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# A PATIENT REMEMBERS

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## A Special Person – Ms LM Mackenzie Natalspruit Hospital

Dr Morris Klein was not only our GP but a very special friend and person, a character still sorely missed many years after his death.

He was a short balding man with a huge “pot belly”.

My first memory of him was when, as a child of about 12 years of age, he, my mother and I were outside and he was delving into his car to find the medication (we lived on a farm in the country). He happily examined, and tasted different pills muttering to himself “no, this will kill her – don’t know what this is” etc. Finally he gave my mother a handful of pills with dosage instructions. Needless to say, Mom was horrified and rushed into my father saying that this “quack” would kill her child. Dad who had known Morris Klein up North had total trust in him and Mom’s horror turned to trust and a deep respect, over a period of time.

He was our GP and friend until he passed away.

Other memories include him coming into our home during the night shouting “Don’t shoot, it’s only me. Who’s ill?” He knew the whole community so well that he knew everyone’s home layout and often made calls to our home on his way home, well after midnight.

He also always allowed his patients to choose their diagnosis with his prompting eg “Measles uh hum? German measles uh hum? Chicken pox?” Eventually the patient would agree on a diagnosis.

Years later as a young officious student nurse I challenged him. “How can you allow patients to choose their diagnosis, you are the

doctor, you diagnose and then you tell him.” His reply was “Lesley, Western medicine is so arrogant. It’s the patients body and disease. Why can’t he have what he wants. They always choose a socially acceptable, curable illness which will earn them the necessary sympathy. I know what they have, what they have had and treat them for what they have.”

He was a humanist.

The local pharmacist could easily identify his scripts as they were almost inevitably written on scraps of paper – very often toilet paper – “its always available.”

Being a GP in a rural community and a keen farmer himself, he would happily treat animals. My mother often jokingly said that if she needed Morris urgently for one of us, she told him that a cow was having difficulty calving. She was then sure that he would come immediately. Otherwise he came when it suited him, usually on his way home.

I never heard him gossip but he knew all the local gossip just by a gentle prod. “Have you heard about Mrs Jones” and then you told all you knew or had heard.

His “old” patients have many and varied stories about him, many amusing, all told with a deep respect, and love for a very special person who was our GP.