

Professor Mochichi Samuel (Sam) Mokgokong

(31 August 1952 – 24 January 2024)

The Critical Care Society of Southern Africa mourns the passing of Professor Mochichi Samuel (Sam) Mokgokong

Sam Mokgokong was the first black neurosurgeon in South Africa and the son of the first black gynaecologist, Professor Ephraim Mokgokong, who had also been a leader in his field. Sam became an Emeritus Professor of the University of Pretoria, the head of Tembisa Hospital's ICU, Professor, chief specialist, and head of Neurosurgery at Steve Biko Hospital. He also became acting head of Neurosurgery at Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University and Dr George Mukhari Hospital, where hundreds of medical students and future specialists benefited from his knowledge and teaching skills.

Sam was a true "gentle" man of science who became a leader in the field of neurosurgery, having performed a number of groundbreaking procedures, such as the separation of conjoined twins at Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital, and he mentored a great number of South Africa's future neurosurgeons.

It was his fascination with science that led him into the field in which we knew him, Critical Care. He developed an enthusiastic interest in our society, never missing annual meetings and consistently making a significant impact on the scientific programme. He was always hungry to learn, and it was his questioning mind that made his lectures so absorbing.

A larger-than-life character and raconteur of note, Sam had a booming laugh that would always bring a smile to those who always clustered around him, hoping to absorb some of his vast knowledge.

He will be greatly missed, and the new generation of intensivists is unfortunate not to have known him and to have had contact with one of the greats of the South African medical fraternity.

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