



Admission of Dr. the Hon. Henry Gluckman to Honorary Fellowship of

October 21st 1983

The College of Medicine of South Africa  
Citation read by

Professor H.A. Shapiro Ph.D., M.B., Ch.B.,  
F.R.S.S.Af., Hon.LL.D.

Oscar Wilde had just put the finishing touches to the French version of his play Salome, in 1893, when Henry Gluckman was born on 12 July that year. This was the year of the Chicago World Fair and, 18 days before Henry was born, Nansen had started on his Arctic Expedition. In this year of Referendums and Constitution Bills, it is an interesting coincidence that this was the year in which the Home Rule Bill passed its third reading in the House of Commons to be rejected by the House of Lords one week later. This was also the year in which Natal acquired responsible government with John Robinson as its first Prime Minister. It is the year in which Lobengula died, by his own hand or that of another or possibly of smallpox; in this year the railway line linking Pretoria to Cape Town was completed.

So Henry Gluckman was 16 years old when I saw the light of day in the little fishing village of Somerset Strand, some 30 miles from Cape Town. When Dr. Gluckman assumed his duties as Minister of Health, he visited all the areas of the country in which the Health Department was dispersed. At that time I was attached to the Union Health Department and the associated South African Police Mortuary. I well recall his dapper visit and the penetrating questions he asked the members of the staff in Cape Town.

By another coincidence, I left the Union ~~of~~ Health Department (where I had been Government Pathologist) in the same year in which Henry Gluckman yielded his post as Minister of Health in the Smuts Government (1948).

It was also my privilege to edit a portion of his collected writings which appeared in the volume entitled Abiding Values which was published in 1970.

Perhaps / ...



Perhaps these not so far-fetched conjunctions make it appropriate for me to present Dr. Henry Gluckman to you tonight, Mr. President, for admission to Honorary Fellowship of this College.

At the age of 19 he went to London to study medicine. He passed the second M.B., B.S. of the University of London and the Primary F.R.C.S. in 1915. The demands of World War I interrupted his studies and, to accelerate his qualification as a medical practitioner, he abandoned further studies in the specialist field of surgery, and then was admitted as a member of the Royal College of Surgeons of England and a Licenciate of the Royal College of Physicians of London in 1917. He was commissioned almost immediately with the rank of Captain in the South African Medical Corps.

He returned to Johannesburg in 1919, having been registered as a medical practitioner with the then Transvaal Medical Council. It was in that year that he became Director of the Special Treatment Centre at the Johannesburg Hospital, an appointment which he gave up only when he joined the Cabinet as Minister of Health.

We cannot trace how many medical practitioners were registered at that time but Dr. Gluckman's official registered number is 0474, indicating that he was among the very early medical practitioners registered to practise in what was then the Union of South Africa.

In 1922, he was appointed as Lecturer in the Faculty of Medicine of the University of the Witwatersrand and in 1928 (the year in which the South African Medical and Dental Council was established), he became Honorary Consulting Venereologist to the Johannesburg Hospital. Now, over half a century later, Dr. Gluckman is still one of the six medical practitioners registered as a Specialist in Venereal Diseases.

It was in May 1938 that he was returned to Parliament as the United Party member for Yeoville, a constituency which he represented uninterruptedly until he retired from Parliament in 1958.

During World War II, Dr. Gluckman, with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, was Liaison Officer between Parliament and the South African Military Medical Services.

In 1942, Dr. Gluckman, as the architect of the project, urged the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry into the health of the nation. In August that year, Sir Patrick Duncan (the Governor-General of the Union of South Africa), appointed him as Chairman of the National Health Services Commission, charged with the task of formulating a National Health Service in South Africa.

The zeal, the vigour and the competence with which he pursued the work as Chairman of that Commission, led to his appointment as Minister of Health in November 1945.

In the course of the work of the Commission, