

## HONORARY GRADUATE

### Sir Raymond Hoffenberg

Raymond (Bill) Hoffenberg, was born in Port Elizabeth in 1923 and, although he began his medical studies at the University of Cape Town at the ripe old age of 15 years, they were interrupted by military service and he didn't qualify as a doctor until 1948, when he was 25 years old.

For almost twenty years he remained in Cape Town working at Groote Schuur Hospital as houseman, registrar and, eventually, consultant physician. His teachers (and role models) in Cape Town were the legendary professors Frankie Forman and Jack Brock, who inspired him and contributed to his development in clinical medicine and clinical research. He became a master in both fields and gained an enviable local reputation as a clinical teacher and an international reputation as a researcher in clinical endocrinology. He helped unravel the long-acting thyroid stimulating substance and exophthalmos-producing substance in Graves' disease or thyrotoxicosis and, while still working in Cape Town, he researched albumin metabolism, a subject of great relevance in the study of the causation, treatment and prevention of the ill effects of malnutrition at a time when Kwashiorkor was a scourge in this country.

Bill Hoffenberg was a fearlessly outspoken critic of apartheid. He was a member of the Liberal Party, adviser to the National Union of South African Students and Chairman of the Defence and Aid Fund, which assisted both people accused of political offences and their families. When the Government moved to ban the Fund, Hoffenberg took the matter on appeal but lost the case.

His activities attracted the attention of the Government and, though there was no evidence that he had breached any of the myriad restrictive laws which propped up the apartheid system, he was served with a five-year banning order on July 28, 1967. In terms of the order, he was restricted to the magisterial districts of Cape Town and Wynberg, prevented from being an office-bearer or member of any organisation which in any way criticised the Government, and barred from playing any part in student activities. He was forbidden to attend any gathering, and prevented from entering any so-called 'non-white' areas, factories or premises on which publications were produced. He was required to report weekly to the police and his academic and research duties were to come to an end from the end of the 1967 academic year. He was not permitted to write or make any statement for publication - a virtual death sentence for a dedicated, successful academic. Bill Hoffenberg left the country that year and returned for the first time in 1993 to receive an honorary degree from his alma mater, the University of Cape Town.

His reputation as a clinician and medical scientist and his standing in the profession led to his appointment as Senior Scientist to the United Kingdom Medical Research Council. Four years later, he was appointed to one of the senior chairs of medicine in England when he became William Withering Professor at Birmingham. His prodigious research output was largely on the subject of thyroid diseases. He soon assumed a leadership role in the Royal College of Physicians in London and in 1983, he became President of the College, a post he held for seven years. He resigned his Chair at Birmingham in 1985 to become President of Wolfson College, Oxford, and served there with great distinction until he retired in 1993. His contributions to British medicine were recognised by the award of a knighthood in 1984.

Sir Raymond Hoffenberg's dedication to the quiet art of medicine and his concern for the underprivileged and oppressed have, if anything, deepened over the years. Despite his exile, he lent valuable support to a group of South African doctors in their successful battle to have the conduct of the doctors who examined detained activist Steve Biko before his death at the hands of the security police declared unprofessional and disgraceful. In his adopted country, he has concerned himself with the problems of racial discrimination in the National Health Service, with the inequalities of access to health care in the United Kingdom and with the need for special health services for immigrant and minority populations.

He has been the recipient of so many academic and professional honours it is impossible to list more than a small fraction of them. There have been fellowships of medical colleges around the world; honorary de-

grees from the universities of Oxford, Leicester, Bristol, Cape Town and the City University. He is a Freeman of the City of London. He has been Chairman of the Council of the British Heart Foundation and of the United Kingdom Coordinating Committee on Cancer Research and President of the Mental Health Foundation and of the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning.

When he left South Africa in December 1967 many hoped that it would not be too long before he would be able to return. Twenty-six years were to elapse before he felt able (or indeed was permitted) to do so and in those years the evil consequences of apartheid worsened. As we negotiate this period of transition, beset by many problems concerning academic health and related issues including the continuing emigration of doctors, compulsory community service, the selection of medical students, and the provision of appropriate or relevant training for them, as well as the question of academic standards, Bill Hoffenberg has given generously of his time and experience to serve as a member of a small select advisory committee set up by the Minister of Health. Even in retirement he continues to serve South African universities and the profession to which he has dedicated his working life. It is gratifying and a great source of encouragement that at this critical era in South Africa's history, one of the stalwarts of the struggle against injustice and oppression, a world-renowned academic and researcher, an inspiring leader of the medical profession in the Western world, and an outstanding, caring and compassionate medical practitioner, should return to this 'beloved country' to receive the highest award this University can confer.

The University takes great pleasure in conferring the degree of Doctor of Science in Medicine *honoris causa* on Raymond Hoffenberg.