

WITS UNIVERSITY MEDICAL SCHOOL GRADUATING CLASS OF 1960

Newsletter #13 10 October, 2022

Moving Forward and

New Zoom Reunion for all on 1 December 2022



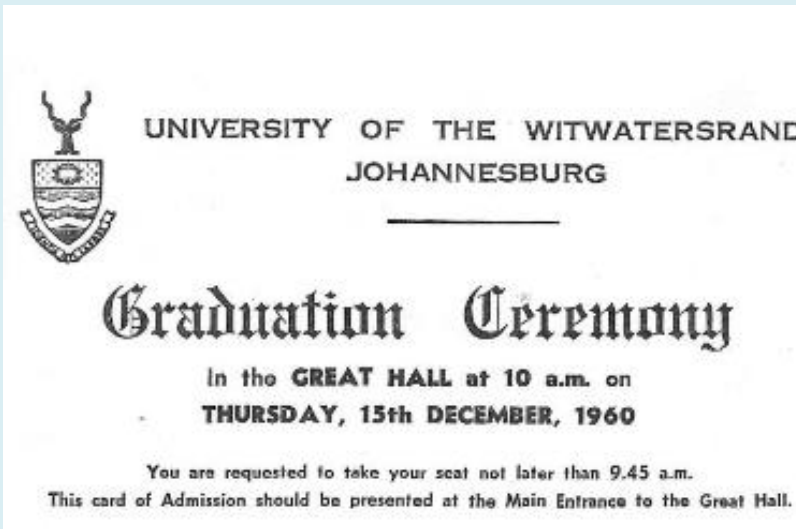
~~~~~  
**Dear Friends of the Medical graduating classes from 1960 to 1966**

**From Chaim (Mike) Rosenberg, MB BCh 1960**

We are two years on from the diamond jubilee reunion of our graduation. Several years ago, I took a deep look at the picture of the 1960 graduating class on the steps of the University of the Witwatersrand and asked myself. 'What happened to those eager young people over the past sixty years?' I could not have imagined how far we would get, and



how pleasurable it would be, to connect with old friends and colleagues and to learn about each other once more. Eliciting their fascinating stories (with the miracle of email and the internet) helped by close friends in the class, **Avroy Fanaroff, Gary Katz, Ronnie Auerbach, Andre van As** and others who joined me on this adventure, and learning about the success of the Class of 1960, as reported by folks in their mid-80s, had been amongst the most pleasing activities of my life. Being able to document our time together at medical school and remember our special teachers and the libraries and hospitals that we worked in and to develop the profiles of 54 of our colleagues and have them posted on a website for all to stumble upon, is something I could not dream of, nor



would it have been possible 60 years ago. But thankfully, there is the [Class of '60 Website](#), created for us by **Nooshin Erfani-Ghadimi**, the Wits US Representative.

We are glad to see that **subsequent Wits Medical**



**classes**, perhaps from our example, or by their own initiative, have also documented their year groups on a website. The Class of 1961, encouraged and driven by **Ivan Samson** (pictured right) celebrated the 60th year since their graduation at the end of last year. Their website with 34 biographies can be seen here [Class of '61 Website](#). We know that **Martin Coleman** intends to pick up the baton for the Wits Medical School class of 1964. There is also an excellent site created by **Michael Eliastam** and the [Class of '66 Website](#). (Maybe there are others that we have not yet stumbled upon)



## Invitation to a Zoom Reunion on Thursday 1 December 2022

Geraldine Auerbach and I invite all members of the Wits Medical classes graduating from 1960 to 1966 to join us on a Zoom reunion. Meet current medical student **Taariq Hassim** and hear from Wits **Dean of Health Sciences**, Professor **Shabir Madhi** and hear a short message from a representative of each of the year groups from 1960 to 1966.

The Zoom will be on Thursday 1 December at the following times:

10:00 Pacific standard time / 13.00 Eastern USA / 18:00 UK / 19:00 Western Europe / 20:00 South Africa and Israel / 5.00am the next day Sydney.(link to be confirmed)

Please register now at this link if you would like to join the Zoom on 1 December :

<https://wits-za.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJcufuyrgDsoHNEqrwZgoMf3OVzkN99lZ7CQ>



Many of you probably have pictures like this of your firm at graduation. This one above is from Gary Katz in 1960, with members of his firm, clutching their degree certificates. Back: **Leonard Kahn** (Professor of Surgical Pathology, New York) **Gerald Lampert** (General Practitioner, Johannesburg, died 1998) **Gary Katz** (Paediatrician, London) Front: **Aubrey Milunsky** (Professor of Prenatal Genetics, Boston) and **Farrol Sims** (Family Medicine, Johannesburg and Milwaukee – died of Covid in 2020). You can read their wonderful stories and those of others on the [who's who page 1960](#)

In addition to the biographies, on the website of the class of '60 there are a dozen [Newsletters](#) covering subjects such as our teaching hospitals and special teachers, including **Baragwanath Hospital**, and **Fevers** and **Raymond Dart**, **Phillip Tobias**, **Mosie Suzman** and **Toby Arnold**, as well as essays on the changes in medicine that we have seen in our lifetimes. All these have been transformed into beautiful, illustrated documents by **Geraldine** in London, and posted on the website by **Nooshin** in Seattle – hopefully for posterity. And no doubt these items will also resonate with graduates from the five years after us.

