

# *In Memoriam*

## **Dr Bruce Irvine-Smith**

**27 June 1943 – 30 October 2025**



Bruce Irvine-Smith was the elder of 2 sons born to Charles and Winifred, both architects. His birthplace was Nigel, and schooling was at King Edward VII Preparatory School and King Edward VII School, both in Johannesburg. Bruce's grandfather, James Irvine-Smith, was also a veterinarian; he graduated from the Veterinary Faculty at Glasgow University in Scotland. He came to South Africa from Britain in the late 1800s as a veterinarian in the British Army. He was elected the first President of the Transvaal Veterinary Medical Association in 1903. This body was the forerunner of the South African Veterinary Association, where James also served a term as President from 1921 to 1924. Bruce, his brother Craig, and Bruce's eldest son Gregory also became veterinarians.

After matriculation, Bruce enrolled at the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg and then the University of Pretoria, where he graduated with a BVSc at Onderstepoort in 1965.

Subsequent to spells as the after-hours vet at Sandown Veterinary Hospital, Bruce went to Europe before deciding to study ruminant physiology and obtained a bursary to study at Cornell University in the USA. However, his exposure to the challenges of companion animal practice saw him change course, and in 1970, together with his brother Craig, the Bryanston Veterinary

Hospital, designed by their parents, was established. Bruce has a shared distinction of being one of the first three private practitioners to graduate MmedVet, in small animal surgery in 1976. The Hospital has since expanded over 50 years to employ more than 80 members of staff. Following on from Bruce's example, multiple vets have gone on to complete residencies at Bryanston Veterinary Hospital and become registered specialists in Small Animal Surgery and Medicine. Bruce was a visionary in private practice, always striving to improve small animal practice. He was available, approachable and happy to help younger colleagues at any time. Bruce served as a mentor to many vets over his veterinary career.

In 1969, Bruce married Lindsay Grant Stuart, a champion diving athlete who competed for the then Rhodesia at the Commonwealth Games in 1962 and the Olympic Games in 1964. They had four children, 3 boys and a daughter who qualified as a physiotherapist but sadly passed away in 1989 from pneumonia. Greg qualified as a veterinarian in 1993 and furthered his qualification with an MMed Vet. in small animal surgery in 2002. He is now a senior partner at Bryanston Veterinary Hospital. Ian too works at BVH in an administrative role. Grant, the third son, lives in the UK and works in Asset Management. The Irvine-Smith family has since expanded, with Bruce and Lindsay sharing 9 grandchildren from their three sons.

Bruce was a professional who was looked up to by the veterinary profession – and despite his immense contributions and commitments to the field, his priority was his family, and he spent as much of his time as possible with them – hiking, joining in on his kids' sports, and making memories with the people he loved most. Some of his favourite memories involved countless trips to Botswana and Kruger Park – a tradition he has passed down to his children and grandchildren. When time allowed, Bruce enjoyed playing squash, cycling and wildlife photography. His favourite photos grace the walls of BVH today.

Bruce's brother Craig left the practice in 1978 to pursue a career in Britain, but Bruce continued in full-time practice until 2015, and after that, often visited BVH to the delight of staff. His example and determination to deliver only the best service to clients and animals have inspired staff and made the BVH a byword for excellence. He will be remembered as an exemplary veterinarian, surgeon, and gentleman. Beyond that, he leaves a legacy as a family man and an inspirational father, grandfather, and devoted husband.

*Greg Irvine Smith & Gareth Bath*