip on the way home.

However, if Apartheid was apparent at the bus stop, there were no signs of it in Dr. Kaye's surgery. It was an equal playing field. All patients were seated in the same waiting area and you were seen on a first-come, first-served basis.

My dad still had his loyal patients from District Six. His reputation then spread to the Black townships of Langa, Nyanga, and Gugulethu. This was the advantage of the location. There were trains to the city and then buses up to Vredehoek. The bus drivers were very familiar with the house and would direct the patients to the entrance. There was a great working relationship between my dad and some of the bus drivers. He treated them well and they, in turn, brought him, patients.

During the Apartheid era, there were many live-in domestic workers in the area who were usually called *Cape Coloreds*. However, if one employed an African, meaning *Bantu*, then they could only legally work in the city with a 'Passbook'. Some called it the '*dompas*' (Afrikaans for 'stupid pass'. If discovered without that dreaded Passbook, then heavy fines were imposed all around. Sometimes even arrest followed.

The ugly system considered some people illegal immigrants, even if they were legitimate Cape Town citizens. The domestic quarters usually consisted of just a single room, and there was no real place to socialize when it came to their time off. They, therefore, tended to congregate in the open areas of the neighborhoods. One such open area just happened to be the shady area across the road from our home, which we called 'the field'.

OTHER DOCTORS

When my dad moved to Vredehoek, he certainly had not arrived in unchartered territories. There were many doctors in the Cape Town city bowl area. However, in Vredehoek there was only a handful.

Dr. Philip Dickman moved into 34 Yeoville Road in 1938. The name of his home was *Lourdes,* reflecting his healing abilities. Although his shingle was outside his front gate, he did not actually have a home 'surgery'. He had rooms in District Six that he shared with a dentist and rented office space in the Old Mutual Building in Cape Town. Dr. Dickman, or Uncle Phil, as he was known to me, was a contemporary of my late maternal grandfather, Isaac. According to his daughter, Pearl Selibowitz, they had once embarked on a grand tour of Europe before they settled down.

Dr. Dickman was my mom's family doctor, and to him, she attributes her middle name, Phyllis. Dr. Dickman took care of many patients of German descent who were suffering from deep depression or anxiety following the war, as they had upped and left everything behind in Europe. Pearl remembers her dad employing 'fish tank therapy', with its soothing benefits. It was a valuable adjunct to his treatment. Just gazing at the soft light and movement could do wonders. For this very reason, aquariums are a popular addition to a doctor's or dentist's waiting room. I do remember my dad buying one, but he did not have too much skill in maintaining the fish. So, in the end, he resorted to a faux aquarium.

Dr. Dickman did many house calls in the area and was not afraid to venture out any time of day or night. Further up the road was Dr. Percy Gersholowitz, a caring and beloved general practitioner. He and his wife, Clara, along with their three children lived at Carmel, 32 Exner Avenue. Percy had done extensive training at the Tavistock Clinic in London. His particular interest was psychoanalysis and psychotherapy. He was a staunch follower of Michael Balint, who wrote what some look on as the doctor's 'bible' on the doctor-patient relationship, titled *The Doctor, His Patient and The Illness*.

Percy was a skilled practitioner in his field and in what other GPs, including my dad, often referred to as "difficult patients". He incorporated many of these modalities, including hypnotherapy, into his practice. In his later years, he also took a special interest in sex therapy.

My dad and Percy had a very good working relationship. They often covered for each other with an informal agreement when each went on vacation. Percy and Clara, a Hebrew teacher by profession, were quite the renaissance couple. They traveled extensively and pursued a wide range of interests well into their twilight years.

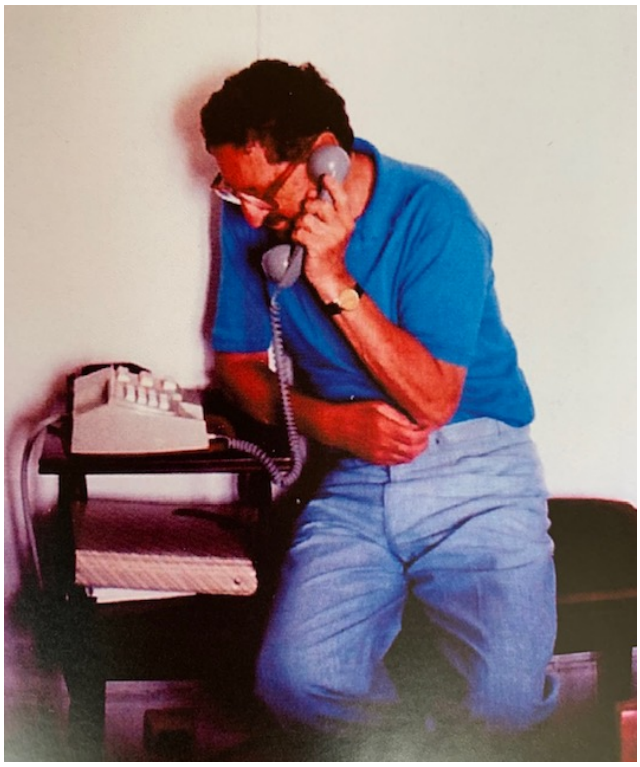
Another upstanding member of the medical community was Dr. Bernard (Bunny) Levy. He lived at 24 Yeoville Road, in a lovely double-storied house, a block from our home. They moved there in 1952. He mainly practiced from town but also had a small home surgery. Bunny and his wife Nita became lifelong friends of our family and Nita and my mom were

inseparable. He was always impeccably dressed and the most upright and honest gentleman. He had a quiet demeanor and would do anything for others.

In 1965, the family decided to move to a flat in Sea Point. Nita's dad, who ran a very successful furniture concern in Cape Town, was battling Parkinson's Disease. So, a difficult decision was made that Bunny enter the family business that he ran successfully for many years before passing away suddenly at age 70. It was a huge loss. My brother, Trevor, was given his doctor's bag and my dad was honored to receive one of his many fashionable shirts, which he wore with pride for many years.

BUILDING THE PRACTICE

My dad, like King Solomon, settled into his temple and the surgery became his sanctuary. He was a true homebody and had his ideal setup. He could be his own boss and would not have to commute to work. We were indeed fortunate to always have at least one parent at home during the day.



Solly on the landline phone in the early days of his practice.

Belmor had a substantial staff in those days. Besides the cook, there was the upstairs cleaner, who was also the nanny for my younger brother, Martin. There were often some non-harmonious times between the cook and the nanny. This was especially evident when we had a cook of Xhosa descent and a nanny who was *Cape Colored*. Those long-standing racial issues still stand today in South Africa. Actual physical fights would sometimes ensue and ultimately led to the firing of one or both individuals, leaving my parents "stranded", without help.

Such woes at the time, but something I soon got used to when I moved to the US. The domestic help lived on the premises. Many stayed for years and were loyal to us.

When my dad opened shop initially, he was virtually a one-man show. There was one landline telephone in the house. We all had to answer, "Dr. Kaye's residence, and then hand the phone to my dad if it were for him. Our private phone calls were limited to three minutes, as we were not allowed to keep the line blocked. How I would've loved "call waiting" in those days. I could never boast about the fact that I spent hours on the telephone with my friends during my teenage years. That just did not happen!

My mom did all the accounts, and every month we would sit on the living room floor, help stuff the envelopes and wet the postage stamps before the advent of self-sticking stamps and envelopes. I also remember having to put little yellow stickers as gentle reminders of an overdue account – or the dreaded red sticker to say if not paid within a certain time, the account would then be sent to a collection agency. My dad never resorted to the latter and rather accepted the bad debt.

Most people paid cash for a visit in those days. When medical aid was in its infancy, the paperwork had to be initially done by the subscriber. As a result, they were often lax about it

and the bills remained unpaid. My dad continued to see some of these patients for years, even though he was never compensated. I won't say it did not bother him, as he was scrupulous when it came to settling his own bills.

The family printing factory supplied the office with everything from soup to nuts. There were the business and appointment cards, prescription and letterhead paper, account invoices, envelopes, diaries, calendars and record-keeping account ledgers. Most important were the small filing cards. All patients had a card with their name and address. Each visit would state the date, diagnosis, and treatment.

If the account was open and unpaid, there would be no line. Often, patients paid what they could afford. The lowest-paying and the free cases kept their own cards and would religiously bring them back at future visits. In doing so, they had an established 'file' with the doctor.

Solly in his practice, with many bottles of pills that he dispensed to patients.

My dad also had mini, plastic, self-closing bags with instructions for any pills he might give the patient. There were hundreds of these still left over when we eventually cleaned up the office, and I brought some back to the States for my own personal use.

He also kept long, black, hardcover, foolscap books. In these, he entered virtually every case that walked through his doors. Every night, he would tally up the number of patients seen.

This was the most amazing amount of record-keeping I have seen in a non-computer age. There were hundreds of books spanning many years. It filled an entire storage area – and was a difficult task to dispose of when he passed away.

Each day told a different story. When a locum did his practice, they too were required to write notes in these books. For this reason, it was always a prerequisite that every covering doctor had legible handwriting.

It was only on one occasion that this became a problem, when a particular locum had totally illegible handwriting. My dad could not decipher anything that had transpired during his absence.

The doctor, who was also a great friend, was gifted with the most brilliant photogenic mind and had to be called back to 'translate' all he had written during the past few weeks. My dad was not unusual in his request. This same doctor, when taking his final specialty boards in

anesthesia, was called back to translate his written paper to the examiners. He was not penalized for this, and went on to have a very successful career.

Doctors do have notoriously bad handwriting. My dad had a distinctive sloppy style of handwriting, but it was legible. One of the defining features of my late mom, as I mentioned earlier, was her very neat and orderly handwriting. Her letters, notes, and diaries were legendary. My brother, Trevor, also has distinctive handwriting and was exceedingly neat in his study notes. This certainly aided me in my studies, as he was three years ahead of me at school. I always used his detailed notes as a guide. Of course, today, most people use a computer keyboard, and no one is expected to write in or read cursive.

The actual consulting room was small but compact. The wooden desk was the focal point, and my dad would sit behind facing the patient as they walked in. The red leather chair, which was a hand-me-down from his brother Jack, was well worn. The top of the desk was covered in glass and displayed many proud moments and family pictures. If you garnered a spot under the glass, then you had 'made' it.

He would often move his desk blotter to reveal these precious family artifacts to his patients. The desk had three drawers on either side. All but one was kept unlocked. Only my dad had the key and there were no duplicates that I knew of. It was as if it held the nuclear codes. No one had privy to that drawer. If you should require something, then he would retrieve it himself. He did keep his cash and banking details in that drawer. When he became ill, we finally got the key. Much to our dismay, nothing out of the ordinary was hidden inside.

The office was also home to a couple of tall metal drawer filing systems. Some housed the patient index cards and others specialist reports and other documents pertaining to the practice. On another wall was a wooden bookcase with two large shelves. This was the dispensing or pill area. To help his less fortunate patients who could not afford to fill prescriptions, my dad would buy certain medications in bulk directly from a pharmaceutical firm. These were generics of commonly prescribed antibiotics, aspirin, paracetamol, steroids, non-steroid anti-inflammatories, anti-nausea, anti-allergy pills amongst many others. He also dispensed a variety of salves and ointments as part of the consultation. He did not charge extra for this service. For the children, there would be colorful elixirs of similar products.

My dad learned this practice of 'free' dispensing from his very good friend and colleague, Dr. Abe Levinsohn, a long-standing beloved GP in Worcester, Cape. He had a very large indigent practice, and this worked very well. My dad also learned another valuable lesson from Dr. Levinsohn: never to get involved with a partner. This had caused countless headaches over the years for Dr. Levinsohn, with the breaking of many contracts. My dad stuck to hiring assistants over the years. This system worked out favorably for all the parties concerned.

My dad was often on the phone with Abe, discussing various aspects of the practice.

Patients always departed with their little packet of medication. This was all part and parcel of the consultation.

The trolley in dad's practice, with sterilizer and bottles of important colored solutions.

Along the opposite wall were the examination couch and extendable lamp. Above that, a small glass shelf housing all the vials for injections. These were always readily available in an emergency. In those early days, there were no disposable needles or syringes. Everything had to be sterilized. For this, there was the sterilizer which housed all the appropriate instruments. In later years this was just an ornament on the glass trolley. This trolley also housed suture material and four very important colored solutions. I will describe each and its significance in a doctor's office.

There was the mandatory bottle of methylated spirits with its distinctive odor. It would permeate the air in his office. It has a lavender hue and is the mother of antiseptics. It is pure alcohol and extremely toxic. When ingested, it causes blindness. 'Meths', as it is commonly called, is used with the proverbial ball of cotton wool to cleanse the area of the skin before a shot is administered.

Then there was the dark betadine (iodine) solution which stains everything with a unique golden-brown color in its midst. This is usually used pre-operatively, even today, as it demarcates the affected location with a focus on the wound and skin in proximity. It is extremely messy to work with and must be avoided if you are allergic to iodine.

Mercurochrome was another solution used for abrasions and potentially infected wounds. Today, people shy away from it as it contains the dreaded mercury. Mercurochrome with alcohol gave it a potent punch. It was called Merthiolate. Most people opted for alcohol-free. This deep red solution gets rapidly absorbed into the cotton ball and would stain everything along the way, from the doctor to the patient, if not carefully applied.

The fourth was the gentian violet solution. This old-fashioned and messy tincture does its trick. Historically, it was used to treat fungal and bacterial infections of the skin and mouth.

This was clearly a go-to tincture for my dad. He would paint everything ‘suspect’ in purple. Bring your baby with a diaper rash and he/she would leave the office with a purple butt. Show him a lesion in the mouth and he would instill a tiny drop of the tincture in your mouth, only to stain your tongue and teeth. Surprisingly, the stuff worked better than all those antifungals out there.

There were, of course, other remedies that he also stocked. He used Friar's Balsam for chronic cough as an expectorant. I recall one of my son’s developing croup and boiling up the tincture with water for the resulting steam to relieve his symptoms.

One of the first medical devices my dad purchased for his office was a diathermy machine. He often had patients come in with muscle aches and spasms. He used this modality to heat the affected area with an electric current to stimulate the blood flow. This was a good adjunct to the prescribed medications. Patients seemed to like this form of therapy and often returned regularly.

He then progressed to an ultrasound therapy machine for similar ailments. He was one of the first GPs to acquire this machine. It was touted as being more effective than the diathermy treatment, which he eventually stopped using. Ultrasound was purported to be the cure-all for all muscular ailments. Indeed, the body does eventually heal itself; but the doctor must do something! The portable EKG was also one of his ‘must-haves’, but that was eventually sold, with very little mileage done.

My dad always kept an open mind to alternative therapy especially when he found that conventional western medicine failed. He was always a strong believer in the ‘placebo effect’ and the power of suggestion. To this end, he attended some courses of hypnotherapy, which he thought would be a valuable adjunct to his practice. He became proficient in this modality and patients would travel some distance to benefit from the treatment. He used hypnosis primarily for cessation of smoking, weight loss and some anxiety disorders. He was skilled in getting people ‘under’.

The skeptic that I was at the time made me want to observe this firsthand. One day, he invited me in to observe, and I was impressed at his method. He used the right tone of voice and got the patient to focus. Within minutes, the susceptible subject was in a trance-like state. He would then have certain cue cards, which he kept in a drawer for the various ailments, and, using verbal repetition, would proceed with the therapy. The patient would leave the surgery in a more positive relaxed frame of mind. They would come back for a series of sessions. This demonstrated the ultimate trusting relationship that my dad had with some of his patients. The popularity of hypnotherapy soon faded.

My dad then engaged in acupuncture, after talking to one of his colleagues who had learned the procedure in the States. Convinced that this ancient Chinese form was the way to go, he studied and taught himself the art of auricular acupuncture. That is the placement of tiny disposable needles into the auricular cartilage of the ear to cure pain, migraines, nausea, and addictions to smoking or alcohol.

My dad was a huge believer in the 'Yellow Pages' (as the landline phone directory for advertising was known in those days) and could not wait to get his name in there. He claimed a huge amount of success with his patients and they kept returning. His reputation spread by word of mouth. I can't remember why I let him place the needles in my ears, but I do remember me pulling them out as they caused me pain. Still, I supported him in his endeavors.

Since my advent into more integrative therapies, I believe that acupuncture is a helpful adjunct, and will benefit certain conditions.

My dad had excellent clinical acumen and could always distinguish genuine illness from psychosomatic ailments. He would never overstep the mark when it came to treating patients using alternative therapy. Sometimes patients would come to him as a last resort, having consulted every specialist in town. Acupuncture was a benign procedure, and they had nothing to lose except, of course, some money.

In his early years of practicing, my dad also did 'confinements', as they were then popularly referred to. He had a midwife assisting him, and was thankful that he never ran into any complications over the years. His mantra was the 'hands-off' technique – the less interference the better. In one family, he delivered all five children. He worked out of the Booth Memorial Hospital in Oranjezicht, a short drive from his house. That hospital eventually became a nursing home, and he gave up doing deliveries.

During his District Six days, his surgery also sported a simple reclining dental chair. He did a fair amount of tooth extractions under local anesthesia, which he said he thought was sometimes only minimally effective.

He was quite dexterous at suturing in his surgery. These were usually uncomplicated work-related lacerations. He always said this was not his favorite procedure.

THE SIXTIES

Life went on at 1 Bradwell Road against the backdrop of the beginning of a struggle against South Africa's Apartheid system. March 21, 1960, saw the Sharpeville Massacre. On that fateful day, Black people were demonstrating against carrying a Passbook to work legally in an area. The massacre happened in the Transvaal in a township near Vereeniging. People congregated and the police fired shots, killing 69 innocent people and injuring countless others. The effects were widespread and even though I was only eight at the time I could feel the tension in the air. I recall Trevor and me going for photos and acquiring 'insurance' passports.

Trevor attended SACS Junior school, following in my dad's footsteps. The building was originally located close to us in Gardens but later relocated to premises in Dean Street, Newlands. He was in a lift scheme throughout his school years. We were four years apart during our school years. I attended Good Hope Seminary Junior school in Breda Street and then continued onto the high school in Hope Street. It was an all-girls school, and there was never a discussion as to which school I would attend as both my mom and cousins had legacies there.