~~~~~


Stumbling upon the website

How delightful it is then, when people, out of the blue, contact us to remark upon it, and to ask a question or to add further information. A particular delight was to receive a long letter from a current medical student at Wits who stumbled upon our website and took the time and trouble to contact us and give us his impressions.

This young man is **Taariq Hassim** (right) and this is what he wrote to us on 5 September 2022 with the subject heading:

Appreciation of the MBChB Class of 1960 (Taariq is happy for us to share his letter with you all.)



Good day Doctors

I am a current Wits Medical Student who stumbled across the website of the 1960 Wits MBChB class. As of writing this email, I am in my final year with only a few weeks of clinical time left before (hopeful) graduation.

I would like to thank you all for the wonderful stories contained on the website. Reading through various newsletters offered a glimpse into Wits' long and fascinating history and allowed me to learn more about such historic figures such as Professors Raymond Dart, Phillip Tobias, DJ Du Plessis and Asher Dubb.

Prof. Tobias sadly passed away in 2012, while I completed my 2nd year Anatomy course only in 2018. Prof. Tobias' Man's Anatomy is no longer used to teach students Anatomy; unfortunately, our dissection times have been cut down to once daily from what I believe to have been more frequent dissections in the past. Despite this, Prof Tobias' legacy lives on: the main dissection hall in which most of the students dissect, bears his name, as does the main administration building for the Health Sciences Faculty, a pleasing and modern building in walking distance from the medical school in Parktown.

Many of the other mentors mentioned still have their names whispered along the corridors of the medical school and the associated hospitals - a senior Endocrinologist at Baragwanath related to us the quality of his teachers, including Professors Shamroth and Dubb, while the former head of General Surgery at Helen Joseph Hospital related to us how serious and frightening Prof. Du Plessis was!

The former medical school in Hillbrow, now serves as a base for Forensic Pathology if I'm not mistaken. Medical students would sit in for autopsies there, but this practice has stopped, possibly due to COVID. The main teaching hospital for students now includes Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital (CMJAH, formerly Johannesburg General), adjacent to the medical campus, as well as Helen Joseph Hospital, formerly J.G. Strydom, in addition to the mighty Baragwanath and Rahima Moosa Mother and Child Hospital, formerly Coronation. There are additional sites we do visit during certain rotations, for example Tara Psychiatric Hospital, an assortment of various clinics and community health centres (including Alexandra CHC as mentioned in one of the newsletters), and a 2-week rural public health rotation to Bushbuckridge.

