

## The state of academic radiology in South Africa in 2010

The *South African Journal of Radiology* reports below a South African 'first': the award of the Frank Doyle Medal to Dr Pieter Janse van Rensburg by the Royal College of Radiologists for being the highest-scoring candidate in the autumn 2009 part A final examination.

I asked around Cape Town about who Frank Doyle was. The only response came from Dr David Legge, an Irishman (who stresses his strong South African roots) presently in charge of our interventional theatre. He told me that Doyle had in fact examined him. 'He examined me in the final (then) FFR. Apart from standing behind me when showing films, he came across as a very fair, sympathetic and good-humoured examiner.'

After some emailing, we discovered that Doyle had been a physicist before doing medicine, where he put his skills as a physicist to good use; this included designing the CT head scanner with Houndsfield and pioneering the use of yttrium implants for pituitary tumours. His clinical interests lay in the musculoskeletal and endocrine areas. Doyle pioneered retroperitoneal air insufflation for adrenal tumours, the accurate recognition of osteoporosis, and measurement of osteoblastic response to new therapies. He had a hidden talent for classical piano playing which was privy to a select few. Personality-wise, he was described as a humorous, kind, self-effacing, generous and wonderful man.

He had a severe stroke in the mid-1970s and took several years to rehabilitate. We could not confirm whether Doyle had to return to medical school to refresh his knowledge; however, he returned to radiology and took a special interest in MRI scanning. And so is Frank Doyle, the man behind the medal, commemorated.

I thought that this may also be an opportune time to pause to look at the state of academic radiology in South Africa. All major academic departments now have full-time academic heads. Steve Benningfield (Cape Town) and Coert de Vries (Bloemfontein) are old stalwarts. A younger generation – Zarina Lockhat (Pretoria) Victor Mngomezulu (Wits) and Richard Pitcher (Stellenbosch) – has emerged. Aisne Stoker is standing strong in Natal, and we all believe that it is just a matter of time before Durban will return to its former days of glory. As we go to press, I'm awaiting news from Medunsa and Mthatha. The Faculty of Radiology of the College of Medicine is vibrant and active under the presidency of Savvas Andronikou. We are seeing talented young radiologists from academic departments and the private sector being drawn in as examiners, and a unitary examination policy has at last become a reality.

Continuing radiology education (CRE) is on an unequalled level. Leon Janse van Rensburg has achieved a perfect balance with the programme, and South African radiologists, both academic and private, have been exposed to practical, hands-on tuition by international experts.

I take pride on this late autumn day here in Cape Town in declaring South African radiology to be alive and in vibrant good health. The Frank Doyle Medal is a personal achievement, but I believe that it also represents the state of excellence of radiology in South Africa.

**Jan Lotz**

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### Frank Doyle Medal Award

The Royal College of Radiologists has awarded the Frank Doyle medal to Dr Pieter Janse van Rensburg who was the highest-scoring candidate to pass all six modules of the Final FRCR Part A August 2009 examination. Two hundred and forty-eight international candidates passed the examination, which comprises six modules: cardiothoracic and vascular, musculoskeletal and trauma, gastrointestinal, genito-urinary, adrenal, obstetrics and gynaecology and breast, pediatrics, and central nervous system – head and neck. Each module is tested separately during an examination each of two hours.

The award is a 'first' for South Africa. It is a much sought-after prize in the UK, with foremost universities and hospitals in hot contention. Dr Janse van Rensburg's achievement is equally a great achievement for South African radiology.