In early 1960, the ruling National Party held a referendum for the Whites-only population on independence from Great Britain. The outcome was the decision that the Union of South Africa would become an independent republic, independent. On May 31, 1961, the Republic of South Africa came into being. South Africa changed its currency from the imperial system of pounds, shillings, and pence to the metric system of rands and cents. It was R2 to £1 – a far cry from today's conversion rates! For this reason, I always feel comfortable working in both systems. The US has yet to convert to the metric system, while the entire world forges ahead.

My dad's practice started to establish in Vredehoek and he soon began winding down his surgery hours in District Six. The patients remained extremely loyal. Even when they were forced to move out to the Cape Flats, they continued to come to the Bus Stop Doctor's location. Many buildings in the area began to vacate but he still did house calls to the flats in Constitution Street. By 1966, the area was mostly razed to the ground when District Six was declared a Whites-only area. Only houses of worship remained amidst the stark open spaces. The area has a desolate feel and remains largely undeveloped with the promise of land return to its rightful owners.

The highlight of my dad's day was his morning visit to the family-run printing factory to meet with his father and his four brothers. They had the utmost respect for my dad and valued his opinion. These daily meetings continued after my grandpa, Morris, passed away in April 1962. It was indeed a sad day for the Kaimowitz family to lose their patriarch. I was nine and remember my dad mourning an entire 11 months, according to Jewish tradition for a parent. He attended minyan services twice daily and he did not listen to music or dance for that extended period.

This was not the first time that I had encountered deep sorrow in our family. A year earlier, tragedy struck. My first cousin, Laraine, the daughter of my uncle Issy and aunty Rita, passed

away unexpectedly at the tender age of 15. This shook the entire family. Issy, Rita, Alan and Laraine had lived at *Belmor* for about 21 years. Alan has chronicled his life there in the 1950s in his detailed family publication *What Was, Was*. He has also recently published a photo anthology about his late sister to commemorate what would have been her 75th birthday.

My dad would not only dispense medical advice but would also try and solve some of the family business problems! He became very emotionally involved with his family. So, he insisted that each family have their own family GP. Naturally, their treatment was always second-guessed by my dad. He also became the factory doctor for Universal Bookbinding and treated many of the workers for both illnesses and work-related accidents.

WCA or Workers Compensation can be the bread and butter of a GP practice. It can also be a headache for the office worker submitting all the paperwork. There were no computers in those days; everything had to be written with carbon paper in triplicate. All the i's had to be dotted and the t's crossed, else the claim would be rejected. My dad sometimes had to wait months to get reimbursed. He ultimately became very efficient in handling all these cases. I often overheard him commiserating with other GPs as the government kept changing the laws. Still, he continued to accept WCA cases until he was forced into retirement.

My dad was also the official doctor for H. Ospovat and Company, the furniture manufacturer trademarked as *Duros*. This factory was also located in Upper Roeland Street. Often these cases were of a more traumatic kind, as the machinery was more intricate. My maternal grandfather, Isaac, was the owner of this factory. This was more a business arrangement, and my dad did not do a morning tea there.

He had a cordial relationship with his father-in-law, Isaac. Soon after my parents' marriage, my maternal grandparents' marriage began falling apart. Although they were living under one roof while I was very young, I did not really understand why my grandpa, Isaac, lived in another room in the house. Nor did I understand why he ate the Jewish holiday meal in the living room at his own table, while the remainder of the family, my grandma, Jenny, Uncle Ruby, mom, dad and brother sat in the dining room. The only explanation I received at the time was that my grandpa had to leave very early in the morning for work and did not want to disturb anyone. This made total sense to me.

It was only years later, when he finally moved to a flat in Sea Point with an alleged 'auntie' of mine, that I understood. Gertie Phillips was, in fact, my grandma's niece. There were nine siblings and Gertie was the daughter of her oldest sister. This was indeed a scandal and an embarrassment. It caused a huge rift among my grandma's huge family. As a result of this split, I did not get to interact with many of the cousins as they 'batted for the other team'.

My Grandpa, Isaac, was a short, charismatic man. He was an astute businessman with only a Grade 8 education. He went into his father's furniture business H. Ospovat and Company and grew it into a very successful concern. *Duros* was the trademark name derived from dur(ability) and os(povat) and the motto was the famous Keats saying: "A thing of beauty is a joy forever." *Duro*s, with its art deco style, did indeed manufacture quality furniture and

mattresses. Many homes, hotels, and the first luxurious Blue Train boasted fittings from *Duros*.

I can attest to the quality as I still own some of the furniture in my home in Boston some 40 years later.

Duros became a public company and was listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, though I do think that most of the shares were family-owned. The business and building were eventually taken over when Isaac retired. Shortly thereafter, it dissolved. The factory was an exciting place to visit. I always found it a treat to either visit my Uncle Ruby or my Grandpa Isaac.

At the entrance was a large switchboard that was manned by a telephone operator. Then there was the large typing pool with the rhythmic movement and sounds of their machines. I always thought it very important to be in that enclosure. They were constantly tapping at their machines but when I appeared, they always looked and acknowledged "Mr. I's granddaughter" with a friendly smile.

I loved visiting the factory and always received a grand welcome. Uncle Ruby, or 'Mr. R', as he was known at the factory, was my mom's only brother and he managed the showroom. The freshly applied lacquer had a definite allure. Hindsight tells us that spending time amongst those potentially toxic fumes could prove to be a health hazard. Perhaps even the cause of my late uncle's early-onset Parkinson's disease? This is purely anecdotal, as there are multiple contributing causes to this condition.

The other offices were modular in nature, except for my grandfather's, who had a self-contained suite of rooms with the most stunning warm wooden paneling on the walls. He sat behind a state-of-the-art *Duros* desk and had beautifully crafted leather chairs. He also displayed an array of photographs. One was a large, framed engagement photo of my beautiful mom, Goulda. I cherish this photo, which now occupies a prominent spot in my living room.

Despite all the upset that the separation caused, and the ongoing feud between the grandparents, my mom and uncle always maintained a good relationship with their dad. My cousins, Clive and Andrea, were particularly close with him and were frequent visitors to his flat in Costa Bravo, Sea Point. I only visited on a couple of occasions. My loyalties were always to my grandma Jenny, and I never wanted to upset her in any way. It was difficult enough for her to face her ex when family functions included them both. There were many criteria that had to be met. Of course, my dad, who did not really feel the emotional brunt of it all, used to say, "Get over it!"

My grandmother, for her own reasons, would not grant my grandfather a divorce for many years until the laws changed. Once the divorce was finalized, he was able to marry his longtime companion.

Isaac Ospovat was indeed a force of nature. He held a prominent position in the City of Cape Town. After being a City Councillor for many years, he was elected Chairman of the Executive City Council. This appointment was in effect more powerful than the Mayor of Cape Town, a position he might have aspired to, if not for his marital woes. Still, Isaac ran the city with an iron fist and made many foes along the way. He devoted his life to civic service and wanted to see fairness amongst the city workers. To honor his dedicated service to Cape Town, a small area on the Grand Parade in front of the old Cape Town City Hall was named Ospovat Place.

Isaac was not a gambler but he did have a passion for horse racing and in the 1950s owned a couple of racehorses. One of them, Phantom King, won the famed Gold Cup race in Durban in 1957. I remember the day clearly, listening excitedly to the commentary on the radio and the absolute jubilation that followed. It was indeed a solid gold cup that he proudly displayed in his office. This was later passed down to his son, Ruby, and now it has its home in Sydney with his grandson, Clive. I inherited his genes, as I have always had a fascination with horse racing. I attended a few of the Metropolitan Cup horse races in Cape Town with Isaac and Gertie. He never placed more than a few South African rands on a horse.

My dad did not consider himself a gambler by nature and had absolutely zero interest in card games, horse racing, or casinos. However, in my eyes, he was a real risk-taker in his other passion.

OTHER PASSIONS

Besides his heart, which was the physical 'ticker' that kept him going, my dad did have one other ticker in his life that he was passionate about. This was the 'ticker-tape' of the JSE (Johannesburg Stock Exchange). I am not quite sure what initially piqued his interest in the stock market. It was self-taught. He subscribed to the *Financial Mail* and each week read all about the companies from cover to cover. After the *SABC* radio broadcast of the 1 pm news each day, there was an update on stock prices, and he would listen intensely.

Solly in his 'ticker' phase.

He had his little group of 'stock market' friends: Sonny Berkowicz, 'Candle' Rosenberg, Ralph Nementzik and Ivan Nurick. The latter could not only quote every stock price off the cuff but could skillfully recall any South African rugby stat. They would come over to the house or take a walk on the Sea Point beachfront and all they would discuss were shares. I was often invited on these outings and could not tolerate the talk. My dad had to promise me there would be no 'share' talk. However, the conversation would ultimately lapse into that subject. He tended to get all consumed with one share at a time. At one stage, it was a fishing share called Lambert's Bay. He was so obsessed that he began following the tides and catches off the West Coast of South Africa.

My dad did not go on many road trips, but when the opportunity knocked for him to go to the little fishing town of Lambert's Bay, he was off like a shot to observe his interest. The main catch in that town was crayfish. It was quite ironic that my dad never ate crayfish. Another company name that was bandied around was Seligson and Clare. This was considered a hot share in the day and that soon became his obsession.

Often, after his rounds at the factory, he would pop into the local stock exchange and meet his buddies. Funnily enough, he even got to know Richard's maternal grandfather, I.J. Sennett,

who was one of the regulars over there. My dad's dream was to have a ticker tape in his lounge. Surprisingly, this dream eventually came true in the 21st century, when he was able to access the live feed on his satellite TV or instantly check the price of his share on his iPad.

In his later years, he received one tip and this became his new focus. It was a property share called Redefine. This is what later defined him. If I had no interest in shares before, I suddenly found myself involved in this retirement investment of his. This stock sustained him both mentally and physically. Mention the name and his whole face would light up. He always used to remind us that it was a long-term investment. He was not wrong.

When my dad was bed-to-chair-ridden, one of our friends arranged the chairman of the company at the time, Mike Flax, to visit. This encounter was one of the many highlights of his life. He could not have been more excited to chat with him about the prospects of the company. I will always appreciate what Mike did. It was indeed a *mitzvah*!

My dad also loved to write letters. They were not of the romantic variety, but rather to share his ideas on a certain subject. Often, they were of a ridiculous nature, like one to the US government about flotation buoys to locate submarines. The reply was that he should rather be concerned about the defense of his own country.

He wrote lots of congratulatory letters to people he knew who had achieved well. He derived great pleasure from seeing people he knew succeed. In their company, he would make sure that their accomplishments were known to those around him. He often wrote letters to the editors of the *South African Medical Journal* or to the *Financial Mail*. I don't think they were ever published. When he could not write anymore, he badgered one of us to write on his behalf.

Talk radio was by far his favorite radio station. He would call in and express his opinion. Often these calls would be broadcast and he would feel very bucked with himself. One such call took place in 2001. Professor Christiaan Barnard was being interviewed on the radio and they were accepting calls. My dad immediately grabbed the opportunity to call and identify himself as one of Chris Barnard's graduating classmates of 1946. Solly was always of the opinion that it was hard work that made one succeed in life. He pointed out to Barnard that he remembered him as the most hardworking student in the class. Barnard graciously accepted this compliment and then responded that he remembered my dad and that my dad was one of the cleverest – to which my dad just laughed because he knew it was not true.

That class boasted some real brains, such as Sir Donald Ross, the South African-born British thoracic surgeon, who performed the first heart transplant in the United Kingdom, and Dr. Rodney Hewitson, who was a thoracic surgeon and Professor Barnard's right-hand man during the world's first heart transplant. My dad always felt a sense of pride that it was members of his class that made such a medical breakthrough.

THE 'MERC'

Fancy big cars were not really in our vocabulary. My mom always had a small car to ferry us to our various activities. My dad drove a slightly larger family car. I recall the Studebaker, an Opel, and then a Valiant for many years. He steered away from German-made cars. In fact, in those early years, we avoided everything German-made.

In 1968, the beautiful classic Mercedes S series came out. Everyone was swooning over the Havana brown color. It ran a close second to the metallic gold Mercedes Benz that was gifted to Professor Chris Barnard after the first heart transplant.

The profits of the Atlantic coast fish yield enabled my dad to splurge and suddenly, buying German was okay. It was indeed a magnificent vehicle and he drove it for almost 40 years, putting very little mileage on it. The gentleman who eventually bought it did a complete overhaul and brought it to show to my dad. This vintage classic is still visible on the streets of Cape Town today.

My dad never believed in locking his car. He said that if anyone wanted to steal it, they could. He never wanted the windows broken, so he left the car unlocked with the key under the front mat. Steal it they did! It was found on both occasions, totally intact. Whoever took it, did so for the joyride.

The elegant, brown Mercedes. Looks like my mom driving.

Patients would know when the doctor was in, as the garage door was kept open during the day. There were never parking issues, per se. That doctor's badge gave him a license to park anywhere without a penalty. While my dad did take advantage of this at times, he did not abuse the privilege.

The Mercedes was his baby and although my mom and younger brother, Martin, did drive it on occasions, I was never entrusted with the wheel. The excuse was that I was not named on the insurance policy. I left it at that. Perhaps I might have exceeded my dad's speed limit of about 15 miles per hour, dangerously slow pace.

To say my dad was a careful driver was an understatement. As a passenger, he was even worse. He was always on the lookout for other cars and often shouting, "*Hokaai*!" In Afrikaans, it meant "Whoa!" or "Stop" to working or draught animals. People later adopted it to tell others to stop what they are doing.

Not to be outdone by his doctor son-in-law, my grandfather, Isaac, answered with the purchase of a midnight blue Rolls Royce that very same year. That really irked my dad who thought it ultra-pretentious. He vowed never to ride in it. My grandpa primarily used the car for Sunday afternoon drives. He also inched along at a snail's pace. The price of petrol (gas) was prohibitive, and the car was virtually given away after my grandfather's passing. My dad's Merc prevailed in the end.

SERVICES GALORE

Number 1 Bradwell Road was always a hive of activity from early in the morning. I would awake to the clanking sound of milk bottles as the Royal Dairy did their daily delivery of milk and guava juice. Every night, we would put out the empty milk bottles and every morning they would be dutifully replenished. I was always amazed at how much milk we consumed in our house, especially since I hardly touched the stuff. There were breakfast and numerous teas made throughout the day.

The entrance to the house in those days was only a small wooden gate with a latch and anyone could walk freely in and out of the property. If patients had to wait for my dad, they were also offered tea.

Then came the jovial sound of the garbage collectors, who came by daily with their trucks. The same route, the same faces – they became our friends.

There were no supermarkets in the area when I grew up; just the local grocer who addressed all our wants and needs in the kitchen. In the early days, we only had an icebox, but no deep freezer. So, perishables were bought daily.

Our grocery store was *Jack's Cafe* in Upper Maynard Street. My mom would have an account with them. Every morning, she would place her order on the phone and within an hour a delivery would be made on a bicycle. It was a bit of an uphill trek and if anything was forgotten, the journey would be repeated during the day. The delivery man from *Jack's Cafe* was a fixture in our kitchen. As the front door was mostly unlocked during the day, he would just press the doorbell and walk-in.

Another one of the bell ringers was the courier from *International Pharmacy*. He zipped up and down Buitenkant Street on his moped and would replenish all the medical supplies and prescription drugs for the surgery and toiletries for the house. Abie Newman, the owner, had a larger-than-life personality. He was a well-respected businessman in Cape Town, who had many other enterprises in the area. It was a small shop, but it was the consummate pharmacy with medications and popular brands of cosmetics. Everything for the surgery could be ordered and delivered within hours through that establishment.

When Jackie Plax moved to Cape Town, he became the resident pharmacist over there. My dad was their loyal customer for many years. In later years, when *International Pharmacy* eventually closed its doors, the surgery switched to *Chinn's Pharmacy*, which provided a similar service. During my dad's time, even when the huge chain, *Clicks*, opened, he continued to remain loyal to the smaller establishments-another one of his sterling traits.

In those days, the postal delivery system was extremely reliable in South Africa. Our mailbox was an important fixture to our outside gate. Mail was delivered twice daily. Being a doctor's house, there was always an abundance of mail in the form of letters, reports, accounts, journals, magazines, and junk mail.

Then there was the telegram – that urgent message that had to be promptly delivered from the post office. Growing up, we were accustomed to seeing the telegram courier usually on a bicycle riding up to the house a couple of times a week. Telegrams were the preferred way of sending condolence or congratulatory messages up until the late 1970s in South Africa. The young telegram 'boy' in khaki uniform would sprint up to the front door, ring the doorbell and then deliver the telegram or cable (from overseas). Both always required a signature.

There was also the unreliable weekly gardener who floated around the property. In his sober state, he did an excellent job. So, my dad was very forgiving when he gave excuses for not coming.

Even though supermarkets had become mainstream, my family remained loyal for many years to the fruit lorry that parked just below the bus stop every Friday. 'Chibba' as he was fondly known, carried all the seasonal fruit and vegetables from the local growers. The order was written down in a notebook and the produce was delivered into the kitchen each week. The account was settled at the end of every month. We were living 'locavore' before it was even a trend! There were no plastic bags or even paper bags; only a crate that was unpacked onto the kitchen counter. Eventually, my mom stopped this practice when the produce started losing its luster, and they could not beat *Pick 'n Pay* prices. A sad day for the local vendors.

I recall fish also being sold in a horse-driven cart on the street. The arrival was heralded by the bellow of a loud horn. Herring was a popular item that was sold this way. It came in large wooden barrels and was a popular item around the Jewish High Holidays when herring was either served pickled, chopped, or marinated. A penny, a herring in those early days. You could always tell when the fishmonger had been in the area by the telltale sign of the smelly horse manure in the road – a useful fertilizer for the garden!

My dad single-handedly helped to keep the economy going. When taking a medical history, he was sure to ask the patients what work they did and if they were employed. It was not unusual to see these 'freelance' workers on our property fixing the forever leaking roof, doing the odd touch-up paint job, repairing the masonry, or cleaning the gutters.

