



PRESS RELEASE

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AIHA Mourns the Loss of Prof. Johan Esterhuysen

South African expert played integral role in AIHA's PEPFAR-supported partnership with Polytechnic of Namibia, championed biomedical sciences education in Africa

WASHINGTON, DC, August 7, 2014 — The American International Health Alliance (AIHA) is immensely saddened by the loss of our dear partner and friend, Prof. Adriaane Johannes Esterhuysen, who passed away unexpectedly following an illness this week in Cape Town, South Africa.

“As Head of the Department of Biomedical Sciences at Cape Peninsula University of Technology’s Faculty of Health and Wellness Sciences, Prof. Esterhuysen — known to us all as Johan — championed the growth and harmonization of a four-year honors degree in biomedical sciences across Africa,” said AIHA Country Director for Southern Africa John Capati. “His guidance and leadership were crucial to the successful establishment of the new biomedical sciences program implemented through our twinning partnership between the Polytechnic of Namibia and the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences.”



Prof. Johan Esterhuysen

Twinning partner Donald Simpson, chair of the Department of Laboratory Sciences at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences and director of its Office of Global Health, said, “I attribute much of the success at the Polytechnic to Johan and his passion for Namibia. He realized that the quality of lab testing should not be dependent upon where people live and that a local workforce had to be developed so that appropriate testing could be done and the efficacy of ART properly assessed.”

Noting that Prof. Esterhuysen also valued the importance of higher education and was responsible for many members of the program faculty advancing their credentials through collaboration with Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Dr. Simpson continued, “To me he was a mentor, an example of kindness and professionalism, and a real friend who will be missed tremendously.”

Prof. Esterhuysen joined Cape Peninsula University of Technology, heading the Department of Biomedical Sciences since 2006. Prior to that, he was at Cape Technikon, where he started as a Lecturer in 1989 working his way through the ranks to become Head of the Department of Health Sciences in Faculty of Applied Sciences in 2002. Earlier professional experience included positions at the South African Institute for Medical Research the University of Stellenbosch. After studying medical technology at Cape Technikon in 1979, Prof. Esterhuysen pursued two Bachelor’s degrees and a Master’s degree at Stellenbosch University, completing his Doctoral degree there in 2005.

“No words can express the depth of our sadness at the loss of Prof. Esterhuysen,” said AIHA Executive Director James P. Smith. “He was a consummate professional with a long, distinguished career that serves as a testament to his dedication to the development of biomedical sciences education and practice throughout Africa. We mourn his passing and extend our heartfelt condolences to his family, friends, and the many people whose lives he touched.”