

ROBERT WILLIAM MAYO FRATER

Professor Robert William Mayo Frater was born in Cape Town on 12 November 1928. He came from a medical family. His parents met and married whilst working at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester in the United States. His father was the first South African at the Mayo Clinic, specialising in urology, while his mother was the first English woman to train there. Professor Frater's third Christian name is thus 'Mayo' after Will Mayo, one of the Founders of the Mayo Clinic.

Professor Frater attended Bishops from 1937-1946, and was at the College from 1942 to 1946, matriculating with a First Class pass. He was a School Prefect in his final year at College, Head of Ogilvie, a Sergeant Major in the School Cadet Corps, Captain of Tennis, and a member of the First Rugby XV. He was awarded the Archbishop West Jones Scholarship in 1946 and qualified in Medicine at UCT gaining a First Class in Surgery. He was admitted as a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons in the United Kingdom in 1955 where he underwent basic surgery training and subsequently took up a Fellowship in Surgery at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota where he would work from 1955 – 1962.

He continued his studies in surgery at the Mayo Clinic which was viewed at that time as the centre of the medical surgical world. Patients and postgraduate medical scholars came from all over the world to benefit from and observe new techniques being developed. The seminal moment in his career occurred while observing an open-heart surgery on a boy who was on a heart lung machine. He decided to specialise in the Mayo Clinic's new field of cardiothoracic surgery. He phoned his wife later that evening and told her that they would be staying at the Mayo Clinic longer than they had planned!

His talent and passion for the profession is evident in the Mayo Clinic's Dr Clagett's assessment of him: "a very outstanding man, wonderful basic knowledge, inspires confidence in patients, excellent judgment and unusually good technical skills. This man is really very superior in every respect. Grade A plus".

In 1962 Professor Frater published an article entitled "Artificial Heart Valves" in the Lancet, the prestigious British medical journal, on the problems in the development of mitral valve prostheses. This was documentation from his clinical work repairing mitral valves with patches, a procedure that was revolutionary for the time.

After completing his training at the Mayo Clinic, Professor Frater returned to South Africa. He continued his research in the field, specialising in the repair of diseased mitral valves using autologous pericardial patches and was the first to install a prosthesis for a defective aortic valve into a human being.

In 1964, he was appointed to take charge of the new Open Heart Operations Department which he built up from scratch, at the prestigious Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York City. There he served as both Division Chief of Cardiothoracic Surgery and the Chairman of the Department of Surgery. The success of the College's academic and clinical achievements is evidenced by the fact that over twelve graduates from their clinical training programmes and research fellowships became chiefs of surgery at their respective hospitals around the world.

Professor Frater undertook his position as Professor at the Albert Einstein Hospital with the intention of teaching and helping his fellow man, rather than enriching himself. The money generated by his unit was pooled so that they could set up a world class cardio-thoracic laboratory - a decision that paid handsome dividends for the hospital in terms of its ability to offer the best medical treatment, whilst serving as a training hospital for future cardio-thoracic surgeons. Over a 50-year period Professor Frater pioneered various life saving techniques. He achieved such outstanding success that he received the highest honour attainable in the medical profession in the United States of America. He was declared the outstanding alumnus of the Mayo Clinic.

After retirement he formed a company, Glycar, in Irene in Pretoria, which produces bovine heart patches that are used to repair diseased heart valves in humans. These patches are exported around the world, most notably to the EU. In the South African context, the success of this company can be attributed to the skills development of its staff and the sharing of its achievements with them. Professor Frater is the only member of the company with a medical degree, while all other members of staff have been trained by him to fulfil their role within the company. In his own words: "you don't need to have a PhD to do special things. All you need is access to information and the willingness to stick to standards".

His next step was to connect with Professor Francis Smit of the University of the Free State. They were able to pursue a wide variety of projects including forms of annuloplasty rings and three leaflet bioprosthetic valves. He established a cardiovascular research lab in the Department of Cardiovascular Surgery at the

University of the Free State and was recognised with an honorary PhD from the University of the Free State.

Professor Frater has had a long and very successful medical career. Through his ground-breaking research, and in teaching others, he has empowered the staff at Glycar in Irene and given them ownership of the company. He has shown that anything is possible if one shows the passion and diligence that the task requires.

Professor Frater has given his entire life to enable others to live a longer life, and thus has given a father, mother or child back to their families and loved ones when they were in a state of ill health. One will never know the true extent of his impact on the people whose lives he has touched, he is a deserving recipient of the Robert Gray Medal.