Martin recalls looking up the palm tree one day and noticing, to his astonishment, a 'freelance' worker perched precariously high up, feverishly trying to remove the tree's overgrown fronds. When he looked, Martin noticed that the worker was tied to the tree by a rope – and had only one leg! Despite the disability, the worker managed to complete the task at hand, cleared the fronds and dexterously landed safely back down on solid ground – to Martin's huge relief.

My dad always felt good about giving these guys some cash for their labor even as he often he had to employ a professional to do a revision job.

One real old-timer was a gentleman named Moosa. Moosa was the ultimate handyman. He washed the car, took care of the pool, and was proficient at disconnecting the car battery when my dad went on extended trips. Moosa even changed light bulbs. He would often be eating lunch in the kitchen on some of my visits home.

My mom did most of her ordering on the telephone. She was not one to go into a butchery and choose her cuts of meat. She called and they delivered. The same with the eggs and poultry. They came from a family-owned business called *Schaffers*, the dominant kosher establishment in the area. In the latter years, my dad also took up the practice of ordering on the phone, mainly sight unseen. When the oven needed replacing, he just called and they delivered. It was a small, free-standing, four-plate appliance that arrived, which looked ridiculously spare in the kitchen. I guess it did its job.

He also ordered a new mattress, without testing it, per telephone – a practice that I have never done. My dad would have thrived in the era of *Amazon,* had he known how.

My mom ran the family housekeeping ship flawlessly and always had domestic help in the form of a cook and a housecleaner. Dinner was the major meal of the day and we always attempted to eat as a family, although my dad was often called to his surgery to attend to a patient during the meal. Evening office hours were between 5- and 7 pm, so there were endless interruptions.

Mealtimes were announced by the ring of a bell, a tradition handed down from colonial times. My children were fascinated by this concept. However, it was a practice that didn't feel right, and eventually made me cringe at just the thought of it.

My dad was an incredibly quick eater and was always served last and tended to finish first. Our family has inherited this fast pace of eating. That's one of the reasons that he detested going to dinners at restaurants with long-drawn-out meals. It was just not his style. He was always happy to devour the bread on the table and skip the meal.

The rest of us adapted to the change when we left the house. Today, I am more mindful of my eating habits. I try to remind my family how important it is to chew slowly, be more present at a meal and not be distracted by the cell phone.

MARTIN

A '*laat lammetjie'* is an Afrikaans term and defined as a child coming many years after its siblings. My parents were blessed to have one of those. Martin was a huge surprise who was born in 1965 and was the best gift my parents had ever given me. I was nearly 13 and the household certainly changed with a baby around.

Burglar bars were installed not for security but to prevent Martin from falling from the upstairs windows. A wooden gate was also custom manufactured by *Duros* for the top of the stairs.

Solly and Martin, circa 1968.

At the time, my parents were considered 'old' to have such a young baby. But, by today's standards, they were not. My mom was 37 and my dad was 42 at the time. The only problem was that Martin's friends' parents were in their early 20s, whereas Trevor and my friends'

parents were their contemporaries. Nonetheless, Martin was never lacking friends from either his preschool or school.

Activities of a different nature took over. Meals became more hectic when Martin was around. My parents were far less rigid with him. Martin appeared to get his away with much more than we did growing up. Being the youngest by far, he garnered a lot of attention from the family. Martin was our little bait. Trevor used to take him to Clifton Beach and pass him around like a rugby ball.

Trevor and I never felt shortchanged by our parents' love and affection, as we were old enough to appreciate the ‘specialness’ of our little brother.

Martin was able to follow his own path and passions in life. He attended Herzlia, the Jewish day school in our area. He was a swimmer and a computer whizz. He was at the forefront of computers and understood the language which remains a mystery to me today. Martin’s unique IT skills were invaluable when our dad became ill.

All grown up: Me, Trevor, dad and 'laat lammetjie' Martin

CONFIDANT

While my dad did not have the official position as his family's GP, he had a more trusted position as a confidant. He was the first to be consulted in a family crisis, with the hope that Solly would solve it all. I know he carried a lot on his shoulders, and always felt hugely responsible for the well-being of his brothers and their children. He loved them all unconditionally.

My dad had a particularly close relationship with his nephew, Harold Kaimowitz, the elder son of his brother, Jack. Harold could relate to my dad, who was 20 years younger than his father. Harold became a lawyer and worked at Universal alongside his uncles, brother, and cousins. He was a fixture in our home on a Friday afternoon when the factory shut early in preparation for Shabbat – a tradition passed on by my grandpa Morris. There was loving mutual respect between my dad and Harold.

We followed his courtship with Patricia Spektor, who later became his wife. I was invited to be in the wedding party, one of the many roles I played in my youth, before I walked down the aisle. Their young daughter, Caryn, in turn, was a flower girl at our wedding. It was Harold who proposed a wonderful toast to my parents at our reception. Harold was also the designated driving instructor for my siblings and me.

My dad was often eager to hear the news and gossip in the community and Harold was always a good source. When Trevor and I emigrated, Harold and his family became surrogate siblings to Martin. Harold had a sensitive nature and an inquiring intellect. He had overcome some health issues, including colon cancer and cardiac bypass surgery, and was back to playing tennis when suddenly he presented with jaundice. He was diagnosed with liver cancer. We were all devastated. He was only 55 years old.

Trevor flew out during this trying period for support. Harold passed away after a short time. By that stage, my dad had already lost his three older brothers. It was not long after that, that Martin also emigrated, closely followed by my dad's younger brother, Bennie. It was a lonely time for my parents. Thankfully, my other cousins continued to maintain close ties with them. They visited, invited them for meals, accompanied my mom to the ballet, and even took them for drives. While my dad was always there for them, they were always there for us!

‘BERGIES’

‘*Bergie*' is an Afrikaans term for a subsection of homeless people in Cape Town. Originally, these people took shelter on the slopes of Table Mountain. In the latter years, they tended to squat and congregate on any piece of open property whether it be a field, under a bridge, or open park.

We became familiar with some of the regulars who set up living quarters in the field or ‘Central Park’ opposite our home adjacent to the bus stop. They were a harmless bunch, often alcoholics or ‘dagga’ (marijuana) smokers who kept to themselves most of the time. Some were employed part-time in the neighborhood. They could often be seen walking up Buitenkant Street with a brown paper bag concealing the cheap wine that they had bought at the International Bottle Store. It would fuel their addiction. Come Friday afternoon (payday), the festivities would start, as they all began to congregate under the oaks.

Gazing out of my old bedroom window on my many trips back home, I could recall some of those nights when the happy chatter escalated into drunken brawls. Often, bottles were broken followed by blood-curdling screams of “Doctor! Doctor!”. Soon thereafter, the doorbell would ring with an urgency that was our cue to summon the ambulance and local police. It was impossible to reason with people under the influence. The following day, the entire incident would be forgotten and the little group would be together again, only for the saga to be repeated the following Friday evening.

Sadly, even after the dismantling of Apartheid, removal of the concrete separating barriers at the bus stop, the vagrants still enjoyed hanging under the oaks. They knew my dad. He was always kind to them and gave them free treatment, food, and money. They were never a threat to him.

KEYS AND MORE KEYS

There was somehow an obsession with keys in South Africa. Was it an instinctive paranoia built into the psyche that everything and anything should be under lock and key? Every key should, therefore, have a triplicate, if one went missing. There were keys for everything; closets, cabinets, files, drawers, rooms, suitcases, cars, freezers, and more – all had keys. Some keys were color-coded for identification, some were labeled and some were not. It was a challenge to gauge which key belonged to what. The flat Yale key was the most specific; then there was the tubular, generic-looking kind that you could wiggle into position and be lucky if there was a fit.

My mom and dad each had their own set of keys on a bunch that they always kept on them. The important keys for the house and surgery routinely hung on a decorative key rack above the front mirrored mantelpiece. When we finally cleaned out the house, we were at a loss as to what to do with the large sweet tin filled to the brim with an array of mystery keys. Every lock on every door and cabinet could be accounted for. In the end, we just trashed the tin.

The open gate, the open-door policy would not last forever. The front gate could be freely entered and the barn-style front door was always kept half-open to let light and air into the house. Did we get burglarized? You bet we did. We were an easy target. Small stuff disappeared from the house; stoep furniture and paintings were taken overnight; laundry snatched off the line; even copper drainpipes and faucets that could herald a financial yield were stolen.

Move along to the 1990s and things changed dramatically. The unemployment rate rose, crime syndicates popped up and violence entered the society with a vengeance. Suddenly, everyone became more vigilant and protective of their property. *Belmor's* security was in jeopardy and drastic security measures had to be taken.

The entire property had a natural tall hedge surrounding it that was not secure. Martin, who was still living at home at the time, pushed my dad to have a wall constructed around the perimeter of the hedge. The white brick wall was duly erected, but it was not impenetrable, as there was a substantial gap created by a large tree. My dad's solution was to add some wire fencing with nails to fill in the gap, not exactly a huge deterrent.

The front gate that could be opened and closed at will was replaced by a secure gate that was operated by a buzzer. A retractable automatic carport gate was also installed for more security. Still, people were able to gain unauthorized access to the property.

On one occasion, we found a couple residing with mattresses and personal belongings in a small clearing under one of the hedges. We only noticed them when the light display of a cell phone glowed from within the dark hedge and they were exposed. They were quite indignant when told they were trespassing. If gone undetected, they could have eventually claimed 'squatter rights'. These were homeless, harmless people. A sad situation.

The abutting neighbor had an incident on their property and the perpetrators used our property as an escape route. They blamed my dad. So, in time, he was forced to implement more drastic improvements to security, which were more in line with what the other homeowners in the area were doing.

This prompted the installation of an electrified fence above the already high wall. What a scary scenario! My dad would virtually become a prisoner in his own home. Of course, this required battery backup to compensate for the routine 'load shedding' – a euphemism for rolling power blackouts in South Africa that are even more frequent these days.

There was also an alarm system that was never activated. The faux alarm and *Beware of the Dog* signs, nonetheless, were visible on the back wall of the house. The same for the mythical security camera that was reputedly guarding the exterior. The real security for the home and neighborhood was provided by a company called *Armed Response*, who conveniently parked their little van right next to the power substation outside our house.

In the event of an incident, they were there in a heartbeat, as opposed to the South African Police, who took forever to respond to calls.

Our garden was lush and overgrown in parts. Navigating the pathway at night could be a challenge as the landscape lighting was limited. It was an anxiety-provoking experience for me once the security gates had closed to get from the car into the house. When we needed an additional flashlight, a cell phone would suffice.

Keys had to be ready to gain entrance to the first barrier which was a floor-to-ceiling expandable iron gate. Once this was accomplished, another key was required to open the glass-paneled double French door. Once accessed, the door had to be securely locked and bolted before walking a few steps to the final barrier: a metal concertina-style door with a lock and then finally the front door with its Yale latch key. All the downstairs doors were bolted from the inside passage.

As the living quarters were all upstairs, there was still one more security gate to conquer. This was a floor-to-ceiling, iron-bar grill with a metal gate. A far cry from the little wooden gate built in earlier years to prevent Martin from falling down the staircase. Once upstairs for the night, the gate was locked, and the key was hidden where it was easily accessible for the inhabitants.

This whole ritual became second nature to me after my many visits to the house over the years. While there might have been a few odd burglaries over the years for gates left open carelessly, we were indeed fortunate never to have had a serious home invasion. That fate has befallen many South African homeowners, despite the highest level of security measures they have implemented. My parent's personal safety was always my number one priority whilst living so many thousands of miles away from them.

FLORA AND FAUNA

Our family did not, per se, boast a bona fide family dog but various pets did float into our lives when we were growing up. There was always an abundance of stray cats in the garden. They tended to live amongst the bushes. I was particularly partial to the kittens having once lost my little Pinky in a tragic accident when I was five years old and still living in Oranjezicht. I was told that a heavy gust of wind had slammed the door shut on his little neck. Although I never witnessed the incident, the images that I conjure in my mind still turn my stomach.

Pinky was replaced at the time by a budgie. After some months the bird mysteriously flew away. For some reason, my dad thought that the bird would expose us to psittacosis (parrot fever), a lung disease, usually transmitted by the entire parakeet family. My dad was not going to take any chances.

Imagine my excitement one day when I was told that there was a heavily pregnant stray cat in the garden. Our domestic help at the time aided with the delivery and I remember keeping the kittens in a shoebox in my bedroom. This arrangement did not last long and the kittens were soon returned to the wild. I was not surprised one day when, during routine blood tests for one of my pregnancies, a positive titer showed up for toxoplasmosis. There was never any active disease, so, this was not an issue. However, I am sure this was the source of the initial exposure.

We remained pet-less until one day a stray mutt without tags showed up at our door on the Jewish holiday of *Yom Kippur*. Martin befriended the dog and begged my parents to shelter him after no one claimed ownership. The untrained dog stayed and proceeded to poop all over the house. Scampy, as we named him, was not a problem – until my brother, Trevor, who was a medical student still living at home, stood on a pile of dog poop right outside his room one morning. He gave my parents an ultimatum: either he or the dog goes. So, much to Martin's disappointment, our transient visitor was given a new home.

For a time, our garden was home to a chicken. This was fine, until the chicken grew into a rooster and all the early morning 'cock-a-doodle' crows became a nuisance. Then there was the bunny, whose length of time at the house was also short-lived. My parents thought goldfish would be a safe bet, but somehow, we kept finding the lifeless creatures floating in the bowls. They had to be rapidly replaced before Martin returned from school.

When one thinks of Africa, one immediately thinks of wild animals or baboons prowling the streets. Baboons did, in fact, linger on the slopes of Table Mountain and were known to invade properties in the close vicinity. These creatures create more havoc than one can imagine. They have been an ensuing problem in various suburbs over the years.

My only encounter with a baboon was at Cape Point one year when I was virtually attacked for carrying a bag of potato crisps. I narrowly made it back into the car. A real fight-and-flight reaction!

Squirrels were regular inhabitants of the garden and scuttled their way up and down the palm tree. One year, an albino squirrel appeared. This was an unusual mutation and a strange occurrence. We were all fascinated by this creature and our level of excitement rose when it made an appearance. We tried to befriend it; but instinctively, squirrels are afraid of humans, so, it kept its distance but continued to visit.

After I left South Africa, a new species of bird arrived on the property. This was the guinea fowl. I am not sure when and how they were introduced to the area but they certainly were not around when I was growing up. They are beautiful birds that have now become synonymous with Southern Africa and are depicted in paintings, ceramics, and sculptures. Often this 'confusion' of guinea fowl would linger on the lawn outside the surgery and do their business and move on.

The iconic palm and fir tree in Belmor's garden.

In Boston, I am now accustomed to wild turkey roaming our property during the fall season. They come in huge herds and can be very aggressive. Quite a different picture!

When we first moved to *Belmor*, some of the trees were still in the sapling stage. There was an established palm tree of the Madeira palm variety in the garden. It grew to a mammoth height and is still the icon that defines the property.

The South Easter wind may howl at its greatest velocity, but the only damage to the tree will be the snapping off from one of the dry dead fronds. I always feared that if the tree came crashing down the house would be uprooted. That tree was symbolic of the growing Kaimowitz family. Limbs have died, but the core trunk strength remains.

There was also a fir tree that my Uncle Bennie planted during the 1950s on the property. This, in turn, grew to a great height and rivaled the adjacent palm tree. The pines of this tree became quite problematic over the years and carpeted the lawn and clogged the swimming pool filter.

The garden also hosted an orchard of fig trees. The climate was ideal. There were green ones, red ones, and unique striped ones. All bore fruit on an annual basis and picking the harvest before the starlings got to them was a major feat.

I was never an adventurous child, but climbing the fig trees was one of my favorite past times. My friends and I would spend hours perched and chatting on one of the secure branches under the shadows of the leaves. It was a relatively easy climb. Some trees were more challenging than others. One by one, the fig trees stopped giving and the leaves began to look frail and diseased until denuded branches remained. For me, I never considered figs the

delicacy it is considered over here in the States. I often get very excited when I see a container of figs in the local market and will pay top dollar to reconjure the memories.

My favorite fruit to eat off a tree was a loquat. These were abundant in our neighborhood but lacking in our garden. There was nothing more delicious than a deep yellow loquat plucked from the overhanging branch of the neighbor's tree.

The plants that really defined the property were the hydrangeas, or Christmas flowers, as they were affectionately referred to in South Africa. The small bushes were introduced from a slip obtained from my Uncle Max and Auntie Golda's Garden in Oranjezicht. They were originally all pink in color. Over the years, the bushes flourished but owing to the pH content of the soil the hue changed to brilliant blue color. Many households were graced with cut flowers from 'Belmor' over the years.

The climate in Cape Town was conducive to outdoor playing all year round and we spent many hours in the garden. Swimming pools became popular and after much debate, a decision was made that a pool would be built in an underutilized area of the property. This was largely for the benefit of my younger brother, Martin, as Trevor was almost done with medical school and I was already in my first year but still living at home. I don't think I ever saw my dad in the water, but he did walk around the pool doing claiming to do exercise.

My dad would get his daily dose of Vitamin D, always with a hat sitting at the pool after lunch. Often on a hot day, he would be without shoes and socks, and if a patient would arrive out of hours the 'barefoot doc' would attend to his patients.

It was also not an unfamiliar sight to see a patient sitting on the pool patio getting P.O.P (Plaster of Paris) applied to an arm or foot after a nondisplaced fracture was diagnosed by a radiologist. P.O.P was a messy business and no better place to apply it was outside. My dad was quite proficient at this application. I appreciated this skill years later when I worked in emergency walk-in facilities. However, by that time the gypsum products in medicine were replaced by far more efficient and less messy fiberglass products.

After all the years the only fruit-bearing tree that remained at the house was the lime tree outside the surgery. How bittersweet!

SURGERY RECEPTIONIST/ NURSE

While my mom held strong on the reins of the household and was a parent par excellence to her three kids, it was virtually impossible for her to run the practice as well. Phone calls had to be answered, messages relayed, paperwork done, supplies replenished, accounts done, and patients assisted.

With an ever-expanding practice and a new baby in the house, my dad put out feelers for a 'nurse' who would fulfill the job description. He first looked to the moms with free time in his practice. That was not a viable proposition.

