

combined a charming disposition with an exemplary character. He exemplified a consummate passion for the welfare of his fellow human being. He was a good friend of the WACS, and he helped in training several medical students and residents from the west African subregion. He was a true and genuine human being, lover of all and father to many. Dr Organ was a soft-spoken gentleman who did not like to ruffle feathers. He said what he believed in and believed in what he said. He was unshakable, yet flexible. You always knew where he stood, and he was not ambiguous. He was a man of few words. Dr Organ had planned to attend the 46th Annual Scientific Conference of the WACS in Accra, Ghana, in February 2006, but this was not to be, because his illustrious journey on earth ended on Saturday, June 18, 2005.

The king whose earthly journey's done  
Has posed his scepter to a chosen one  
We say farewell with grief and pain  
Yet hope to see his face again  
In memories of yesterday,  
Trails he blazed, residents he trained

The part of us he took with him  
Left empty space, flowerless stem  
We'll call upon his righteous deeds  
And nurture all his planted seeds  
Of wisdom, virtue and noble thoughts  
To fill the void his absence wrought  
We'll honor him in future years  
With worthy causes, not with tears  
And when our journeys' ends shall come  
We bid his spirit "guide us home"  
Where those things that seems to be  
woeful endings  
Are now joyful new beginnings

Dr Organ was a beacon of hope for the hopeless and an outstanding role model to all of us. He led by example and governed by consensus. He was a man of humility, respect, honor, and integrity both in his professional and private lives. Indeed, his selfless service to his fellow men and to fellows of the WACS will never be forgotten. Dr Organ will always be remembered by all his friends, colleagues, residents, and students as a man of truth, fairness, and discipline and as a man who dedicated his life to the service of humanity. But the time has come to give him back to the Dear Lord who gave him to us.

Yet, as Thou did not lose him in giving,  
So we have not lost him by his return  
For what is ours is Thine always,  
And life is eternal, and love is  
immortal;  
And what we call death is only  
a horizon  
And a horizon is nothing but the limit  
of our sight  
Lift us up O God that we may see  
further  
Cleanse our eyes that we may know  
ourselves  
To our beloved who art with Thee  
That where they are and Thou art  
We too may be with our Lord

The president, members of the governing council, and fellows of the WACS say adieu to a great friend, teacher, and colleague. May his good work on earth precede him to paradise and ensure his welcome to the bosom of the Almighty Lord.

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## Claude H. Organ, Jr, MD

### *International Surgical Giant*

John Terblanche, ChM

While on sabbatical leave with Tom Starzl, MD, PhD, in Denver, Colo, in 1978, an old friend, Ben Eiseman, MD, with his usual wisdom, arranged for me to meet Dr Organ during the Surgical Boards Examinations. Thus started a close friendship, which was to grow later that year during a visiting professorship to his department in Omaha, Neb. Here my wife and I first met and were charmed by Betty Organ and recognized Claude Organ's pride

in his close-knit family. Claude and I had in-depth discussions on various aspects of surgery, and I would later incorporate many of his innovative methods of departmental chairmanship when I became chairman in Cape Town, South Africa, in 1981.

In May 1986, at the admission ceremony in Cape Town, Claude Organ was awarded the Honorary Fellowship of the College of Surgeons of South Africa by the president, the late Phyllis Knocker, ChM. With his well-known support for women in surgery, he was delighted that the then president of the multidisci-

plinary Colleges of Medicine of South Africa (Rondebosch), was a female surgeon. He was proud of this award. Two pictures of the ceremony were included in the chapter on his life in the book *A Century of Black Surgeons*.<sup>1</sup> He was also typically not frightened to defend his position as a visitor to South Africa. In 1988, he wrote an editorial in *Oncology Times* entitled "Apartheid and Medicine"<sup>2</sup> in which he praised the Colleges of Medicine of South Africa for their college credo, which had been adopted by the College Council in 1986. He quoted the whole credo and pointed out that it in-

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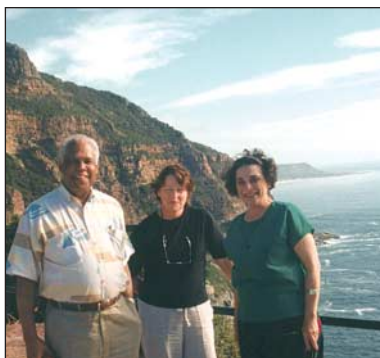
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**Figure 1.** Claude (second from right) and Betty (third from left) Organ with my wife, Anne Terblanche (left), and our hosts in Manila, the Philippines, December 1996.



**Figure 2.** Claude and Betty Organ in a game park in South Africa (courtesy of Claude Organ).



**Figure 3.** Claude (left) and Betty (right) Organ and Anne Terblanche (middle) at Chapman's Peak, Cape Peninsula, Cape Town.

cluded the following: "The College is opposed to all forms of discrimination on the grounds of race, religion or sex, and believes that such discrimination is incompatible with the ethical practice of medicine."<sup>2</sup>

Dr Organ was one of international surgery's truly great intellects, a superb teacher, and a master surgical innovator. Couple this with his personal charm, humor, friendliness, and concern for others, and one can begin to appreciate what a remarkable person Claude Organ was. I truly valued his friendship. Over the years, Dr Organ and I shared an interest in the development of international surgical links and dialogue and the potential of surgical assistance to developing countries. We met frequently at surgical meetings and events in many interesting places. I was always privileged to share special time in intellectual discussions with Claude, and my wife and I had memorable so-

cial contact with Claude and Betty. One example is shown of us in Manila, the Philippines (**Figure 1**).

Typical of Claude is the story that follows. During 2 bus trips at successive meetings in 1994 in Sydney, Australia, and then in San Francisco, Calif, he and I worked out a plan to establish a "Fellowship in Academic Medical Leadership" for previously disadvantaged (ie, black) South African physicians. He supported the proposed program with his typical enthusiasm and helped to set up meetings with various potential donors in the United States. Unfortunately, this fellowship eventually did not come to fruition, but this was in no way Dr Organ's fault.

When a new visiting professorship and memorial lectureship was created in the name of my predecessor in Cape Town, J. H. Louw, ChM, Claude Organ was our choice as the

first incumbent. He agreed, and he and Betty were our guests in Cape Town in October 1994. Claude Organ made many lasting contributions during his visit. His memorial lecture, entitled "Charlie, Sam, and Jack: America's Heritage,"<sup>3</sup> was delivered to an enthralled audience. As usual, he fit in an incredible amount of teaching, time in the operating room, and counseling of staff and students. Prior to Cape Town, the Organs visited a game park (**Figure 2**), and we had wonderful times touring the Cape on the weekends (**Figure 3**).

My wife and I had the pleasure of attending his presidential meeting of the American College of Surgeons in New Orleans, La, in October 2004, and we also spent a wonderful informal evening at dinner with some of Claude's international colleagues and the Organ family. In December that year, he visited South Africa, as leader of a "People to People Ambassador" program. He was to have visited us again for the International Society of Surgery Société Internationale de Chirurgie meeting in Durban in August 2005. Unfortunately, his untimely death prevented this. At the meeting, all congress delegates received a copy of the *South African Journal of Surgery*, which contained an obituary for Dr Organ.<sup>4</sup>

Sadly, he has left us, but the memory of Claude Organ, international surgical giant, lives on.

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