



South African National Society

History - Culture and Conservation. Join SANS.

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NEWS BRIEF

OBITUARY

DENIS EMERY SLANEY – 14 NOVEMBER 1929 TO 11 FEBRUARY 2015

Denis Slaney was born in Durban and grew up in Overport near Overport House and McCord's Hospital. He was educated at Durban High School and studied at the University of Natal [Pietermaritzburg]. He trained to be a teacher and on leaving university taught for one term at Port Shepstone High School before being posted to Estcourt High School where he taught history and geography for the next twenty years. He in fact taught, or as he liked to put it "tried to teach" his future wife, Dawn Hope, for four years. Twenty years later they married in 1971.

Shortly afterwards Denis was promoted as Vice Principal and Head of History at Northlands Boys' High School and they moved to Durban. He and Dawn lived at Westville where soon after their arrival their son Kevin was born. They lived there for the next forty-two years. Although Denis was a strict disciplinarian, he won the respect of his pupils as a result of his fairness and the ability to pass on his knowledge. Dawn and Kevin were touched by the number of past pupils who contacted them and remembered Denis with affection. From Northlands Denis was promoted to Head Master of Brettonwood High School and finally Head Master of George Campbell High School.

Theunis Eloff and Robert King introduced Denis to the South African National Society. He was subsequently elected to the Committee, became Chairman, President and ultimately Honorary Vice-President of the society. He combined these roles with being a very efficient treasurer and did much to put the Society's finances on a sound footing. Denis was very astute with finances and had even considered leaving teaching to take up a career in finance. However, his true vocation was education and in particular teaching History.

His great passion was Royalty. This had been stimulated at the age of eight, by the 1937 Coronation and further enhanced by the Royal visit to South Africa a decade later. Denis had a phenomenal knowledge of royalty, not only of the British Royal family, but also of the European and Asian Royal families. He was especially interested in the Royal family of Thailand. Even overseas visits centred around places with Royal connections. One of the highlights of Denis's life was the State Visit to Durban of Queen Elizabeth II in 1995. His Father, a veteran of World War I, had received an invitation to meet the Queen and Denis accompanied him. He built up an outstanding collection of books, royal memorabilia and his extensive collection of scrapbooks.

Denis was a devoted Mason and was District Grand Master of the Scottish Constitution for five years.

He retained his interest in History and when his health allowed, attended the Society's monthly meetings. For many years he and Dawn were involved in selling tickets for the SANS Christmas hamper in order to raise money for the Killie Campbell Bursary.

Denis was a real gentleman, a man of high principles and with a dry sense of humour. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him. The Society extends its deepest sympathy to Dawn and Kevin and the other members of his family.

Robert King – President