He then found a Mrs. Fryer, who had older children and lived within walking distance of the house. Mrs. Fryer, whose family were also patients, was a loyal employee who stayed for many years and became particularly attached to my younger brother. She eventually retired due to travel constraints when she and her husband moved to another suburb quite a distance from the house.

'Nurse' Ingrid and Solly, in his practice.

My dad did not have to look too far for help. Ingrid Michaels was a bright 18-year-old whose mom, Linda, was a part-time housekeeper (char) with our family. Ingrid was young and enthusiastic. It was indeed a family affair when her younger sister, Portia, also joined the maintenance squad at the house The title of 'nurse' was immediately bestowed upon Ingrid.

She not only played this role but wore many hats over the 35-plus years that she stayed with my dad and the family.

Ingrid had excellent interpersonal skills. She could connect with people of all races and developed a good rapport with all the patients. Her beautiful, legible printing was legendary and a quality my dad valued: a real bonus in those non-technical days.

When my dad was forced to retire due to his illness, Ingrid took on the role of personal assistant and managed a team of carers during this period. Ingrid was our savior when it came to managing our dad. She was not only compassionate but also proactive in his care. Years after my dad's passing Ingrid remains an integral part of our family. We will always be indebted to the Michaels family for all the love, support and loyalty displayed to my parents over the years.

HOUSE CALLS

House calls were the rule rather than the exception in those days. For my dad, they were generally confined to about a 3-mile radius. On the very rare occasion, he ventured a little further. For the most part, they were not urgent, often to the elderly, children at home with nannies, or just plain reassurance visits. The doctor, after all, is the best 'drug' medicine can prescribe.

My dad was an expert in his delivery, with his friendly "Hello", kind word, and frequent "guarantee". During school vacations, holidays or weekends, accompanying my dad on house calls was a treat. Mostly, I sat in the back of the unlocked car and waited while he went inside to attend to a patient. He was usually quick and did not make it a habit to '*schmooze*' unnecessarily, so I did not object to tagging along. I never felt threatened or unsafe driving into some of the so-called unsavory areas of District Six. Bloemhof flats in Constitution Street is one of the buildings that come to mind with its shattered glass windows. Somehow, I felt protected by that doctor's badge (black cross on white background), which was visibly displayed on the dashboard

Everyone knew and respected the doctor, and often there was someone to greet him at the front gate. Before embarking on a house call, he would enquire about a dog. Even if he was told, "Not to worry, it is a very friendly dog," he would need a guarantee that the dog would be locked up in another room. Most dog bites he saw in his practice were from the owner's dogs. I must have inherited my phobia of big dogs from him. On some of the more social visits, he would bring me in to say hello to the patient.

House calls were not only confined to the daytime hours. There was the odd call that would be deemed an emergency and my dad would have to trek out in the night. As he was a solo practitioner, he was essentially always on call. He had no mobile phone or pager. The house had one telephone for many years, without an answering machine. Essentially, you were a slave to your practice.

If you were not contactable, you could subscribe to a service called *If No Reply*. They would take a message or direct you to another doctor. It was not ideal but there was no alternative until my dad and a group of local doctors came up with the brilliant idea of *Night Owls*. These were also solo practitioners in the area who were reluctant to be on call 24/7 for their patients.

The initial group of *Night Owls* consisted of my dad, Dr. Tobias, Dr. Chaimowitz, Dr. Kaufman, Dr. Kaplan, Dr. Lemonsky, and Dr. Swade. I recall my dad arranging the schedule and every seventh night a different doctor would be on call. There was no coveting of one another's patients and a nominal fee was paid to the doctor. It was something like R2 in those days!

The arrangement was highly successful and other doctors from Sea Point, Dr. Resnick, Dr. Katz, Dr. Cohen and Dr. Kramer also asked to join the group.

This arrangement and nightly rotation went on for many years until, one by one, the doctors retired or emigrated overseas. My dad soon educated his patients that any house calls, other than an emergency when they should rather go to the hospital, could wait until morning.

I will allude to housecalls further on in the book when I worked with my dad as an assistant soon after completing my internship at Groote Schuur Hospital.

MY SCHOOL YEARS

My childhood and formative years were shaped at 1 Bradwell Road. *Belmor* became part of my DNA. While the practice was always there, it also became an integral part of our lives. There was no concept of privacy. As I mentioned earlier, the front 'barn' door was always kept half-open to enable natural light and fresh air to pass into the relatively dark entrance hall. It also invited the free flow of traffic to and from the kitchen and toilet to the surgery. You had to beware of coming down the stairs half-naked to sneak into the kitchen otherwise you could be greeted by a patient waiting on one of the *stoep* chairs for the doctor.

With this open-door policy, it was not unusual to see a patient walk straight into the living room and take a seat, only to be told that the waiting room was in fact on the *stoep* outside. I remember, on one occasion, my mom had visitors and this stranger arrived and sat down with the guests. It was a little embarrassing to tell her that she was in the wrong waiting area.

Solly in his practice waiting room, waiting for patients.

It was only after many years that my mom acquired a separate phone line for the house. At first, it was only used for outgoing calls. This enabled the family to talk for longer than the limit of three minutes that we had with the doctor's phone for all those years. I was always envious of my friends who used to chat for hours with one another. On the other hand, one could always get through to our house and not deal with a busy signal. Every call, whether a patient or not, was answered, "Dr. Kaye's residence", and then directed appropriately. We had to deal with many lines and intercom systems over the years.

My dad then installed an intercom system outside the front door. Our response to the buzzer prompt would be: "Who's calling?" This voice from nowhere initially freaked a lot of the locals out and they just ran away. It took a while, but then patients got used to the idea of talking into the machine and explaining why they were there. In later years, when proper security was required, a more sophisticated system with an intercom and electric gate buzzer was installed at the outside gate.

My days were crammed with schoolwork and extracurricular activities. While I went for piano lessons for the good part of seven years, I was clearly not a natural musician like my mother, who had perfect pitch and could play any tune by ear. Music lessons were painfully traumatic for me. Ms. Annie Sher was an amazingly talented teacher. I learned to play what was taught to me by heart and could perform those pieces flawlessly in an Eisteddfod competition or a Trinity School of Music examination. But my heart was not in it and I stopped practicing, which frustrated the teacher even more.

After many crying sessions, I eventually begged my mom to stop the classical lessons and for a short time, I tried syncopation (jazz). But that did not hold my interest for too long.

As a result, the beautiful ebony grand Steinway that occupied a large area of the living room became a mantle for family photographs. My repertoire consisted of two pieces that I had 'mastered' during my piano years – Beethoven's Fur Elise and Bach's Solfeggietto in C Minor. Both were my favorite classical pieces.

Sadly, today those skills are lost. However, I do appreciate the fact that those lessons instilled in me a love and appreciation of the great composers and of classical music. Thinking back, it was really a lack of maturity on my part that made me quit those lessons.

Fast forward many years later in Boston, when one of South Africa's greatest jazz and music teachers moved to the area from South Africa – Charles Segal. I thought I would try again. The basic touch was still there after many years, but I struggled to learn the new approach. Once again, I gave up in my frustration, much to Charles's disappointment. He really thought he could turn me into some maestro. Despite this, our two families still became the best of friends. I discovered later that Charles had given my mom piano lessons when she was pregnant with me.

I also did speech and elocution lessons privately, in the hope that it would improve my inherent shyness. Whilst I could perform a dance in front of a large audience, public speaking made me seize up. Over the years, I have gained more confidence, but still, I would rather dance than give a speech.

I enjoyed all the sports offered at our school and succeeded in captaining both the first teams in tennis and netball. However, during my day, Good Hope Seminary High School was no powerhouse in sports. We generally lost more games than we won. Still, I loved being part of a team and representing my school. Whilst my parents did encourage me to play sports, they were never on the sidelines to cheer.

Parents were not as involved as they are today, which can sometimes be to the detriment of their kids. There was no ulterior motive to my playing sports or other extracurricular activities such as building a resume. We just did things for enjoyment. My parents never placed any pressure on us. My father did stress that schoolwork came first but he never demanded us to be top of our class.

My childhood was really defined by my dancing. From age six, I attended classes in ballet, tap, and modern. My mom devoted herself to this activity of mine.

Me aged 11, after winning the junior bursary for more promising dancer at the Cape Town Eisteddfod

I had the most remarkable teacher, Grace Sklar, who was fondly known to all her pupils as "Auntie Gracie".

Auntie Gracie was truly the one and only. She was so charismatic and just lit up the room with her bubbly personality. She was a teacher and choreographer extraordinaire. She taught me so many lessons in life from a young age. While it was exciting to win trophies and get awards, it was not all about winning. It was about giving too.

Besides the competitions, we did hundreds of concerts throughout my career in aid of many local charities raising thousands of rand. The greatest rewards were performing in the wards of children who were affected by polio or some other neurological or orthopedic condition. I recall dancing between the hospital beds at Princess Alice Orthopedic Home and at the Jewish Aged Home (Highland House). Those moments were priceless, seeing the absolute joy on those people's faces.

My mom was a proud dancing mom, but never an interfering or pushy one. And with her distinctive handwriting, she was the perfect choice to act as a scribe for Auntie Gracie, when she was invited to adjudicate for the Modern Dance Championships in Johannesburg one year. There was my mom sitting on the podium next to Auntie Gracie, writing fiercely, but at the same time getting to glimpse all the talent in the competition. And talent there was! It was a real treat to accompany them on this mission.

My mom was supremely well organized and *shlepped* me to lessons, rehearsals, dressmakers, and performances. One of the built-in closets in my bedroom was designated the 'dancing cupboard'. This held costumes, accessories, and the proverbial makeup case that had everything from stage makeup to safety pins and band-aids. My mom was the most reliable and dependable stage mom. If one needed anything, just ask "Auntie Goulda", as she was fondly known by all, and it would get done.

'Auntie Gracie' and me.

My dad just went with the flow when it came to my dancing. Even when I was ill, he played the game and allowed me to perform by medicating me up to the hilt. If I completed my schoolwork, he was satisfied. If I had any struggles in that department, he would be quick to jump on the wagon and organize an extra lesson.

He always had a patient who needed extra money. He even volunteered me as a ballet teacher to one of his less fortunate patients. I was only about nine at the time and I had to give the little girl a ballet lesson. I was totally overwhelmed by this, but I did it, nonetheless. The little girl came with two pennies to pay me. It taught me a huge lesson in how fortunate and privileged I was.

I knew that dancing would not be my ultimate career. It did teach me tremendous discipline, and I continued with classes until my matric year in high school. I was in it for the enjoyment and not really for keeping in shape.

I was generally very active. I ate anything and everything and did not put on an ounce of weight until I started 'swotting' for my matriculation exams. I was never concerned about food content. I was always a picky eater. I was never a dairy fan. I refused to eat butter, cheese, or drink plain milk. Anything with a pungent smell just turned my stomach. A visit to a dairy farm or cheese factory was not on my list.

Meals were all home-cooked. There was always white bread on the table as well as a very simple salad composed mostly of iceberg lettuce, fresh cucumbers, and sliced tomato. Not very nutritious by today's standards. We rarely went to a restaurant. That was for the grownups.

On a special occasion, we would go to a popular Italian restaurant, The Harlequin, in Woodstock. My favorite dish to order was spaghetti bolognese. I loved tomato flavoring, although I did not eat fresh tomatoes. I have never been a risk-taker when it comes to new foods as my family will attest to. Roasted potatoes, boiled white rice and green peas were my staples growing up. These vegetables accompanied delicious stews of either beef or chicken. Cape Town waters boast amazing fresh fish. At least once a week, a platter of either fried Dover sole or kingklip was prepared along with chips, (French fries).

Drinks were largely in the form of freshly squeezed orange juice or Coca-Cola, which was another unhealthy staple in our house. Although we were not a snacking family, I enjoyed the local brands of chocolates and potato crisps. Looking back at my diet then, I would say it was totally lacking in greens, and I ate way too many carbohydrates.

When I stopped my rigorous dance training, I continued to eat junk food. My mom was very subtle in telling me that perhaps I could lose a few pounds. She introduced me to the little carbohydrate-counting book. The message was quite clear. Keep to about 60 grams of carbohydrates per day and eat as much fat as you want. The extra few pounds just dropped off in no time. I learned that little carb-counter by heart and it has stuck with me to this very day. It's all about the carbs!

I do remember *Ponderax* (fenfluramine) being the diet pill of the day. I admit to trying a course for about two weeks to suppress my appetite. For me, it was largely psychological, and it had the opposite effect. That was my first and last experiment with diet pills.

I was undecided about what I would do when I graduated from high school. My parents had always said that pharmacy was a great career choice for a woman, as one could do locums and still raise a family. I entertained that idea when I filled out my application to the University of Cape Town. I was more interested in the sciences so was leaning toward a Bachelor of Science degree in pharmacy. At the last minute, I threw in my application to UCT Medical School. My grades were solid, and I also had the required science and biology.

Although there were no actual interviews, the 'package' looked stellar with a good recommendation from the principal, Miss Charlton. I had also been elected head girl and had been awarded other leadership honors. However, the deciding factor would ultimately be the first-class pass and senior certificate subject grades, which would allow me to make the cut.

My brother had already completed his preclinical years. I saw the slog that it was, and I could not envision myself spending six years at medical school and then a one-year internship. It seemed like an eternity, and I did not know too many females who completed the course and practiced their profession in those days. To add to that, I was quite squeamish, to say the least. My brother Trevor really thrived in those blood and trauma situations. The matric results came out and a few days later, I received the letter of acceptance from UCT Medical School. There was great excitement around, but I was still very confused as to what I really wanted to do.

I admit that I was largely influenced by my dad. His words were: "If I could do it, then so can you!" He kept reiterating that medical school was not rocket science.

My mom took a step back when I came to making my final decision. There were no second chances at medical school when I started. If you failed one course during the first year, then you were out. The weeks were long and classes were from 8 am Monday through Friday with labs four afternoons per week. There was no time for a social life. I was envious of the arts and social science students who were hanging at the student union or sunning themselves on 'Jammie' steps outside the old Jameson Hall (the newly renamed Sarah Baartman Hall). University was so different from high school where we had been totally spoon-fed. I realized that physics, chemistry, and biology had nothing to do with being a doctor but was a premed requirement and one way of weeding out the class.

I remember the elation when Trevor passed his first year and that was a motivating force. We were given two prescribed books to read during that first year. One was the *Double Helix* by James Watson about the discovery of DNA and the other short stories about all the past Nobel prize winners in science and medicine. My dad elected to read and discuss the books with me. Many years later, James Watson was denounced for making disparaging racial comments about genes and Blacks-comments he has refused to retract. It was a highly controversial book that upset a lot of prominent scientists, including Francis Crick with whom he shared the 1962 Nobel prize in Medicine.

While my dad could not help me with the science subjects, he continually wanted to remain involved and support me during my studies. Physics became torture for me by midyear, so he enlisted one of his patients, who was also an applied mathematics lecturer at the university, to tutor me once a week. Biology was a combination of botany and zoology. The botany lecturer was the worst I had ever experienced in all my years at the university. He made a drier subject even drier. Drawing leaves and looking down microscopes at phloem (vascular tissue in charge of transport and distribution of the organic nutrients), is all I can remember. If only it had some relevance to the drugs that we would be studying down the line during pharmacology.

Zoology was a total turnoff for me. I hated the fact that we had to 'euthanize' and then dissect real live animals and insects – cockroaches, rats, frogs, crayfish, and the dreaded smelly dogfish, with all its cranial nerves. That was the syllabus and I had to comply. My dad again did his part by getting one of his fisherman patients to deliver some live crayfish to our kosher home. One dunk in a pot of boiling water did not exactly do the trick, and on opening the refrigerator one evening I noticed these creatures had come back to life which totally freaked me out. To dissect crayfish, they could not be cooked, so there was this fine line that depicted the point of death.

Before a practical examination, we had to practice the dissections and we could pick up live rats and frogs at the university. One morning, my mom was hugely surprised by an escaped frog hopping around the kitchen, which then had to be captured. The frog dissection was the one that fascinated me most. It was done on a wax slab floating in water inside a baking pan. The internal organs just rose to the top and could be clearly identified.

I basically sweated through that first year and only achieved that pass after a grueling oral examination in chemistry with the highly respected Professor Ellsworth, who made it a mission to address every student in his class after one week by their last name. "Miss Kaye" it was for me, in his usual sarcastic tone when I erred during a chemistry lab.

Despite my busy week, I did manage to have somewhat of a social life. There was no one special but I did manage to get asked out most Saturday nights on a date. During those years, if there was no official date, then one would just stay at home. There was no going out to clubs and bars with a group of friends, like it is today. I had spent 12 years of my life in an all-girls school and did not have any 'boyfriends' per se. I had never called a guy. My mom said it was not the right thing to do.

I did go to parties, socials, and discos in high school. Besides my school friends, who remain very dear to me today, I also made friends from my dancing days, and these also became lifelong. The wonderful thing about social media for me is that I have reconnected with all these wonderful people in recent years as my Facebook friends. We celebrated our 50th high school reunion in Cape Town in Feb 2020 a week before the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

My parents gave me the most wonderful treat at the end of my first year. They released the reins a bit and allowed me to travel to Europe and Israel on a tour organized by NUSAS (National Union of South African Students). This was quite a controversial organization in my day, as it was open to all races. It was formed as an organization to represent and promote the interests of all university students in South Africa.

This was called the 'Air Hop' tour and it certainly bore a striking similarity to the movie, *If It's Tuesday,This Must be Belgium*. Still, it gave me my first real taste of traveling.

Second-year marked the move from the upper campus to the medical school campus. School only commenced in early February, so it was still the height of summer. One Sunday evening, I reluctantly went to one of the hops or socials at the Jewish students' organization on campus. There I met familiar faces but also one or two new faces who were also medical students a

year or two above me. One guy totally caught my eye but appeared to be with someone else, who I later learned was just a family friend. I went home and accepted going on a date with someone else for the following Saturday night. I remember the image of this eye-catcher and dreamed about him that night. I only learned his name the following day: Richard Kerbel. There was no Google, Facebook or Instagram for further information about someone.

