John Robert Jamieson (1955 - 2006)

John died suddenly on 4 January 2006, aged 50.
He had an exceptional career, and was best known for his
interest in oesophageal disease and his passion to promote
minimal access surgery in South Africa.

John was born on 22 October 1955 in Johannesburg. He went to
school at St David’s Marist Brothers
in Inanda, where he matriculated
in 1972. After completing a year
of compulsory military service, he
enrolled at the University of the
Witwatersrand, graduating M.B.
B.Ch. in 1979. John’s time at the
university was characterised by the
numerous friendships he developed,
not infrequently at the expense of
his studies. Many fond memories
remain, not least of which are the
circumstances under which he met
his future wife. John had fallen onto
a cactus; the removal of the innu-
merable thorns from compromising
anatomical sites required the assis-
tance of a host of friends, among
them Marie.

After graduating he completed his
internship at South Rand Hospital,
where his passion for surgery was
born. In characteristic style he
pursued his dream with vigour.
The next step was an SHO in Professor Bremner’s unit at
Hillbrow Hospital, where he was exposed to the endless fas-
cination of gastro-oesophageal disorders. He subsequently
joined the registrar rotation at Wits, attaining the F.C.S.
(S.A.) in 1986. For his performance in this examination
he was awarded the Michael and Janie Miller Postgraduate
Prize.

After becoming a consultant John joined the Professorial
Unit at Johannesburg Hospital. In 1989 he spent a year as
a research fellow in DeMeester’s department at Creighton
University in Nebraska, where Ron Hinder, one of his men-
tors from Johannesburg, was working. This fellowship had
been made possible by his award of the prestigious Michael
and Janie Miller Travelling Fellowship.

John then returned to Johannesburg and the Department
of Surgery, in which he remained
until he went into private practice
in April 1991. He continued to be
active academically, becoming the
protagonist of the use of oesoph-
geal manometry in the manage-
ment of reflux disease. He also
remained an active member of the
Oesophageal Diseases Unit, a posi-
tion that he held until his death.
John always enjoyed teaching and
spent much time with undergradu-
ate as well as postgraduate students;
he was also frequently called on to
be an examiner despite his busy
practice.

John’s passion for laparoscopic
surgery was reflected in his involve-
ment with SASES (the South
African Society of Endoscopic
Surgery), where he was Treasurer
for many years. He was always
extremely prudent, ensuring that
the Society’s well-being was guaran-
teed. This desire for fiscal exactness
sometimes caused despair among
his fellow committee members; undoubtedly, however, the
Society would not be in its present stable position without
John’s tremendous commitment and hard work.

John, always the family man, leaves his wife Marie and
their children, Ryan, Sean and Nicole. The three were the
apples of his eye and he often expressed great pride in their
achievements.

Hambakahle, John. Your colleagues and friends salute you.

Martin Veller