

## Professor Robin Green



Professor Robin Green was a giant in the field of Paediatric Pulmonology and Allergology in South Africa. Robin started his medical career as an MB BCh graduate at Wits University in 1985. He was drawn to paediatrics and completed his Diploma in Child Health in 1990 and FCPaed the following year in 1991, at the same university. He worked at the then Johannesburg General Hospital as a paediatrician and was the Deputy Head of Pulmonology from 1992 - 1994. While there, he also completed his Diploma in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene at the Wits University in 1993. After a number of years in private practice, he rejoined academic medicine in 2005 as an Associate Professor and Head of Paediatric Pulmonology at the University of Pretoria, having completed his PhD while in private practice. At the University of Pretoria, Robin started a fledgling Department of Pulmonology which grew to be a centre of excellence in training of not only many Paediatric Pulmonologists in South Africa, but also many allergology graduates. He went on to become the Chair of the School of Medicine at the University of Pretoria.

What was truly unique about Robin was that besides being a true academic, he genuinely loved his job and had a passion for teaching and children. His ability to simplify difficult concepts and his engaging manner made him a well sought out lecturer for both undergraduates and postgraduate students. This was borne out by the many invitations to speak nationally and internationally. As a scholar, he embraced new ideas and innovations that improved care of children through research he undertook with colleagues.

Robin was a servant leader and one of his best attributes was his belief in the principle of kindness. He served on many committees and organisations including, the Chair and one of the founding member of the National Asthma Education in 1997 - 1999, a member of the Allergy Society of South Africa, the South African Thoracic Society, the Critical Care Thoracic Society of South Africa and as President for the College of Paediatricians of South Africa. In all these organisations, Robin played a very active role and was instrumental in progressing both paediatrics and allergology and paediatric pulmonology in South Africa. He has published over 100 peer-reviewed publications and was lead author and co-author in many guidelines in allergology and respiratory disease in children, in South Africa.

For all his accolades, Robin truly loved life. His love for golf, sharp suits and ties was unmatched. The many meals shared with a good glass of red wine and laughter will be dearly missed. For many people that he mentored over the years, he will always be remembered for his kind, inclusive nature and his energy.

To Professor Green, you will be sorely missed. You were a mentor, teacher and friend to many and you transformed many lives. Robala ka kgotso.

*When great trees Fall by Maya Angelou*

When great trees fall,  
rocks on distant hills shudder,  
lions hunker down  
in tall grasses,  
and even elephants  
lumber after safety.

When great trees fall  
in forests,  
small things recoil into silence,  
their senses  
eroded beyond fear.

When great souls die,  
the air around us becomes  
light, rare, sterile.  
We breathe, briefly.  
Our eyes, briefly,  
see with  
a hurtful clarity.  
Our memory, suddenly sharpened,  
examines,  
gnaws on kind words  
unsaid,  
promised walks  
never taken.

Great souls die and  
our reality, bound to  
them, takes leave of us.  
Our souls,  
dependent upon their  
nurture,  
now shrink, wizened.  
Our minds, formed  
and informed by their  
radiance,  
fall away.  
We are not so much maddened  
as reduced to the unutterable  
ignorance  
of dark, cold  
caves.

And when great souls die,  
after a period peace blooms,  
slowly and always  
irregularly. Spaces fill  
with a kind of  
soothing electric vibration.  
Our senses, restored, never  
to be the same, whisper to us.  
They existed. They existed.  
We can be. Be and be  
better. For they existed.