While walking on campus the following Monday, I bumped into Richard and he was particularly friendly. We got talking and asked me out for a date the following Saturday night. I was gutted as I already had plans. “How about another time?” I eagerly blurted out. He took my number and called me via payphone at medical residence to invite me out on the following Sunday evening to the symphony concert at the City Hall. An unusual choice for a first date, to say the least but I accepted without hesitation. We double-dated with his best friend, Allan Feldt, who brought along a beautiful rag princess as his date – somewhat intimidating!

Truth be told, Richard and I clicked from that very first date and we were an item on and off for the next five years. That was March 12, 1972, and we celebrate that ‘anniversary’ each year, although our trip to the chuppah was only five years later in February 1977.

Richard was from East London but spent many summers in Cape Town, although our paths had never crossed. We were both only 19 when we met. He was one year ahead of me at school. Richard was the first guy I bought home to meet my family. Of course, they never thought it was serious, as he was only a third-year medical student. There was a six-year age gap between my parents and the trend in those days was for girls to be married in their early 20s. There was this myth that guys would court girls through six years of medical school and then dump them once they were qualified. Well, I was prepared to take my chances.

It really helped to have an older brother and a boyfriend ahead of me at medical school. I knew exactly what I was in for each year. Trevor was meticulous and organized in his note keeping and passed these skills down to me. Richard had the full experience of medical school as he lived on campus. For this reason, he had lots of groups of friends. He had his little tutorial group that would play cards between lectures and during lunch. I always knew where to find Richard during the day at med school but I was mindful of never coming between him and his friends. This was his way of relaxing. Richard has always been an avid sportsman. From playing varsity rugby at UCT, he segued into playing recreational and competitive squash.

I, on the other hand, had stopped my dancing and played a little tennis. Exercising was not a top priority in my life. My days were just consumed with my books. I usually came home from school in the late afternoon and just flopped on my bed and power-napped before dinner. I was a night owl when it came to studying and usually only got to bed after midnight. Anyone driving past our house late at night always noted the lights on in our bedrooms.

As I mentioned earlier, medical school was not always plain sailing. My first encounter with the anatomy laboratory was not pleasant. I was almost knocked out by my first whiff of formalin that was used in the preservation of the cadavers. This was even before the donor

cadaver had been unveiled to our little group of eight students. I was ready to give up there and then.

Anyhow, I devised a little plan which worked for me. I kept a small jar of Vicks vapor rub in my locker and every morning as I donned my white lab coat, I would dab a small amount of the salve at the base of each nostril. This seemed to do the trick. Still, I was not one of the most active dissectors in my group. I could not wait for that year to be over. Between anatomy and peering down at boring histology slides, could a medical school get any worse? By the year's end, I was ready to quit and take a less challenging course.

My dad did not push me, but early in my third year, I did set up a meeting with the Chair of Pathology, Professor Uys, at the time. He was very reassuring and encouraging and said that once the basic sciences were behind me, I would get a real taste of medicine. So, sticking to my dad's famous mantra, I became a stayer.

Trevor graduated from medical school with flying colors and achieved an internship in the prestigious Saunders and Louw firms at Groote Schuur Hospital. He married his long-time girlfriend, Jackie Landsman, and finally moved out of the family home.

Fourth-year heralded the start of the clinical years. Some of the lecturers were contemporaries of my dad's. I was now known as Trevor Kaye's younger sister. I did not want to disappoint. It was really the first time I became excited and passionate about learning. I was dealing with real people and live cases. I could not wait to arrive home and discuss my day with my dad.

While some of the diagnoses were complicated, I could not believe that my dad knew all the stuff I was talking about. Those textbooks that had accumulated dust all those years in the bookcase outside my room suddenly came to life again. I was now part of a group that was easily identified by my white coat with dark green piping that shouted, "medical student". The pockets were overly stuffed with diagnostic sets, pens, notebooks, and of course, completing the picture was the obligatory stethoscope dangling around the neck. Not a smartphone in sight. How did we survive? We conversed with one another and went to the library to research a subject.

Our academic year was divided into a number of blocks. It was during my fourth year that I was introduced to obstetrics. I watched in awe and a bit of horror my first vaginal delivery. I could not believe that my dad had done hundreds of these during his long career. His advice to me was that the less you interfere the fewer complications. Just allow nature to take its course. With his famous hands-off technique, he did not encounter one poor outcome. By the end of my fourth year, I had completed the required 30 deliveries and had assisted in many cesarean sections. I must admit it took a bit of time, but by the end of my first clinical year, all my squeamishness had disappeared.

As part of our fifth year, we were required to do a six-week elective, either locally or abroad in any discipline pertaining to our studies. This had only recently been introduced to the curriculum starting from the class ahead of us. This meant that Richard who was by now in his

fifth year was given this opportunity. He chose to go to a program in Israel, which in fact turned out to be more of a vacation than anything else. When it was my time for an elective, my parents were adamant that I stay locally. My dad was more all about work than play and he was not going to sponsor me on a jaunt to Europe in the middle of my academic year. So, my elective was a stint at the Red Cross Children's Hospital, followed by a couple of weeks shadowing Dr. Solly Sieff, a prominent and beloved pediatrician in Cape Town.

I do admit my disappointment in not going to London to one of the famous hospitals with my classmates, but I did gain some valuable experience nonetheless staying back in Cape Town.

Our training took us into the world of informal settlements. I certainly learned how the other half lived. We followed up with infants and children who were inpatients and then went back to their corrugated iron shacks. We experienced Apartheid right under our own very eyes. While our class admitted Cape Colored and Indian students, Black students were not admitted. The hospitals were run by the Cape Provincial Administration and as such was subject to strict Apartheid laws. The wards in the hospital were separate.

There were Whites-only and non-Whites-only wards on opposite sides of the long passage at Groote Schuur Hospital. The White medical students had free access to all the wards and patients while the "non-White" students were restricted to the "non-White" wards – just in case a "White" patient would object to being examined by a person of color. There was never any sort of rebellion on their part, except when the final class photograph was taken during graduation, the "non-White "students were noticeably absent. Their names are listed as absent, but their message is loud and clear. It is not a photograph that I can proudly display.

As medical students, we did our part and ran the S.H.A.W.C.O clinics out on the Cape Flats. One evening a week, the medical students would all ride together in a combi and provide free medical care to the inhabitants. We were far from doctors but we were supervised by a general practitioner who ran the show and it felt to us as if we were providing a valuable service.

1976

The year 1976 heralded the time that television was first introduced in South Africa. Despite being such an economically advanced country, somehow the government always believed that seeing the outside world would corrupt the population. We were brought up with the radio. We had transistor radios all over our home. Mealtimes always coincided with the world news. There was a lot of censorship and we only got to hear what was appropriate for our ears. My dad loved listening to the radio, especially the news, stock prices, and music. For every device owned the government demanded a license. The same went for television. They were very strict about enforcing the rules and my dad was ultra-compliant.

People rushed out to buy their sets and all they really got to see was the test pattern all day. The network only started to broadcast at 6 pm. The *South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC)* which was government-owned boasted the fact that South Africa had the PAL system which was best for color. The country became hooked on the *Brady Bunch*, *Dallas,* and *Civilization*. It was all canned shows. The South African TV industry was still in its infancy and could hardly produce a show of any caliber. It was certainly weird when I look back on growing up without this medium. We missed the moon landing live in 1969 -inconceivable!

My memories of growing up were climbing into bed at night and listening to all my favorite radio programs; quiz shows, radio theater, and a vast variety of other shows. I also read avidly. We did not miss television as we knew no better.

Nineteen Seventy Six was also my final year at medical school. At last, we had commanded a little respect from the underclassmen. 'Final year medical student' always had a nice ring to it. You had endured the six-year program. I had never thought much further than that. Of course, I wanted to get married and have a family. I was 24 already and getting up there. Richard had just graduated and was doing his internship at Groote Schuur Hospital. His family had relocated to Cape Town from East London, and he was now living at home with them in a lovely flat in Sea Point. Our families had become close friends since their move. I got to know his older brother, Tony, who recently married a very good friend of mine, Irma Phillips, and his younger sister, Patricia, who had a long-term relationship with and later married one of Richard's classmates, Alan Kantor.

Richard still had compulsory military service looming over his head. My brother had elected to do this straight out of high school, which was nine months at the time. Trevor had just received his commission as an officer when he had a motor vehicle accident while driving in the camp. He had overturned a jeep and, in the process, severed some important tendons and vessels in his right wrist. This occurred while he was up in Pretoria. I was in the room when my parents received that dreaded phone call. They immediately sprang into action to get the first plane up to Pretoria. My brother was fortunate in that he was close to the top military hospital in the country (Voortrekkerhoogte).

My mom had not flown since her first cousin, a newly qualified doctor, Jacqueline Ospovat, had perished in one of South African Airways' early fatal crashes operating from East London to Durban. Vacation transport in our family had only taken in the form of cars, boats, and

trains. The subject was taboo in our house. My mom was then forced into reality and flying was the only means of her getting up to Pretoria to see Trevor.

This broke the 'spell' for her, but I continued to be a nervous flyer for most of my life. My mom then became a flying pro after we moved to the United States. She often traveled in a navy blue and red pants suit with red accessories, looking like one of the flight crew from British Airways.

Trevor and his wife, Jackie, moved to England where he completed his studies and became an MRCP (Member of the Royal College of Physicians), a degree that my dad was immensely proud of. After working as a physician in London, their travels finally took them across the pond to the United States. In Boston, there were several ex-South African physicians doing residencies. Their reputation as superbly trained doctors preceded them.

However, my brother did not want to rush into anything before surveying other cities and sites. And so, in their minimally equipped VW combi, they embarked on an ambitious road trip. Whilst in the Minneapolis St Paul area, there was a promising offer.

However, just before he signed on the dotted line, an opportunity came in from the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital in Boston for an internal medicine residency program, which largely recognized what he had already accomplished overseas. For this reason, the West Coast was never entertained and back they trekked to Boston to take up the new position. The fairy godfather in all of this was Dr. Herbert A Selenkow, a prominent physician and thyroid specialist at Harvard Medical School.

He took a special interest in the newly minted South African doctors and was willing to sponsor them for Green Cards. The year was 1976 and South Africa was going through a tumultuous time. It was a pariah of the world for its Apartheid policy and the future did not look at all favorable. However, we were stuck. I had not yet graduated from medical school and was still single, although Richard was clearly in the picture at that stage.

June 1976 saw the Soweto uprising in South Africa. This was a series of demonstrations started by black schoolchildren who were forced to do their education in Afrikaans which was not their native language. Sadly, they were ambushed by the South African Police and hundreds were killed and injured. These demonstrations made their way down to Cape Town and we saw the fruits of this in the casualty department at Groote Schuur Hospital, when people were speckled with buckshot wounds – painful and arduous to treat. The medical students, registrars, and consultants all got into panic mode. Where did the future lie in South Africa?

America was slowly closing its doors to foreigners and was making it increasingly difficult for foreign medical graduates to obtain visas. We had all passed the ECFMG (Examination for Foreign Medical Graduates) with flying colors during our final year. However, now that credential was defunct and there were rumors that a new and much more difficult test was going to be introduced the following year, called the VQE (Visa Qualifying Examination). The

first part was a detailed knowledge of all the basic sciences which we had put to rest almost four years ago. The second part was clinical knowledge and then a basic English skills test.

Final year medicine was really a recap of the clinical years and we had to show proficiency in internal medicine, including pediatrics, general surgery, and ob-gyn.

I was fortunate to be a part of a very bright and enthusiastic tutorial group that all wanted to succeed and land good internship placements. Trevor had left quite a legacy at medical school and now it was my time to shine. By now, he was already in an established training program in Boston. Before his departure, he did allow me to copy his meticulous set of carefully compiled notes. These mini files were an absolute lifeline for me. There is an upward learning curve in taking handwritten notes as opposed to the digital experience. The information becomes more ingrained. Perfect for a visual learner like myself.

All the complicated hospital cases I was seeing did not relate to the day-to-day GP ailments that my dad was dealing with. I was clueless about the treatment of run-of-the-mill strep throats or ear infections. While my dad supported me in my studies, he felt out of his depth with this new and different approach to medicine. Still, I had much to learn from him.

Richard was already into his internship year at Groote Schuur Hospital (GSH), and so our paths did manage to cross during the day.

Graduating a second child as a doctor was a proud moment for my parents. Soon after the auspicious capping ceremony in December 1976, I was thrown into an internship headfirst at GSH. With a degree behind my name, I still felt lost and clueless – six months in internal medicine in the Jackson firm and six months in surgery and pediatric surgery in the famed Prof Jannie Louw Firm. I was 24 but looked like a teenager. I had to keep reassuring the elderly patients that I indeed was a qualified doctor. This did not exactly boost my confidence.

In those days, the new interns had to do the busy work – draw the blood for labs and put up the IV drips.

During that year, the hospital transitioned from the giant plastic syringes, which had to be decanted into the various tubes, to the much easier, more efficient vacuum-sealed color-coded tubes. The former was a real messy affair and could easily expose one to an infectious agent. There were many occasions that I had to summon Richard to come from his ward to assist me in inserting the intravenous drips. He was very proficient and could locate the most obscure vein. I was on call every third night and sleep was a luxury of the past.

Limited hours on call for doctors were not yet implemented.

My first weeks' vacation was for our wedding and honeymoon. Truth be told, I was so exhausted from the long hours, that all I did was show up in my beautiful white gown at my wedding. All the rest was taken care of by the two sets of parents.

Richard and me, February 20, 1977.

Once married, Richard and I moved into a small flat in Bantry Bay, one of the most beautiful and protected spots in Cape Town. Sadly, we hardly had a minute to appreciate it. We either ate at the hospital or at one of our parents' homes. Hardly a way to start married life but we weren't any the wiser and a lot of our peers were in similar situations.

We both had cars. I had a little brown stick-shift Mini Minor, which my grandma Jenny had gifted me in my fourth year. Until that point, I was either in a carpool or borrowed my mom's car. I do recall having endless battery problems with that little car. I constantly needed to jumpstart it. The Mini served me right until we emigrated. That was my last experience driving a manual car.

I was largely responsible for the fact that Richard stayed in South Africa to do his compulsory military service with the SADF. I still had to do a year's internship after graduating, in order to be a licensed medical practitioner. A few of his friends did skip the country; they were never prosecuted as the regime ultimately changed and compulsory military service was scrapped.

However, not our story! We did not want to remain in exile.

Halfway through my internship, I moved back into my childhood home. Richard had to go to Pretoria to do his basic military training after which he was, like Trevor, commissioned as an officer. Living back in Vredehoek was comforting and convenient, as it was only a seven-minute drive to the hospital from 1 Bradwell Road. I lived for the letters and the occasional phone call from Richard. He had to line up in the barracks to make a call. We currently take mobile phones for granted.

After about six weeks, he was allowed a weekend home. I was so self-involved at the time that I was totally unaware of the stress that he was going through during basic army training. Even

with the title of Doctor, there were some military personnel who derived great satisfaction from crushing the human spirit. His military training was scheduled for a period of 12 months, but during training, they upped the period to 24 months. We were not happy, but we were trapped.

There were various insurgents on all the fronts of South Africa and these border posts had to be manned. Richard was sent to an outpost on the Limpopo River, bordering the Kruger National Park and Zimbabwe. Things were essentially quiet over there, but it was extremely isolated. Communication was very scant. The highlight of his stay in that area was visiting the set of the film, *The Wild Geese*, starring Richard Burton and Roger Moore which was released in 1978.

WORKING WITH MY DAD

Over the years, my dad employed numerous assistants and locums for the practice. He would never just close the practice and leave on a vacation. He felt a responsibility to his patients. He would advertise in the local medical journal. Even if the applicant came with glowing testimonials, his only real criteria were the legibility of their handwriting. On his return, he needed to be able to read the abbreviated notes (3- by 5-inch cards) and do a follow-up, if necessary. No electronic anything in those days! Sometimes he hired the same locum year after year.

After the burnout of my internship year in internal medicine and surgery at Groote Schuur Hospital, I was more than ready to assist my dad in his practice. I thought I was more than qualified. Little did I know how wrong I was. This was a whole new ball game for me. Where did my dad, who had qualified all those years before I had, gain all this knowledge? It certainly was not taught to me at medical school.

I was oozing with confidence in managing complicated medical cases, but was totally clueless about the everyday ailments that warranted a consultation from the doctor. I was used to spending hours with a patient, taking a history, ordering a sling of laboratory tests, and then perhaps arriving at a diagnosis before instituting treatment. Now I had to rely on my own diagnostic acumen.

I had the best teacher in my dad. He had years of experience and could gauge whether this was a real or feigned illness. Being a general practitioner, you are was privy to the family life and stresses of a patient, which aids in making accurate diagnoses and doing the appropriate management.

I soon learned that people wanted answers and a quick fix simultaneously. I often felt that I was going against the grain of what I was taught. I was dealing with a population that was usually lacking in health insurance. They did not trust the free dispensary that was located less than a mile down the road. So, I often found myself just handing out antibiotics to some demanding patients.

I did learn the importance of the follow-up visit. There was often a ‘no charge’ for the same ailment. If they didn’t come for the return visit, it often meant that they were cured. My dad would never hold onto a case if there was no improvement. He was loyal to a team of top specialists in their respective fields, to whom he would consult or refer in an instant. He was a true believer in second opinions. I agree with that philosophy.

It is always good to have a set of fresh eyes to look at something. My dad knew his limitations and never felt threatened or insulted by having another doctor take over a case. In fact, he valued their opinions and regarded it as a learning opportunity.

Over my 18 months of working, I adopted his system. We had a good working relationship – if I continued to do things his way and didn’t question his methods or motives. I helped with house calls, visits to nursing and old-aged homes and substituted for him as a surgical

assistant in orthopedics, general surgery, and ob-gyn. They were a friendly group of doctors, who accepted me as my dad's replacement. The experience was far more pleasant than holding a surgical retractor in the Prof Louw "firm" when one minor adjustment could cause an eruption of volcanic magnitude by the chief surgeon. You did not want to upset 'G-d' in any way!

My visits to Highlands House, the Jewish Home for the aged, taught me a lot about compassion. Administering care to the elderly was not always about handing out a pill. Often, loneliness was their only ailment. A touch of the hand and some reassurance was all they needed.