The MBBCh curriculum has undergone significant change in the past two decades with the addition of the Graduate Entry Medical Programme (GEMP). Suitably qualified applicants with a Bachelor's Degree or greater, and after sitting an exam, are allowed direct entrance into MBBCh III (now also called GEMP 1). Though I did not enter Medicine through this pathway, many of my colleagues have. These students are often older, wiser, and bring fascinating stories and backgrounds with them - Masters Degrees, PhDs, decades of working in other environments, adult children, and the like.

One possible consequence of the GEMP is the unfortunate shortening of the clinical years; currently only MBBCh V and MBBCh VI students inhabit the hospital while the lower years deal more with preclinical theory and some clinical skills lab based practical teaching. A great deal of the curriculum has moved online due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which, together with the fire at Charlotte Maxeke Hospital, has severely affected academic activities. On a more hopeful note, the class now more closely resembles the population of the country and the patients we care for - a majority is female and of colour, a strong departure from an unfortunately racist past.

The Leech, the student run Journal I had never heard of till your newsletters, is unfortunately no more. I have been unable to identify exactly when publication stopped, though I know of students from a decade ago who were still interested in continuing its

legacy. The Wits Health Sciences Library (WHSL), the main library available to medical students on the Parktown campus, has an incomplete collection of Journal copies which I have enjoyed reading through. It seems a pity for such an excellent journal to have been discontinued.

I see the last newsletter entry is from January 2021. I know the gap has been considerable but do still hope for additional pieces to be added, especially so that future students can learn more about those who came before, their wonderful achievements, and the hardships we are no longer exposed to.

Kind regards, Taariq Hassim, MBBCh VI (2022), Wits

It is very pleasing to us that Taariq has found the site and found so much of interest in it that even 60 years later, resonates with his life as a Wits Medical Student. It's good for us to be connected with the present generation of medical students. We so much appreciate that he has written to us, to share his thoughts and opinions – and that he has agreed that we can share his letter with the class of '60 – and indeed, going forward, share it with the classes of other years in the 1960s whose members were equally distinguished and with whom these memories would be shared.



