Professor John Cosnett (1925 - 2012) began his medical career as a student at the University of the Witwatersrand. His registrar training in medicine was at the University of Natal; he then moved to Edendale Hospital in Pietermaritzburg as head of the medicine department, a position he held very successfully there for some 20 years, providing a high level of service and valuable guidance and training for aspiring physicians. John then decided to concentrate on his major interest – clinical neurology – and he moved to this department in Durban, where he was appointed as Associate Professor of Neurology and where he worked until his retirement in 1990. During these years, he published numerous articles on diverse medical topics (including the maladies of various characters in the works of Charles Dickens) and completed his MD dissertation on neurological disease in the Zulu people.

John was a most astute physician with a quiet, patient approach and exceptional ability to concentrate on the problem at hand and reach a conclusion in the most efficient manner. Many young doctors were inspired by his acumen, knowledge and wisdom, and the way he applied them in the clinical situation. He was known too for the dry humour that he introduced not infrequently, but never inappropriately, into his conversation.

After retirement, John and his charming wife Wendy gave up their pleasant Victorian home in Durban, moving to Northern Ireland to live near to their medical practitioner son and his family. The memory and influence of John Cosnett as an arch-physician, role model and friend will long remain.

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