It was around this time that I decided to change my name officially from Kaye to my married name Kerbel for professional purposes. I found that having two last names was confusing when it came to banking and passports etc. I was Dr. Kaye and Mrs. Kerbel. The change involved quite a few legal documents. Except for my medical diploma that has my maiden name Dr. Brenda Kaye, I am now only referred to by my married last name. The confusion only then arose years later when I began working with my husband in his pediatric office. To prevent any confusion in this setting, I became known by the patients as Dr. Brenda, Dr. Mrs.

Kerbel, or just 'the other Dr. Kerbel'.

While I continued in my dad's practice, the South African Defense Force (SADF), was busy shifting Richard around the country. Eventually, he ended up working at the Wynberg Military Hospital (No 2), which was in proximity to Chezmont, our little flat in Wynberg.

The army soon discovered that this lieutenant was an invaluable asset to the army squash team. The coach used all his clout to keep him stationed at Wynberg.

It was at Wynberg Military hospital that Richard began his interest in pediatrics. Up to that point, there was only talk of him doing obstetrics. He had been taking care of the newborns and children of the military personnel.

The additional 12 months that the SADF imposed on him undoubtedly changed the course of our lives. We were essentially in a holding pattern. Forget what other plans we had in store for the following year. Also, we learned that the time in the SADF would not be over for another 30 years as there would be an obligatory one-month duty each year.

That was it! Our minds were made up. We had to leave South Africa and its horrible regime. We had to make plans and secure jobs in the United States. The problem was obtaining a visa!

We breezed through the ECFMG (Education Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates). Therefore, we did not place too much focus on the new Visa Qualifying Exam. I was in the middle of my internship, working crazy hours, and Richard had just completed his basic army training in Pretoria.

The exam was given in various centers throughout the world in September. We were ill-prepared and we did not attain the required marks in the basic science section. We were in

good company, as many of the prominent physicians at Groote Schuur Hospital suffered the same fate.

We knew our futures were at stake. So, as soon as we were able, we registered for the next exam the following year and made a concerted effort to prepare for it. We attacked the prescribed textbooks with vigor. This time, we had to travel to a test center in Johannesburg. The preparation paid off as we were both successful in all three parts: basic sciences, clinical sciences, and English. We were elated! We soon realized what a scam this was. It was only another step in the process of applying for a visa. You still needed a job and Labor Certification.

In December of that year, I took my first trip alone to Boston for a look-and-see. Snow blanketed the ground and temperatures were below freezing. It was difficult to get my mind around the fact that this might be my home one day. It was both exciting and scary at the same time. I could not imagine leaving my family and beautiful Cape Town for this.

I was getting a lot of prodding from Richard and from his parents who were encouraging the move. I did my homework diligently and checked out possible apartments, also the Waltham Hospital, where we might be offered a residency. I returned home with a realistic attitude, while Richard was bent on utopia. In the interim, we began applying for jobs and submitting the various testimonials and transcripts from UCT Medical School.

Things were moving along well. Richard's parents, Edna and Herby, were delighted to welcome their first little beautiful granddaughter, Glenda, Tony and Irma's new baby in March of 1979. There was much excitement brewing in the family.

Then, in April of 1979 came the devastating cancer diagnosis of Richard's dad, Herby. This hit us all very hard. My dad and he were close in age and were also good friends. Herby was the most lovable guy. This affected my dad profoundly. He burst into tears when he read the radiology diagnostic report which somehow had been sent to his office. He was inconsolable. How was he going to break the news to Richard, whom he regarded as a son?

Suddenly, our lives were in turmoil. How could we possibly leave? Further tests and an open laparoscopy determined that this was an inoperable carcinoma of the esophagus.

There were few treatment options in those days. The plan was a course of irradiation followed by oral chemotherapy. While we all knew the eventual outcome, full disclosure was not given to Herby. They still had an overseas trip planned to the States later that year in the hope of visiting us. After Richard finished his stint with the SADF, he went to do various locums. Herby continued to work every day and tried to live as normal a life as possible.

In May of that year, I discovered I was pregnant and there was great joy all around. It was assumed that we would be staying in South Africa to have the baby. In the meantime, we had moved to a lovely duplex flat in Green Point. Trevor, meanwhile, was working diligently to find Richard a job in Boston. He did not engage a lawyer, so didn't think things would proceed as quickly they did.

In July of that same year, we suddenly received a letter from US Immigration to say that Labor Certification was almost through and that in order to receive our Green Cards we had to be in the country within six weeks. Richard's parents were elated as they had always pushed for us to leave. My dad was stunned. He said that we were making a terrible mistake and that I was going to a new country to have a baby without medical insurance or much support. I felt conflicted and guilty. How could I do this to my parents, who had given so much of themselves to me? Another dilemma was leaving Richard's dad. Writing this over 40 years down the line still evokes huge emotions in me.

The papers came through, and then there was the rush to get the necessary medical and criminal clearance.

I still remember the trip to the *Binnehuis* furniture store to pick out our dining and living room furniture. The quality of their mahogany furniture has stood the test of time. Some of the English antiques we brought over did not fare as well. We also shopped for baby furniture and stocked up on all things related. We took a full container and were able to fill up every available piece of space with all our favorite non-perishable groceries and paper goods. You would've thought we were going to a desert island, but this was our way of saving money on the other end. After some 10 years, I was still discarding unused canned goods from the old country. This was something all ex-SA patriots have in common.

I knew the layout of the apartment that we had rented in Waltham, MA. Charles Bank Garden Apartments was a popular place for young married couples to start off and it was also close to The Waltham Hospital.

BOSTON

I clearly remember all the family and some friends coming over for a farewell tea to my parents' home in Vredehoek. All the ashtrays were piled high with cigarette butts – a true sign of having a crowd. The aunts and uncles all smoked in those days. I departed Cape Town with a heavy heart. I knew my mom would come for the arrival of my baby, but there was no talk of my dad coming.

We arrived in Boston on October 5, 1979, each with our two suitcases and me with a sizable belly. As our lift was only scheduled to arrive in November, we moved in with Trevor and Jackie in their two-family home for a couple of weeks. We were thrown in at the deep end. Richard started work as a surgical intern with a hellish schedule. I was persuaded to fill in an ob-gyn position, a specialty I had little interest in. My tenure at my job lasted only two weeks, due to an unseasonal snowstorm and a midnight delivery. That prompted my resignation.

We bought a brand-new blue Toyota Corolla with our remaining cash, following my dad's advice never to owe money. Of course, this was a huge mistake as we needed to build up credit in our new country. Sears even refused us a credit card. Many years later, when we had established good credit, they hounded us with offers but, on principle, we would have no dealings with them.

Richard's parents visited us as planned. It coincided with the arrival of the humongous container truck, and we had a huge amount of fun unpacking all our goods. It was a tight squeeze into a compact two-bedroomed apartment, which was essentially below ground level. When the snow arrived and covered the bushes outside our windows, our view of the ground was blocked. I used to joke that from that position we could only move up in the world.

Richard worked long shifts and I was mostly at home trying to settle into this new world. It was such a culture shock. Even our native English was not the same. People could barely understand what we were saying. We had to learn a whole new lingo. I pined after my family and home country. My mom wrote me daily aerograms and I could not wait for the mail to arrive each day. The calls were very brief and only once a week. My dad hardly got on the line. My mom was the spokesperson.

Fortunately, I did connect with an ex-SA obstetrician who fully understood my predicament with health insurance. Pregnancy was considered a pre-existing condition, so I was given a special rate by the hospital and doctor, which I was able to pay off over a few months after the delivery.

We both sat for the FLEX (Federal Licensing Examination) in January 1980 at the World Trade Center in Boston – a prerequisite for being a licensed MD in the US.

It was a three-day exam in a freezing cold facility. I was heavily pregnant and I remember bringing a donut cushion for comfort. The hall was packed with foreigners taking the exam. We endured our first Boston winter, while our friends and family were all baking in the sun

on Clifton Beach in Cape Town. In addition, the onset of darkness just after 4 pm really messed with my circadian rhythm. I bathed and was ready for bed by 5 pm! This became a daily routine during the peak of winter. At that stage we had only one car. So, unless I transported Richard to and from work at untimely hours, I was basically stranded. Of course, everything was just “peachy”, when I talked with my family. I related all the new experiences but not my innermost feelings. Pregnancy itself creates a very emotional state, which compounded things for me.

My due date was fast approaching in mid-January, and I was excited for my mom to arrive. Russell decided to arrive in his own time, a week overdue on January 26, 1980. It was not an easy delivery from both perspectives. He had shoulder dystocia with a resultant fractured clavicle. I was battered and swollen, with a spinal headache to boot. Still, we were over the moon with excitement for our new little boy, Russell.

My dad was very excited to have a grandson, but had to wait a couple of weeks before he could see the first photographs. It was during this period that we received the devastating news that Herby’s cancer was terminal.

A decision was made that we would all go back to Cape Town and spend time with Herby during his last days. My mom and I took Russell, at just two weeks old and in zero degrees temperature, on the commuter train into Boston to obtain a rushed passport for him. Russell, at barely seven weeks old, did his first trans-Atlantic flight to South Africa with zero immunizations in his system.

For my newborn and me, this was the best thing that could’ve happened. I was back in the comfort of my parent’s home and my baby was taken care of day and night. In contrast, the extreme sadness that Richard felt on seeing his dad was heartbreaking.

It was indeed a blessing to have Herby cradle Russell in his arms. The support of the community was amazing. Every afternoon, there were hordes of visitors at their Sea Point flat enjoying tea with Edna and popping in to see Herby. Richard sat day after day on his dad’s bed playing cards (klabberjass). It was a competitive father-son activity they relished since his childhood.

As Russell was our first-born male by natural delivery, we were able to hold the ‘pidyon haben’ ceremony at the flat in the presence of at least 10 men. This was very meaningful, as both grandfathers and one great-grandfather were present. This so-called 'redemption ceremony' is attained by giving five silver coins to a kohen. Isaac Ospovat, my maternal grandfather, was a kohen and so he played a pivotal role in the ceremony. A small festive meal was also prepared for everyone to enjoy.

After six weeks, the inevitable happened and Herby quietly slipped away. He was only 58 years old. Richard was robbed of his dad at such a young age, and Russell was never able to properly engage with this wonderful man.

Running on the heels of this, my beloved grandma, Jenny, was diagnosed with late-stage ovarian cancer. We had already returned to Boston. Trevor flew over to advise some palliative care. This was tough on my mom, who did not have her daughter there to support her. Grandma Jenny passed away on July 19, 1980. She had been a real presence in my life.

We survived our first year in Boston despite all these hiccups. We had 14 different sets of visitors come to stay at our tiny apartment that year. Some were just visiting and others making plans to emigrate. Still, it was nice to have familiar faces around.

The following January, I went back to Cape Town to celebrate Russell's first birthday. I stayed for six weeks, and Richard managed a couple toward the end of my stay. Winter was soon forgotten as we frolicked in the pool. My dad's practice was going well and he continued his routine of daily office hours, assisting surgeries, visiting his brothers at Universal, sitting at the pool, and taking his afternoon nap.

I lived for my annual extended visits to Cape Town and my mom's and Edna's yearly visits to Boston. My dad came occasionally but not without a lot of persuasion. He kept telling us how much organization would be required on his part and that if he did not have a suitable locum in place, the practice would die.

OUR OWN HOME OFFICE

After two and a half years living in Charles Bank Garden Apartments, where we made lasting memories and friends, it was finally time to set down some roots where we could envision our children going to school. Residency and fellowship training did not bring in much of a salary and Richard had to supplement his regular job by moonlighting on weekends. At this stage, I also managed to find some part-time work at new walk-in medical centers that began to pop up around Boston. These were largely privately owned by groups of doctors who had affiliations with regional hospitals in the areas. Franklin, Milford, and Billerica were the clinics where I was employed in 4- or 8-hour shifts at a whopping $25 per hour! Still, that added income enabled us to buy our first home on Greenwood Street in Newton.

Suddenly, my dad showed a huge interest in our purchase: not for the upstairs living quarters, which were luxurious compared to what we previously had, but for the potential ‘surgery’ in the roughly finished basement that had a separate entrance. So, gone was Russell's playroom, and in a few months, a lovely pediatric-friendly home office was created. The plan, however, was to work mornings in shared office space with a well-established ex-South African pediatrician in Watertown and only do afternoon office hours in the home office in Newton.

Richard initially thought that he would receive the overflow from this ultra-busy pediatrician, but in all honesty, the pediatrician decided to move his location as he felt a direct threat.

With the help of local obstetricians and other referring doctors, Richard's practice slowly grew. He had a divided practice between Newton and Watertown, just as my dad had when he started out.

My dad was hugely proud of Richard and the fact that he had taken his advice. This office was a little more intrusive than my dad’s, as we had to tread very quietly when patients were downstairs. Also, we could not have more than one or two cars at a time parked outside, as neighbors would complain. Still, this arrangement worked for eight years until we moved homes and consolidated the practice in the big white house on Mt Auburn Street in Watertown, coincidentally also at a bus stop.

Thanks to my dad and his encouragement, Richard was able to build up a very busy patient base in Newton and surrounding areas. They all followed him to his Watertown location. It was at this stage that I too hung up my shingle below Richard’s and started seeing sick children and adolescent females. I was done with the stress of working in emergency medicine.

CANCER DIAGNOSIS

My dad was never one to draw attention to his own health or even complain about an ache or a pain. However, he never ignored a symptom. After experiencing a rectal bleed, he took himself off to one of his respected surgeon colleagues. He was diagnosed with a lesion low down in his colon. The surgeon advised that Professor David Dent from Groote Schuur Hospital be consulted in his case. He came home and made the announcement to my mom that he was to have major surgery in the coming week.

We were stunned! He was just shy of his 60th birthday. He was otherwise in perfect health. He made the unprecedented decision to his family that if the cancer had spread in any way, he was forgoing chemotherapy, as results were not at all promising for colon cancer at that stage. We could, therefore, only hope for the best outcome of the surgery. The plan was that Trevor would fly to Cape Town for the surgery and immediate postoperative period and I would go for six weeks following that with my two-and-a-half-year-old.

We couldn't have asked for more expert care than was afforded to us by Professor Dent and his team at GSH. It might have helped that both Trevor, Richard, and I had been interns under Prof Dent and had a personal connection.

It was determined at surgery that the lesion was located very low down in the rectum. The only option was to perform an abdominoperineal resection where the anus, rectum, and sigmoid colon are removed, and a permanent colostomy placed in the abdominal wall. The position for the stoma (opening) was carefully decided by the stoma-therapist nurse, Priscilla Stevens, fondly known as "Prilly", so that he could comfortably adjust to life with his new appliance.

My dad recovered well from the surgery and only needed a couple of paracetamols for pain when he got home. However, he was ultra-careful with himself. He was never a physical person before and was less so post-surgery. He began to employ assistant GPs to work for him. Some were long-term and merited their shingle go up alongside my dad's outside of the house. Some were extremely well qualified and looking for interim work. This was a win-win situation for both. I now did not feel so bad about abandoning my dad's practice.

My dad changed his diet drastically after his surgery. He cut down on red meat and had to avoid food that would give him gas or diarrhea. Prilly found him the bags that best suited him. In one instance, they had to be imported from a Scandinavian country. He was lucky in that the hospital was able to supply him with this. He went religiously for his stoma checkups with Prilly. It was mainly to see her. He spent months shopping for her Christmas gifts. He totally recognized and appreciated her brilliance in her field.

Prilly had lectured to us as medical students, and she had a vast knowledge about stoma care – even more than the surgeons! She became a world authority and took her expertise to many parts of Africa. This prompted my dad to write one of his famous letters to get her honored by UCT by bestowing an honorary doctorate upon her.

Despite his herculean efforts on her behalf, he received rejection letters from the leadership at UCT to say she was not uniquely qualified and worthy of this. He took this personally and was not shy to voice his disappointment.

I hope one-day that Prilly reads this and knows that my dad was out there batting for her. When last I heard, Prilly was retired and living between Cape Town and the UK.

My dad kept his colostomy private and didn't want anyone, especially his patients, to know about it. He did not want it to define who he was. He felt it was a stigma and that people would run away if they knew. It limited his social activities. He often did not want to sit for long periods of time as he became uncomfortable. He never swam in the pool or went to the beach, although those were never really passions of his. He did not want to be embarrassed by any gas that would escape in public.

It did not take him long to master his appliance. He had a few hiccups along the way, but he managed to sort it with help at the clinic, and with the support of a close friend and neighbor in Boston who had dealt with his own ostomy issues.

My dad demonstrated huge courage when he embarked on his first trip to Boston about seven months post-surgery in May 1983. I was four months pregnant with our second son, Jeremy, by then. During that visit, we even took a road trip up to Montreal, which my dad handled like a pro. It was a memorable trip, which he talked about for years. He was not usually one for long car trips but it was okay if someone else drove.

ACCEPTANCE

My dad finally accepted our living in the US and encouraged my younger brother, Martin, to do the same. He realized there was no future for him in South Africa, and that he would be better off where his two older siblings were. This was particularly tough as Martin, being the youngest, was the 'special' child. My dad finally conceded after many years that we had made the correct decision in emigrating, and that we had created a wonderful life for ourselves in our newly adopted country.

When we moved into our current home, my parents had very comfortable living quarters. It was on the lower level, but they could still walk out into the garden. They had their own suite of rooms. At this stage of their lives, they traveled Business Class and always had airport assistance. My dad was never one for carrying heavy suitcases. They loved visiting with us as it was one-stop shopping to see all their children and grandchildren. Our friends included them in everything. With most of our friends being ex-South African, there was always a connection to be found.

My dad left his home and practice in good hands. Ingrid moved into 1 Bradwell Rd with her family and took charge of the patients. She was a phone call and fax away. Things ran very smoothly, and on his return to Cape Town, there were generally no issues. These trips to Boston usually lasted three weeks, by which time he was itching to go home.

Life for us was also a continuous cycle of visits to South Africa. It was a long-haul flight and we tried to vary the route for the shortest possible connection to Cape Town; London and Amsterdam winning out most of the time. Traveling with young babies was not easy, but soon it became second nature. Our boys got used to Cape Town being their second home. My parents had a warm and loving relationship with all their grandchildren, and we staggered our trips to Cape Town so that each family could have a special time with them.