Above: The Wits Medical School building on Hospital Street, where we studied in the 1950s, had opened in the early 1920s. When this picture was taken, nearly a hundred years later, in 2017, it had become the University of the Witwatersrand Department of Forensic Medicine while the medical school had moved to Parktown in the late 1970s.

~~~~~



## Classes of '61 to '66

### Ivan Samson – of the class of '61 writes

Dear Geraldine and Mike

Thank you for including me in this comprehensive, educational and interesting newsletter as well as for the invitation to join in the Zoom meeting in December. It's great to see that this is still a 'living' ongoing work in progress and will be added onto in time to come. Interesting too to read the letter from Taariq to learn of the changes that have been made to the Wits Medical School program, and to learn of the demographics of today's students. Looking forward to another virtual get together. Members of the class of 61 please join us and you can contact me at [nosmasnavi@gmail.com](mailto:nosmasnavi@gmail.com)

Ivan Samson. Clinical, community and hospital based paediatric practice, caring for at least three generations of patients – also trumpeter and tennis player. St Catherine's, Canada

### Wulf Utian – of the class of 62 writes

#### THE INVISIBLE WITS MEDICAL SCHOOL GRADUATING CLASS OF 1962

Anyone reading this newsletter is likely to ask, did a class graduate in 1962?

Together with the Alumnus Office I tried to contact class members to try and emulate the classes of 1960 and 1961, but there were only 2 tepid positive responses. So, as we celebrate 60 years since our graduation, we largely remain invisible. Regrettably there is no contact list for the class, no memorial for classmates who have passed away, little knowledge of the married names of our women classmates, no accessible way of reconnecting with classmates we were so close to all those years ago.

It does not need to remain this way and so I make a plea to all who know members of the Wits 1962 class to send the contact info of classmates to me Wulf Utian

[wulf@utianllc.com](mailto:wulf@utianllc.com). Dig into your archives and send old photos, anecdotes of memorable moments, an up-to-date bio of yourself we can add to a new blog, before (1962) and after (2022) photos of yourself, anything you would consider worthy of recording.



As for myself, after specializing in Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the University of Cape Town, I had a major fall out with the Apartheid system in the mid-1970's that hit the international media and made life unpleasant for us in Cape Town. Through the intercession of Avroy Fanaroff (class of 1960) in Cleveland, Ohio, I was invited on Sabbatical to the Case Western Reserve

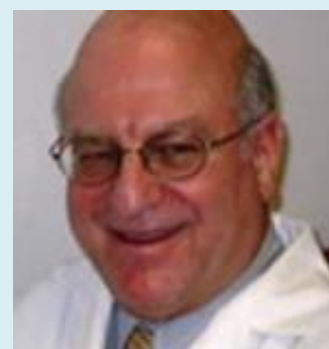
University School of Medicine in 1976 in Cleveland Ohio, and with the passing of time subspecialized in Reproductive Endocrinology, was a pioneer in microsurgical techniques in infertility, in vitro fertilization, and multiple aspects of reproductive aging in women, becoming Chairman and Professor of the Department in the process. I still claim to be on the longest sabbatical in recorded history. So, let's hear from you, class of 1962.

My warmest regards, Wulf Utian [wulf@utianllc.com](mailto:wulf@utianllc.com) ([Utian Website](#)) ([Wulf Utian on Wikipedia](#) )

WULF H UTIAN MB BCh, PhD, DSc(Med), FRCOG, FACOG, FICS  
Arthur Bill Professor Emeritus, Reproductive Biology, Case Western Reserve University  
Director Emeritus, Obstetrics & Gynecology, University Hospitals of Cleveland  
Honorary Founding President, Exec. Director Emeritus, NAMS  
Emeritus Chair Scientific Board, RMR Inc.  
Consultant, Gynecology and Women's Health, Cleveland Clinic  
Founder and Honorary Past President, International Menopause Society  
Mobile: 216 2727751

**Martin Coleman** of year '64 says

Thank you very much for including me on this invitation! I will definitely plan to link and will say a few words. I have so enjoyed past 1960 class activities and look forward to our virtual reunion on 1 December. I hope my class members will join too. Much appreciated, Martin Colman



Class of '64 can contact me at [mcolman@UTMB.EDU](mailto:mcolman@UTMB.EDU)

Martin Colman, MD, FRCR, FACR, FACRO, FASTRO, FARS  
Emeritus Chair of Radiation Oncology, The University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston, Texas.  
Emeritus Professor of Radiation Oncology, The University of California, Irvine, California.



And **Michael Eliastam** of graduating year 66 says:

I certainly will be available to participate and say a few words in any reunion as you described. The letter from the almost graduated Taariq is very endearing, I wish there were more. As usual your willingness to remind us of our past lives is much appreciated!

Be well, Michael Eliastam, class of '66 [meliastam@gmail.com](mailto:meliastam@gmail.com)  
Wayland, Massachusetts.01778

**Please will somebody from classes '63 and '65 get in touch** and tell us if you would like to say a few words on the Zoom on 1 December email [chaimrosenberg@aol.com](mailto:chaimrosenberg@aol.com) ; [geraldine.auerbach@gmail.com](mailto:geraldine.auerbach@gmail.com)

~~~~~


Moving Forward

We have spent a long time talking and thinking about our medical studies. What Geraldine and I are asking you all now, is to tell us what you are doing now – what are the things that sustain and interest you in your retirement and your advanced years. How are you coping with the exigencies of being a ‘senior citizen’, and all that this brings with it in the way of frailty and loss. What are your special interests and what absorbs you in these troubling times.

