On October 6, 2003 Mercer Rang, one of the world’s most eminent paediatric orthopaedic surgeons, died after a long illness which he had borne with a combination of courage and equanimity.

Born in London, England in 1933, Mercer Rang graduated from the University College Hospital Medical School in 1956 at the age of 23 and began postgraduate surgical training in London’s St. Bartholomew’s Hospital.

There followed two years of National Military Service as a Command Surgical Specialist in Northern Ireland. Mercer then undertook postgraduate orthopaedic training during which he was inspired by the late Lipmann Kessel to pursue an academic career. He enrolled in the programme of the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital. In 1965 he was seconded to Jamaica where he served for two years as a Senior Lecturer in Orthopaedic Surgery at the University of West Indies under the leadership of the late Sir John Golding. It was during that time when Mercer single handedly organized a highly successful postgraduate course on “The Growth Plate and Its Disorders”. That was the beginning of a warm and lasting friendship between the Rangs, the Goldings and the Salters.

In 1967 he came to The Hospital for Sick Children as a Basic Research Fellow and we undertook research on the pathogenesis of deformity of the femoral head in an animal model of Legg-Perthes’ disease.

At the end of that year he was appointed to the Staff of the Division of Orthopaedic Surgery where he continued undertaking research until his retirement from the Hospital in 1999.

He thereafter practised and taught orthopaedics in Saudi Arabia for one year at the end of which he became ill and returned to Toronto.

Mercer Rang was a multitalented man, a remarkable combination of a skillful paediatric orthopaedic surgeon, a kindly clinician with sound judgement, a basic and clinical scientist, a superb teacher in both the spoken and written word, a clever cartoonist capable of illustrating his own books, an accomplished landscape artist, a highly respected orthopaedic historian, a fine and loving husband for his dear wife, Helen, as well as a devoted father and grandfather. He was truly a Renaissance Man.

Mercer had a wide variety of clinical interests in paediatric orthopaedic surgery but his most important contributions were in the fields of children’s fractures and neuromuscular disorders, especially cerebral palsy, as well as the history of orthopaedics.


He served as a visiting Professor in 26 universities and delivered over 200 invited lectures in many countries including 22 eponymous Lectures.

He travelled extensively teaching orthopaedics in a number of Third World Countries as the First Lipmann Kessel Travelling Professor.

He received many honours and awards. Three of his most cherished honours included Honorary Fellowship of the American Acad-

Mercer and his loving wife, Helen, have been the most gracious of hosts and hostesses in their home.

He was also a wonderful family man. Our condolences are extended to Helen, their three daughters, Caroline, Sarah and Louise and their six grandchildren.

Finally, the philosopher, Ralph Waldo Emerson, was asked how he would define and describe a person who has achieved success. His response is particularly relevant to Mercer Rang.

“He has achieved success who has lived well, laughed often and loved much; who has enjoyed the trust of pure women, the respect of intelligent men and the love of little children; who has filled his niche and accomplished his task; who has left the world better than he found it, whether by an improved poppy, a perfect poem or a rescued soul; who has never lacked appreciation of Earth’s beauty or failed to express it; who has always looked for the best in others and given them the best he had; whose life has been an inspiration and whose memory a benediction.”

I am confident that all of us who have been privileged to have known him would heartily agree that, by all of Emerson’s criteria, Mercer Rang achieved success.

R. B. Salter

CARL THEODORUS MÖLLER, MBBCH FRCS (ED) FRCS (ENG)
1911-2003

Carl Möller, the last survivor of the five founder members of the South African Orthopaedic Association, died peacefully at his daughter’s home on 14 July 2003.

The son of a doctor, Dr Möller met Francois P. Frouché, the doyen of South African orthopaedic surgery, at an early age. He graduated from the University of the Witwatersrand in 1934, and in 1940, after obtaining both the London and Edinburgh fellowships, commenced orthopaedic practice in Johannesburg.

Carl Möller was one of the ‘Group of Five’ founding members of the Orthopaedic Surgeons’ Group in July 1942. At the 1952 Combined Meeting of the Orthopaedic Associations of the English Speaking World in London, the Group became the South African Orthopaedic Association, with Dr G. T. du Toit receiving the Jewel of Office from her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother. From 1955 to 1957 Carl was president of the association, and he served with distinction on the executive committee until 1977.

For many years he was consultant at Johannesburg Children’s Hospital. Those who knew him in the clinical setting were always impressed by his compassion and the sincerity of his approach to each individual patient’s problem. In discussions he drew on his memory of patients seen many years previously, reminding one of the wonderful healing powers of time. Predictably, he titled his Francois P. Fouché Memorial Lecture ‘The Time Factor in Orthopaedics’.

Carl Möller served as Councillor on the National Executive of the Medical Association and on the Fee Committee. Until the slide rule was superseded by his pocket calculator, he always had it at the ready to calculate injustices. In the role of elder statesman, he was at all times willing to discuss any medical problems, clinical or political, with younger colleagues.

After the death of his second wife, Dr Möller moved to Cape Town. He is survived by his son, an anaesthetist, and by three daughters, one of whom is married to a general surgeon. We salute the memory of this great South African orthopaedic surgeon, and extend our condolences to his children and grandchildren.

Jos van Niekerk