Many of our friends and some cousins had emigrated to other parts of the US and Australia.

Besides having both my brothers in the Boston area, we had Richard's sister, Pat, and husband, Alan, living in Chappaqua, New York. They were only a three-hour drive away and we made frequent visits to each other enabling their children Hayden and Danielle to become close with our two boys.

My Uncle Bennie, whose wife Molly of 49 years had passed away, eventually settled in New Jersey and married a very fine lady, Shirley Aidekman. With his only remaining brother now living in the States, it was even more of an incentive for my dad to visit. Shirley maintained beautiful residences both in New Jersey and in Florida. She was a stalwart in the Jewish Community and a trustee of two major universities. We became very close with them over the years and visited them often. Bennie and Shirley made numerous trips to Cape Town. Shirley was a talented artist in her own right and was taken up by all the arts and crafts that South Africa had to offer.

We were once more a diaspora. The amazing thing was that, every December, we all would meet again on either Camps Bay or Clifton Beach and play catch up. The world-class Waterfront which was only developed after we had emigrated too became a popular meeting place.

My mom was always a young-at-heart, active lady. In the early 2000s, she started to complain of radiating leg pain to the point that she could hardly walk. I was in Cape Town at the time when she decided to undergo surgery for spinal stenosis. It was a rushed decision toward the end of one of my stays that forced me to extend my trip. Unfortunately, she did not handle the anesthesia very well and had some postoperative delirium. It scared the hell out of all of us. The surgery was not successful, and my mom continued to have chronic leg pain. My dad felt so helpless. None of his magic cures worked and this caused him much angst and frustration.

During this time, she also manifested a slew of other cognitive and neurological symptoms, as demonstrated by her decline in her knitting skills. My mom slowly withdrew and was never quite herself again. She was able to do one last trip to Boston for Martin and Diane's wedding, which was a wonderful family affair. A year later they had little Nathan and brought him to Cape Town for a short visit, which really brightened their lives.

My dad was never really interested in the athletic feats of my boys. He followed their academic progress with fervor and wondered what they would do with their lives. Becoming a doctor follows a completely different path in the US. Therefore, when Russ entered college to do a BA in Economics, he had absolutely no idea what his ultimate career path would be.

Three generations of medical doctors: Russell, me and Solly, July 2008

Towards the beginning of his junior year in college, he decided to switch tracks to premed, which totally took us all by surprise. Of course, my dad was thrilled and had him 'graduating' before he had even been accepted at medical school. This enthusiasm and encouragement on my dad's part influenced Russell's life. When he finally entered Tufts Medical School in 2004, he was all in for the long journey. My dad was continuously blown away by Russell's good grades and class assessments. His mantra about the stayers continually fueled Russell.

As I had mentioned earlier, my mom's demise was sudden and unexpected. Whether it was a stroke or her heart was immaterial, she was ultimately spared the long-term devastating effects of Lewy Body disease – a blessing in disguise. The funeral had to be delayed until all three of us could get on a flight to Cape Town.

Here are my words at her funeral.

"What we once enjoyed and deeply loved we can never lose, for all that we love deeply becomes a part of us." – Helen Keller ,

"My mom will always be a part of me. She set the bar when it came to being a devoted wife and a good mother and has been an example that I have tried to emulate my whole life and will continue to do so. In my eyes, she was always the queen. In fact, in those good old days even sported the same hairstyle although she gave up the traditional hair set 'do' years ago.

Mom was always the epitome of elegance. She loved clothes and was always beautifully turned out, but not in an extravagant way. She had golden hands. When I was a child, she took pride in sewing all my dresses. She was a knitter par excellence and not only knitted for all her children and grandchildren but knitted layettes for her nieces and nephews. She utilized this talent for charity, and I remember her dressing scores of little dolls for the annual Herzlia School fete.

She was a talented baker who made creative birthday cakes for us. She loved the arts and did not miss a ballet or musical show. She played the piano and at one eisteddfod even rose to the occasion when the pianist did not show, and she had to play for me while I performed. She was the consummate dancing mom and at the same time managed to attend my brother Trevor's rugby matches and athletic meets. When Martin was involved in swimming, she shuttled him to training sessions.

She was a skilled bridge player and in the latter years became quite the computer whiz. She was a prolific correspondent and over the years chronicled every detail of her life back home in Cape Town to us in Boston. She was super organized, kept a diary and was the 'mother' of all list makers. She planned months ahead for her trips to visit us and each child and grandchild received a carefully chosen gift. Her suitcases were bottomless pits. She spent weeks with us every year and my children are truly blessed to have formed such a wonderful bond with their grandmother. She and my dad were there for my sons' bar mitzvahs. She attended graduations, proms, and even lacrosse games.

One year, we schlepped her halfway across the United States to a national chess tournament. Even across the miles she was involved and took an interest in all their activities. She loved all her grandsons and treasured the disc bracelet she constantly wore sporting all their names and birth dates. Mom was the most loyal person. She was loyal to her family, to her friends, to her hairstylist and manicurist, and even to the stores, she frequented. Everyone loved her in return, and this was evident in the way she was treated right up to the end, always with utmost respect and dignity. Dad was the ultimate caregiver and companion, never leaving her for a second. She had a wonderful team of supporters led by Linda, Ingrid, and Alex. We will all feel the terrible void, but will continue to cherish the memories of our beautiful mother, grandmother, wife, and friend."

As the only daughter, I felt hugely responsible for my dad. He would be living alone in that big house. He did not want the caregivers to stay on as companions. My dad was someone who could make tea, use a microwave oven and open the refrigerator for a snack. But those were his limits. Ingrid was now working daily as the nurse, receptionist but also as a housekeeper. My brothers had already returned to Boston, and I had remained to sort out the house.

Solly turns 85 in 2007.

It took a fair amount of prodding on my part but I persuaded my dad to come home with me to Boston for a few weeks. He did not like the long-distance travel at the best of times and was just content being at home seeing his patients who were still coming at a steady rate. He was busy with his acupuncture and doing physical examinations for the fisherman.

I booked his trip Business Class while I sat in Economy on the same flight. It was the best medicine for him as there was always some action around my home. My friends visited often and, of course, he was able to see the grandkids, who had not gone off to college.

On the flight back to Cape Town, he was accompanied by one of my cousin's children who just happened to be visiting South Africa at the time.

For the next four and a half years, we all visited him on separate occasions and he managed one more trip back to Boston. He enjoyed it so much that he even considered applying for permanent residency. That, however, never came to fruition.

He had several house companions over the years. Each stay was short-lived as each person had their own sob story. One an alcoholic and another proved to be a kleptomaniac. Still, they filled the void.

Friends and cousins really showed up, visiting and taking him out on weekends. He particularly enjoyed a musical soiree on a Saturday afternoon with his friend, Dr. Alec Chaimowitz, at his flat up in Tambourskloof. Dad still drove my mom's Toyota Corolla and was able to do simple chores, such as taking Ingrid to the Gardens Centre, or visiting the bank.

We made a particular fuss about his 85th birthday, which we held at his favorite venue – the Radisson Blu near the Waterfront. Martin and I were there, as well as all his nephews and close friends. It was a memorable event with many photos. He was still in control of all his finances and hardly shared any information with us. This all, however, would come to a grinding halt.

THE LATTER YEARS

It was January 10, 2010, and the phone woke me earlier than usual. It was Dr. Lynne Wolhuter on the line and in her usual calm voice told me that my dad had suffered a left-sided stroke. The CSO (Medical-Community Security Organization) paramedics were already at the house and were transporting him to the Christian Barnard Hospital in Cape Town. He was still lucid and talking, but the next 48 hours would be critical as the stroke was evolving. Our wonderful family in Cape Town rallied around him. Ingrid, his loyal assistant, took overall charge of his care and the practice while my two brothers and I scrambled to get flights to Cape Town.

My brothers and I all took different routes to Cape Town arriving within hours of each other. We walked into the unit which housed my dad and there he was lying in bed and talking in a very quiet voice. He thanked us for coming. My heart just sank. Where do we go from here? The day before this incident he was doing physicals for 30 able-bodied fishermen and now his life had taken an abrupt turn.

During this hospital stay, he relayed to us two very out-of-body experiences he had had. These images became ingrained in his mind, although they were largely hallucinogenic in nature. In the first, he describes his coat, which normally hangs behind his door, dancing around the room. In his other vision, he describes a magical painter transforming the color of the hospital room. I assumed that the reflective nature of the large window had contributed to this effect. He also mentioned at this point that he had faced death and was not afraid.

The hospital room was filled with visitors, his devoted nephews, grandnephews, and lifelong friends all showing their faces and love. One thing was missing – his music!

I ran back to the house and brought his portable CD player and favorite Engelbert Humperdinck collection. His whole demeanor changed. Music emanated from the room and very soon the hospital staff came streaming in. Janitors came with their brooms and were waltzing to the ballads with huge smiles on their faces. It was the highlight of their workday.

Music is indeed wonderful therapy. My dad became the most popular patient on the ward.

Within a week, his condition had stabilized and we now had the arduous task of preparing for his home care. There was never talk about him going to a retirement community. He had been a resident doctor at Highlands House (the Jewish Home for the Aged) and that, for him, was totally out of the question

In the hospital, he had already established a relationship with physical and speech therapists, which are the most important aspects of stroke rehabilitation. The stroke had not only affected his left side but had also caused a marked weakness of his trunk muscles, rendering him helpless when it came to turning or lifting himself in bed. We knew he would require care 24/7. As we were out of the country, we had to rely on an agency that would provide staff. A very good school friend of mine, Marianne Hirsch, recommended an agency that she had used for her late dad. Through them were able to employ the caregivers before bringing him home.

These people were our lifelines. They slotted in well with Ingrid, who kept things running smoothly.

Except for the chair lift, which we ironically had installed six months before this event, the house was not at all handicap-friendly. We bought a hospital bed and had the shower opened to accommodate a chair. Unfortunately, there were steps to the entrance of the house. This made it very difficult to maneuver a wheelchair to the sidewalk. They did manage it on occasions but only after we installed a metal ramp through the backyard.

We bought a solid bedroom chair and modalities for the help to get him on and off the bed. We tried a hoist but that was a total disaster. I had never had firsthand experience with stroke patients. That made this all a valuable learning experience.

My dad also had an indwelling urinary catheter, which needed to be managed and changed every six weeks. The fact that he had a colostomy made nursing care very much easier. Dad was proficient at using the bag, and he was able to instruct his aides, who had little experience in that field on what to do.

Family of doctors, l-r, Russell, Richard, Trevor and me with Solly.

My dad spent his mornings sitting in his chair. He was always perfectly groomed, dressed in one of his blue shirts and a sweater. He was content to just watch television, listen to the

radio, or his CDs. Surprisingly enough, my dad was skilled at using all the remotes. By this stage, we had Direct TV installed in the house and he could access all his favorite news channels. He had access to even more programs than I had back on my cable network back in Boston. Very soon, I was introduced to Sky News, Al Jazeera, and the Russian news channels. He was a good flicker.

In the late afternoon, his caregivers would control the television. Many times, I would walk into the bedroom and my dad would be fixated on *7de Laan*, a popular Afrikaans soap opera. It was totally lost on me. Another favorite of the staff was *Keeping up with the Kardashians*. My dad appeared to enjoy that too!

He was still fascinated by smartphones and iPads. He was in awe of how one could obtain information in an instant. I thought that it would be perfect for him to have an iPad for us to Facetime with him. We set it up with a limited number of Apps so it could be used with ease by the staff. He had a designated app for his favorite stock, Redefine, and would have someone give him an update. The iPad screen was perfect for him to view all the latest photographs of his kids and grandkids. Another big plus was that he could listen to all his favorite talk show programs from around the world through the internet...BBC, PBS, Israel, and Chai South Africa.

Dad was always up on current affairs and had an opinion about everything.

My son, Jeremy, arrived from Southeast Asia on one of his visits to Cape Town and announced that a man in my dad's position ought to have a Facebook page. In a matter of minutes, Jeremy established a FB profile for my dad. He got a real kick out of collecting FB friends. it was the perfect site to post his aphorisms or 'Sollyisms', as we called them. We controlled the page and every few days he would decide what to post.

It was not always plain sailing with the Internet. Often the system was down and we had to deal with the frustration on the other end. Fortunately, Martin was always able to fix the line remotely from the other side of the world. This was even before all the 'load shedding' started with a vengeance in South Africa. There was the occasional power outage, but they were prepared.

While my dad had a very competent house doctor in Dr. Wolhuter, Trevor and I were always consulted first. Ingrid, from her years of experience working with my dad, picked up the subtlest of signs that something was wrong and immediately contacted us for advice. My dad still thought he could practice medicine on himself and there were times that he had called up *Chinn's Pharmacy* and self-prescribed. He did not take the ban on this practice lightly, especially when he was having sleeping issues at night.

We had to give strict orders to the caregivers about his medications. Everything was carefully labeled, and instructions were cello-taped to the wall closets. There was a clock on the wall and the day posted on the huge bedroom mirror, along with his signature '100 %' sticker in bright blue letters. We left no stone unturned when it came to his care.

The house was becoming a money pit. Every day there was something else to deal with, a leaking roof, a blocked drain, or a broken appliance.

While retirement was not part of my dad's plan, it was suddenly thrust upon him. It was a lot to swallow. He was still engaged in life but now in a very limited capacity. He never complained about his fate, always with a cheerful smile and a show of appreciation for all that we did. Still, when we said our farewells after a stay, it tugged at our hearts.

Martin, with his expert IT skills, installed a web camera in his bedroom. We could then observe our dad at any time of day or night on an app on our phones – Solly's Cam. This gave us a small sense of comfort.

I signed up for online shopping from *Pick 'n Pay* and *Woolworths* during that period. Every two weeks, Ingrid would email me a list of groceries and I would sit on my computer and order. I was more familiar with Cape Town prices than those in my local supermarket. I was astounded at the rising cost of living. Who would have thought that this practice would become second nature in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic?

Things settled into a stable rhythm at 1 Bradwell and my dad even progressed to a walker, albeit only upstairs. His appetite was back to normal and his speech was strong. Five months later he suffered a setback. He had a second stroke on that same side. This time, he was taken to the Cape Town Mediclinic in the Gardens suburb. It was in early June and we were on our way to visit our son, Jeremy, who was working in Hong Kong at the time. We had planned an extended trip to Thailand and Cambodia as part of the visit. We were leaving that night.

I was so conflicted as to what to do. In the meantime, my two brothers flew out to assess the situation. I reluctantly flew to Hong Kong. After touring for a few days, things were not improving, and I felt the need to get to Cape Town. Fortunately, there were direct flights from Hong Kong to Cape Town, so I was able to book my return trip to Boston via Hong Kong.

Richard stayed in Hong Kong with Jeremy. It so happened that we were forced to cancel the extended part of our trip due to political unrest in Thailand. June also coincided with the World Cup Soccer 2010 being held in South Africa. So, I was greeted with quite a vibe on arrival in the country.

My dad spent less than a week in the hospital. His carers 'specialed' him in the hospital and attended to all his needs. While the physician care was outstanding, the hospital nursing staff was not up to par. We had to advocate for our dad.

Attending two World Cup soccer games was a bonus during my stay in Cape Town at the newly constructed Green Point Stadium. Ingrid came with me to one of the games. My dad, who was not really a sports fan, was excited for us to go. He got over that hiccup and continued his status quo of being bed- to- chair bound for the next few months.

VISITORS

There was never a limit to the number of visitors my dad would receive when he was housebound. He was always ready to receive an 'audience'. It was quite extraordinary how everyone's trip to Cape Town was not complete without a trip to see Uncle Solly.

On Saturday mornings our loyal family friend, Paul Levy, visited him. It was like *Tuesdays with Morrie* except we dubbed it *Saturdays with Solly*. They both looked forward to these encounters. My dad relished all Paul's accomplishments with his real estate company. He was like Paul's surrogate dad.

Sunday morning tea was also a special event. Abe Bravo, a mensch of the first degree, never missed a Sunday. His nephews Jeffrey, Leon, Daryl Kaimowitz, and their families were always regulars as well as friends Nita Levy, Carin and Geoffrey Wolman. Not to mention the pop-in visits during the week by Roslyn Beekman, Myra Kaimowitz, and Charles Sacks. Two of his oldest friends from childhood – Norman Beatty and Attie Driessen – also visited on occasions. Tony and Irma Kerbel as well as Mina and Julian Sennett were also regulars.

Martin, Trevor and me visiting Solly when he was bedroom-bound

The urologist, Dr. Stephen Eppel, also took a special interest in my dad and did us the huge favor of doing a house call to change my dad's indwelling catheter. It saved us calling an ambulance to transport him to the hospital where the ER docs could not replace it and invariably had to call for a urologist's help. Urinary tract infections are a real killer in the elderly.

We were forever grateful to Steve for his expertise and compassion in dealing with my dad. Steve's wife, Shelley, a musician, also brightened his days with some home visits. It was stressful for me during my trips back home. I never wanted to go out and enjoy leisure time while my dad was confined to the house. I worried constantly about his urine output and color. I was playing doctor with all the emotional involvement.

On one occasion, he fell particularly ill after eating some fish. He was intensely nauseous, and his eyes became yellow. This could only mean some sort of obstruction of the bile duct, which was later confirmed on ultrasound. We were reluctant for him to go through a complicated endoscopic procedure to confirm what could be a grim diagnosis. However, to our surprise he had a large gall stone obstructing the bile duct. The gastroenterologist dexterously removed it and, in its place, put a temporary stent for six weeks, which was later removed without incident. So, all that burping, and indigestion had nothing to do with reflux after all.

Our situation, living with a parent overseas, was not unique to us. Many of our South African friends had to endure similar hardships. We were here one minute and then on a plane the next, going whichever route was the quickest to our destination. It was not always easy. On one of my trips, my visa to South Africa had expired and I had to spend the entire day at the Department of Home Affairs with doctors' letters begging for an extension. Hefty fines were given and on occasions, passports were confiscated. The governmental rules were relentless.