Please will all those reading this Newsletter send a paragraph outlining the above to both chaimrosenberg@aol.com ; geraldine.auerbach@gmail.com which we can print in our next Newsletter in mid-November – reminding you of the link to the zoom. Please send your paragraph of say 100-200 words, by Tuesday 8 November

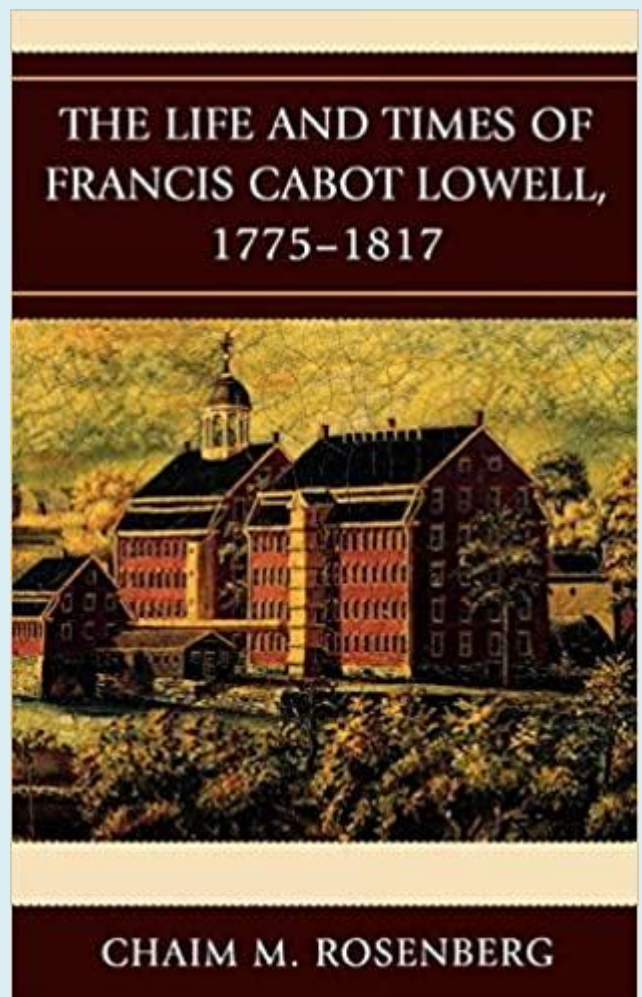
Here is a paragraph from me Chaim (Mike) Rosenberg

Members of the Class of 1960 were privileged to have useful careers spanning many years. After 40 years practicing psychiatry I turned to the study of American history, focussed on the role of the individual. Completing more than a dozen books, I have learned a lot about modern-day publishing. *The Life and Times of Francis Cabot Lowell* tells how he brought the industrial revolution to America. *The International Harvester Company* describes



Cyrus Hall McCormick, the inventor of the mechanical harvesting

machine. I am now researching and writing about the near 50-year (1754-1799) close friendship between George Washington--father of the American nation--and University of Edinburgh trained physician, James Craik. Each



completed book opens new vistas. Research and writing helps me to move forward. I hope to continue in my second career for as long as I can integrate multiple thoughts into interesting and meaningful paragraphs.

Please send us your paragraph about your special interests and about what absorbs you these days – as well as a picture of yourself preferably involved with your new interests. Let's move forward on this splendid class renewal.

~~~~~  
Newsletter #13, compiled by **Chaim (Mike) Rosenberg**, Chicago, October 2022

edited by **Geraldine Auerbach** MBE, London, October 2022  
~~~~~

Some video LINKS you may find interesting

Interview of Dr Jack Kussel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3xY28eY5Es8&t=5s>

Interview of Dr Essop Jassat: [\(1\) Freedom Day - Dr Essop Jassat, Wits Alumni 1960 - YouTube](#)

Interview of Dr Gloria Davis: [\(1\) Women's Month Interview with Dr Gloria Davis-Myers - YouTube](#)

Class of 1966 reunion: [\(1\) Class of 1966 55th Reunion - YouTube](#)

Class of 1961 reunion: [Class of 1961 Reunion - YouTube](#)

Class of 1971 reunion: [\(1\) 50th reunion - MBCh 1971 - YouTube](#)

Phillip Valentine Tobias - Emeritus Professor on his 80th – Wits Official (15 mins)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4WwnsA_VfQ

Philip Tobias (Icons 2012) (3mins) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0uRe6fzx5WU>

Professor Harry Seftel on the Dangers of Smoking. (9 mins) <https://vimeo.com/152246809>