RAYMOND DAVID ACKERMAN

Mr Raymond Ackerman was born on March 10, 1931. He entered Bishops in January 1944 as a boarder in School House. In his Matric Year he was a school prefect and a member of the prestigious Ten Club. He matriculated in 1948 with a First Class pass and went on to UCT where he graduated with a B. Com degree in 1951. He joined the Ackermans' department store chain that year as a trainee manager and, after the group was bought by Greetermans in 1955 was responsible for establishing the first true self-service supermarkets in South Africa, Checkers.

Having built up the Checkers business to 85 stores, he was dismissed by Greetermans in 1966. Using his two weeks' severance pay, a bank loan, a modest inheritance and shares purchased by friends, Ackerman bought four small stores in Cape Town trading under the name Pick n Pay. Since then, Pick n Pay has grown into one of the largest supermarket and hypermarket chains, with over 1700 supermarkets throughout South and Southern Africa.

Mr Ackerman has always put the customer first and organised the company around that unbreakable principle, while investing heavily in staff training, relentless promotion from within – and on merit – and the very first broad-based employee ownership scheme which encourages all employees to think like owners. The company today employs 85 000 people in 7 countries. Mr Ackerman's contribution to South Africa, other than single-handedly pioneering and developing supermarkets in this country to a world class-standard, has been

to encourage and involve communities in the commercial and philanthropic objectives of his company, such as:

- Buying from local suppliers;
- Supporting local farmers and manufacturers;
- Assisting previously-disadvantaged individuals to purchase or set up Pick n Pay franchise stores;
- Supporting local communities in times of trouble/disasters;
- Establishing the Pick n Pay Foundation which supports children from disadvantaged families to attend schools and universities;
- Using the family foundations to create and support hospitals, schools, and local community centres.

He established the Raymond Ackerman Academy of Entrepreneurial Development for youth who have had limited access to tertiary education. He is also the benefactor of the Raymond Ackerman Golf Academy which assists the education of disadvantaged youth through the medium of golf.

Rutgers University in the USA conferred on Mr Ackerman his seventh honorary doctorate. In her citation, the Chancellor, Phoebe Camden, said:

“As a business leader during South Africa’s apartheid period, you defied the South African government to protect the most impoverished and vulnerable of your fellow citizens. Despite crippling government fines, you subsidised bread prices to make certain that basic food items would remain accessible to the majority of South Africans.

Your life’s work has grown economic opportunity and also expanded opportunities for equality in your home nation of South Africa. Your business philosophy inspires entrepreneurs worldwide to strive toward a future where doing well and doing good are twin prerequisites for economic and social success.”

Amongst his many awards, including the seven doctorates, national and international, he has also been the recipient of:

- Lifetime Achiever Award, Sunday Times;

- The Indian Academy of South Africa, on behalf of King Goodwill Zwelithini, honoured his "Outstanding Business Leadership for Commitment to improving the quality of life in South Africa";
- One of The Men of the Decade, Women's Bureau of South Africa;
- Paul Harris Fellowship Award, Rotary International;
- Management Excellence, Witwatersrand Business School;
- One of Four Outstanding Young South Africans, Jaycees – 1965;
- Humanitarian Award, B'nai B'rith;
- Man of the Year, Financial Mail;
- Businessman of the Year, Financial Gazette;
- In 2014, Raymond was awarded the Order of the Baobab (Silver) from the State President for decades of service to the community and consumers.

The 2011 CNBC Africa All Africa Business Leaders Awards' (AABLA) Lifetime Achievement award noted in the citation: "Through incisive leadership, Pick n Pay has achieved remarkable status in the Southern African retail landscape ... it introduced black ownership through its very successful franchise division, introduced the concept of sustainability nearly a decade before other retailers and invested in growing small farmers and BEE suppliers in order to help address and avoid national food security and safety issues. Apart from that, the group and its leadership have chosen to take principled positions on issues that they believed directly affected the future of South Africans. Ackerman's stand on apartheid, monopolies, cartels and regulated consumer prices has been widely publicised. South Africans have come to expect a 'voice' from the group and its leaders on social issues, which could have a material effect on their future safety and prosperity."

Notwithstanding enduring both overt and subtle discrimination at Bishops as a result of being Jewish, he sent his two sons to Bishops and two of his grandsons also attended Bishops. His experiences at Bishops helped awaken a mission to assist in the uplifting of the currently disadvantaged and those without a voice. He is a great benefactor of the School and has had the ODU and hockey precinct named after him and is now the Patron and President of the ODU.

Raymond Ackerman's contribution to South Africa and to his fellow man has been significant and he is a worthy recipient of the ROBERT GRAY MEDAL.