Dad was approaching his 90th birthday and we wanted to do something special to mark the occasion. I could not go that November, but both my brothers went. It was a catered affair in the home and there were many greetings from around the world projected onto the white wall of the living room. Not to miss out, I did another special tea for close family and friends when I visited a few months later.

My dad also opened his home to an engagement party for his grandson, Greg, and fiancée Tamar, for them to meet the Cape Town family. When his nephew, Alan, visited with his new wife, Rachel, from the US, it was another opportunity to entertain. All these celebrations conjured up memories of the days when Belmor was the hub of the Kaimowitz family.

FINAL MOMENTS

It was during one of my visits to Cape Town that my dad had taken another turn for the worse. He had a urinary tract infection, stopped eating, and was short of breath. It was a Friday and my dad had been sleeping all day. I was at his bedside at the Cape Town Mediclinic. I called my brothers and told them it was time for them to come as my dad had, what appeared to the doctor, to be Cheyne Stokes respiration – an ominous sign.

I was, however, somewhat familiar with my dad's heavy snoring and apneic breathing spells. He responded briefly for the rabbi's visit, which kind of threw me. Of course, my brothers wanted a guarantee that this was near the end. I told them the decision to come was entirely theirs. Through it all, I was sitting next to him holding his hand and feeding him sips of water with a teaspoon. I went back to my dad's house that night. My brothers were by now in the air and went directly from the airport to the hospital to say their last goodbyes. To their utter amazement, there was our dad propped up in bed eating breakfast.

My brothers weren't happy with me for disrupting their schedules, but I was not going to apologize for my dad's miraculous turnaround. They stayed the week, and we were able to bring our dad home again, eventually laughing at the whole scenario. But we knew the whole situation was tenuous and that things could go awry at any time.

On July 31, 2014, halfway through his 91st year, he woke up short of breath. I could see on the Solly Cam that he was struggling. He did not want any heroics done on himself and requested no more hospitalization. All our cousins and friends went to say their goodbyes. We heard his whispers. I will never forget the loving way his caregivers treated him; some said prayers for him. I was glued to the camera until the very end when they pulled the sheet over him. I could no longer look. It was finally over.

We all flew back on the same plane, including Richard. We now had to plan for a funeral. We had the same issues again with the rabbinate about the eulogy. Trevor persisted and gave a wonderful tribute to my dad.

On the day of the funeral, the heavens opened. It was both wet and cold, a typical winter day in Cape Town. It was a day that my dad would say, "Stay home, it's absolutely meshuga to go out." But people came, even Richard's 95-year-old uncle, Dr. Julian Sennett, who was a pallbearer. Our cousins Andrea Liebman, Caryn Kaimowitz-Horowitz, and Mike Kaimowitz flew down from Johannesburg for the day.

We came back to the house for a shiva of one night which was beautifully organized by Karen and Caroline Kaimowitz. The house was filled with people comprising of family, friends, acquaintances, and former patients. After the traditional Shiva prayers led by Rael Kaimowitz, the floor was open for anyone to speak. It was heartening to hear the words of those whose lives our dad had touched.

Trever and dad at Martin and Diane's wedding, Boston, 2003.

TREVOR'S EULOGY TO OUR DAD

Notable historical events that occurred in 1922 include:

The discovery of insulin for the treatment of diabetes; the tomb of Tutankhamen was discovered; the USSR was created; and Solly Kaye was born Solomon Kaimowitz on November 14, 1922

Unlike his biblical namesake, his 'temple' was his house, and his 'sanctuary' was his surgery. His 'subjects' were his family, friends, and his many patients. Like his namesake, he treated them all with compassion and wisdom.

James M. Barrie who wrote Peter Pan said: "It is not in doing what you like, but in liking what you do, that is the secret of happiness."

That he practiced medicine for 64 years was a remarkable testament to a man whose profession defined him as a person and that he loved and considered his hobby. He graduated from UCT Medical School in 1946 and amongst the many distinguished graduates of that year was Chris Barnard.

He felt it was very important to get out of bed every day with a purpose. He worked right up until the time of his stroke in January 2010.

He was a great believer in the power of positive thought and of alternative medicine and was an early proponent of the use of hypnotism and acupuncture in his practice. He believed in the value of nutritional and vitamin supplementation and loved the use of vitamin B12 injections as a 'pick me up'. Oh, and let's not forget the value of gentian violet.

He was trusted and loved by his patients. His treatment came with a guarantee. He was Dr 100%. He always said that as a doctor you had to know who was sick. He knew his limitations and was never too proud to ask for a second opinion from a specialist.

His waiting room was open to all ethnic and economic groups and believed in a first come first served policy no matter who you were.

Solly was a family man with family values and loyalties.

He revered his own father and was always deeply appreciative that he was given the opportunity to go to medical school. He unconditionally loved his four brothers and each of their families. He was the family confidante and the person to whom they all turned in crisis. He was a loving and proud father and grandfather. The multiple photos, business cards, certificates, and diplomas beneath the glass top on his office desk was his display of the accomplishments of his offspring.

He was not a materialistic person and was a man of simple needs. He always believed that a person should live within their means. He was a generous man who literally would give the shirt off his back if someone liked what he had. The only 'gold' that he cherished was our late mother, Goulda, who lovingly and protectively catered to all his needs.

He was a humble and scrupulously honest man, who always looked for the good in people. He was happy when people did well or had good fortune.

He never complained about his own health despite being a colon cancer survivor of greater than 30 years. A fact that many of you may not have even known.

Although he was a lifelong member of the Gardens Shul, he was not a particularly religious or deeply spiritual man. He was, however, a proud Jew and a staunch defender of Israel. I want you to know, Rabbi Feldman, that you played a role on two occasions when our dad was critically ill, and you changed his Hebrew name with success both times. My brother and I joked that his identity is unknown, and he can now join the witness protection program. To continue on this lighter note:

He always looked for a Jewish relationship. Listening to the official cd of the FIFA World Cup song, sung by Shakira, called Waka Waka. "Is she Jewish?" asks Solly. "No," says Brenda. "She is Colombian." "But," he says "her name is Shapiro!"

He was an early riser but always had an hour-long afternoon nap. Even from a deep sleep, he could be roused for a phone call, a patient, or a conversation.

Solly never smoked, never over-ate, and always dressed warmly. He even wore a sweater in summer. He went to bed early at night. On the other hand, he ate very fast and never exercised..... So, go figure!

He was an avid listener to 'talk' radio and was never shy to call up and voice his opinion. He loved to listen to music at night and would fall asleep with his favorite CDs still playing. I will always think about my dad when I hear an Engelbert Humperdinck song.

He followed the stock market closely and always watched the day's closing prices on the summit at 6 pm. Even in the end, he knew the value of his Redefine stock.

In Solly's opinion, there was no more beautiful place than Cape Town; the best food was always found at home, and he judged a restaurant by the quality (and quantity) of the bread it served. Although he did travel to the United States to visit us, local travel any further than Muizenberg he considered meshuga!

He was fastidious about being on time and always planned on giving himself more than enough time to get anywhere..... perhaps it was because he was a slow driver.... but more than likely it was because he was obsessed with finding good parking. He tried to avoid places where the parking was not good.

He hated shopping and was a man ahead of his time. Never mind internet shopping. He believed that everything could be done on the telephone, sight unseen! He tended to be impulsive and made decisions rapidly. I recall him buying a set of bargain golf clubs. I do not actually recall him playing golf although he said he played twice..... And the clubs?.....they were left-handed!

Our dad was a gregarious individual who was quick to start a conversation with perfect strangers. He even embraced Facebook and loved seeing who 'friended' him and even contributed his 'Sollyisms' of the day on a regular basis. He was also a prolific letter writer and wrote to anyone and everyone about anything. He liked to recognize good service and was quick to acknowledge this to their superiors.

Although he had an opinion about everything, he would sometimes preface it by saying, "I'm just a simple GP." He was not a man who enjoyed public speaking, but at his birthday party in November he did thank you all for coming and said that he hoped to see you all at his next birthday.

Well.... it's a few months early, but I can tell you that he would have loved the crowd today. Thank you all for your friendship, love, and caring over the years.

On a personal note: I would like to say a special "thank you" to his loyal and long-term staff of over 30 years: Ingrid and Linda Michaels, who essentially kept him going and ran the house after my mother passed away 8 years ago, to the caregivers who helped him so respectfully,

carefully and patiently these past few years. They did a great job, and we are truly appreciative of their care. To my brother-in-law, Richard: for his understanding, support, and patience of all the time Brenda has spent in Cape Town since he first got incapacitated.

To my sister, Brenda, for always putting our father first and for advocating for him so strongly during this final phase of his life. Our approaches may have differed at times, Brenda, but your heart was always in the right place.

To my brother, Martin, for keeping the lines of communication open between Boston and Cape Town. For speaking with our dad daily for the past 20 years!

To my Kaimowitz first cousins and their families, as well as Paul Levy and Carin Wolman: for behaving like surrogate children. I cannot tell you how thankful Brenda, Martin, and I are for the love and attention that you showered on our father. Your efforts will always be appreciated.

To his lifelong friends, of which there are too many to mention and so, at the risk of offending everyone.

To his GP Dr. Lynne Wolhuter for her care over the years. For the kindness and respect, she showed our dad. For always going the extra mile and for handling all the 'family medical consultants' with such patience, tact, and aplomb.

And finally, to our dad: for his influence on all of us; for his generosity, his spirit, and for his love. We love you and will miss you. These last few years have not always been easy, but you never complained or ever asked "why me?". Rest in peace.

SOLLY'S SPRING

In May 2017, Cape Town was suffering the effects of a three-year drought. Day zero was imminent for residents when the city's faucets would supposedly run dry. Severe water restrictions were imposed in the Cape Town area. Naturally, one must get to the root cause of this crisis. I won't go into many details of the most probable causes but increased consumption and the diminished amount of rain top the list.

The reservoirs were at very low levels, but there was a largely untapped water source lurking below the huge rocks of Table Mountain – what could be termed aquifers. There is a permanent stream coming down the mountain, called Platteklip Gorge. It is the main reason that the Cape was established as a refreshment station for the ships rounding it in the 1600s.

During the 1800s, the waters became polluted and less potable. They were even thought to be the cause of the bubonic plague that ravaged Cape Town. For this reason, the British built these brick tunnels to lead the water directly into the ocean and the water remained largely unused. These forgotten tunnels were documented in an informative film*, Place of Sweet Waters* by Sven Harding in 2016.

Solly's nephew, Leon Kaimowitz, fills his water container from Solly's Spring, January 2018.

The term, ‘hydrocide’, was coined for a community that misuses water and is unable to live in the area. These tunnels could have essentially provided an answer to the impending water disaster. During this period, the wealthy could invest in private boreholes or import large water tanks to fill their swimming pools. The average citizen had to rely on many open springs that popped up all over the city.

After my dad passed, the new owners essentially gutted the house and replaced it with a contemporary new structure with enhanced views of the city and mountain. During construction, they undoubtedly encountered one of the streams traversing the property. They used this water to their advantage for garden irrigation. When the drought crisis hit, they placed a diverter with a faucet that opened on the exterior wall of the property. What a magnanimous gesture by the new owners of the property!

My brothers and I were just blown away. My dad was gone, but his beloved home kept giving. While these were not the healing waters of Lourdes in France, there was still a subliminal therapeutic remedy coming through those pipes. We joked that if one held the water up to the light, one could see the faint hue of gentian violet.

There was a sign outside the house to say, “Non-potable water for free”. While the public no longer lined up to see the doctor, they still lined up for the sustenance of life. They came in hordes, some with huge canisters, others with mini tanks. There was, however, a liter limit.

When the water issue was resolved, that faucet was locked and a permanent site was set up one street away by the City of Cape Town. It was officially named *Bradwell Spring* with many such faucets for public use.

In our minds, we have named the perpetual spring coming from *Belmor, Solly’s Spring* – dad’s living waters.

REMEMBERING SOLLY

Solly and grandchildren

“Professor Solly! I cannot think about my grandfather without smiling. I already miss him dearly, but I take his inspiration and wisdom with me each day. 'It’s the stayers that count,' one of the lessons that he learned that rings most true with me. He had a special ability to make each person he spoke to feel like he was their number one fan.”

- **Russell Kerbel**

“It has been amazing to read and hear the endless warm stories of how Grandpa positively influenced so many people over the past nine decades. We all knew he was an incredible man with a unique heart…but putting all the memories together shows the remarkable permanent impression he has left across the globe. I will miss Grandpa so much. Whether it was his comical raising of the fist when I’d get out of line as a kid, his contagious smile when he welcomed you into his home, or his ongoing imparting of random wisdom, he always knew how to make you smile and feel better about yourself.”

- **Jeremy Kerbel**

“Grandpa Solly was inspirational. He moved us to learn, treat every person with respect, honor integrity, stay positive and hold your family dear. He acted with dignity in every step. Tamar and I were so appreciative to have known and been loved by him."

- **Greg Kaye**

"I've had the pleasure of knowing Grandpa Solly for three years. The first time we met, he called me 'wife' right away. He just knew! Grandpa Solly was a simple man with simple taste. This is what I admired most about him. He was the epitome of a family man. Nothing else mattered. I am so honored that my children, PG, will have his last name. More importantly,

I am honored to carry on the tradition of 'family first' – it's the Kaye way."

- **Tamar Kaye**

"I honestly cannot think of a person who has been through so much and has been overwhelmingly positive through it all. His attitude was infectious – it's amazing the effect that he had on people – it carried over from life to work. To hear the way people spoke of him will always be amazing to me. He was truly inspiring in that way – someone to follow and emulate."

- **Spencer Kaye**

"I did not get to spend as much time with grandpa Solly as I wish I could have over these past few years. My memories of him are of his kindness, his sense of humor, and his passion for medicine. During my time working with my own dad, he exhibited those same qualities every single day. Those qualities have definitely rubbed off on me over the years and I know I will take them with me wherever I go. I thank them both for that."

- **Dylan Kaye**

"Although the Atlantic Ocean separated us for most of my life, I know that my grandpa Solly was an amazing father, grandfather, doctor, and humorist. Without him, I don't think my dad would be as funny. On those times I did get to visit him, traveling thousands of miles, he did not disappoint. He had the original Kaye personality and charm that he passed on to all of us. I loved him very much and I aspire to live my life to the fullest as he did."

- **Audrey Kaye**

"Grandpa Solly was an awesome grandpa. He was also an awesome and generous person. I will miss Grandpa Solly. He was always nice and trying to help others."

- **Nathan Kaye**

"Dear Grandpa Solly, I was so happy when I was with you and I am so happy that we met before, unlike my other grandpa. We had so much fun together, but I know the time has come when people have to go. I'm sad."

- **Ariella Kaye**

"Your loss is our loss too. Your dad was an incredible man with the finest of values. We all learned from him with his powerful inner strength and his ability to listen and laugh. He had a great smile and a contagious laugh – always finding the good in everyone and all situations. He

was a man of his word and someone we could trust. I have so many memories of your parents coming over to our home in Constantia for Sunday tea and of us popping in to see your dad – always welcoming and happy to see us. My boys visited your dad the last time they were in Cape Town, and they talk about and mention him often as he was the oldest man they knew!"

- **Taryn Berelowitz**

"My Uncle Solly was a special guy. We had an amazing connection. He was my uncle, friend, confidante, doctor, and storyteller. I will always remember his infectious laugh or his stock market tips. When I introduced him to Robin, he said I was a 'bladdy' star. He developed a special connection with my daughter, Rubi. As I reflect on the life of my uncle who lived into his 90s, we can only hope that my children will draw from his values and inner strength which made him the man he truly was."

- **Clive Ospovat**

"Uncle Solly – man, husband, doctor, family man, brother, and uncle. A man who loved to heal and took such great care of his family. He would make house calls any time of the day and night. If he wasn't sure of his diagnosis, he would always call in a second opinion. My father, Max, looked up to his brother, as did Uncle Solly to him. A soft-spoken man, who always gave good advice and had a calming effect on his brothers during business meetings. Rubin, my husband, felt so at ease with Uncle Solly who took him in as one of the family. He believed in alternative medicine and practiced acupuncture giving good advice to my son, Wayne, who also practiced in that field. He called me Berenice and enjoyed our little phone chats, getting updates on my kids and grandkids. When we think of Uncle Solly it brings such a warm feeling and wonderful memories that will always be a part of our lives."

- **Berri Stuppel**

"Solly Kaye, a man for all seasons. He was a father, a husband, and a healer. When I cast my mind back a mere 68 years, I can recall Solly vividly as a young doctor, whom I met when I first started going out with Ruby in the mid-1950s. As a young student, I was taken by Ruby, early in our relationship to meet his sister, Goulda, and her husband, Solly in their home in Virginia, Avenue. At that time, Brenda was a cute 5-year-old and Trevor showed signs of a career in athletics. We soon became fast friends with Solly and Goulda in spite of a 10-15 year age gap. We went out socially and constantly were in their company. They came to our wedding in Johannesburg and were a great support to us, particularly in the fragile relationship that existed between Jenny and Isaac. Solly always managed to keep an even keel on problems and gave sound advice. It is with great anguish that I write this remembrance of a wonderful man and a friend whom I will cherish till the end of my years. He has been blessed by his children Trevor, Brenda, and Martin and they in turn have been a blessing to him. We will all miss you, darling Solly."

- **Vivienne Ospovat**

“You taught me so much about being a doctor and looking after patients. I have always appreciated what you taught me and it has helped me over the years.”

- **Dr. Janella van Beeck**

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I would also like to thank Ingrid Michaels, my dad's loyal receptionist, for always being there for him and for the rest of us, for her patience in answering my questions and filling me in on the details of the practice. She was the caring overseer, confidante and perceptive 'fly on the wall'.

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ABOUT BRENDA

Born in Cape Town, South Africa, Dr Brenda Kerbel (Kaye) now lives in Newton, Massachusetts, in the United States. She obtained her MBChB from the University of Cape Town and is also certified as an Integrative Nutrition Health Coach.

Brenda is married to Dr Richard Kerbel, a pediatrician. They have two sons, Russell and Jeremy, a daughter-in-law, Charlane, and three beautiful grandchildren, London, Zeke and Troy.

Brenda loves to read, travel and continues to maintain strong ties with the South African community.