

George Bishop (1943–2001)

Internationally recognised rabies expert George Bishop, chief veterinary researcher at Allerton Laboratory, died suddenly in Pietermaritzburg on August 25. Bishop (58), the son of veterinarian Dr Bunny Bishop, a lecturer in animal diseases at the Natal University Agricultural Faculty, was educated at Merchiston, Maritzburg College and the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, where he completed a Masters degree in Microbiology in 1972. He joined Allerton in 1968 and initially specialised in the treatment of brucellosis (an infectious disease of cattle, goats and pigs) but more recently was heavily involved in the fight against foot and mouth in the province.

But it is principally for his work in the field of rabies that he will be remembered. He served as secretary of both the KZN Rabies Action Group and the SA Rabies Advisory

Board. As secretary of the Southern and East African Rabies Group for the past 12 years, he was the main driving force in addressing the rabies problem in sub-Saharan Africa.

Recognised as a leading rabies expert internationally, he delivered papers at congresses both in Africa and overseas, travelling to the U.S., Australia, Malaysia and Vietnam. He penned 15 scientific articles for various journals and was the author of five chapters – and co-authored five others – in the new veterinary textbook *Infectious Diseases of Livestock with special reference to Southern Africa*. This two-volume publication was published by the Oxford Press in 1994.

Together with Dr Paul Kloeck, he was the co-producer of the Rabies video *If Only I Knew* in English and Zulu, which is used in the education of the general public, while a highly regarded video *Rabies in Humans and Animals* is widely used in the training of doctors and veterinarians.

His interests and endeavours in the field of veterinary science, together with his knowledge and expertise, led to Bishop being awarded an honorary life membership of the SA Veterinary Association in 1988.

Brian Weaver, the director of veterinary services in KZN, said that ‘because of his modest nature, many people did not know that George was a superb microbiologist who was respected by vets throughout South Africa. It is going to be difficult, if not impossible, to replace someone of his calibre and of his experience and in-depth knowledge of animal diseases. His specific expertise was rabies, for which he was world renowned.’

Bishop travelled extensively throughout Africa with paediatrician John Godlonton, each addressing the problems of rabies from their different perspectives. ‘George played the major role in controlling and decreasing the incidence of both human and animal rabies in the province,’ said Godlonton. ‘His dedication and generosity were remarkable and he was held in the highest regard internationally.’

Bishop leaves his wife, Margie, and two sons.



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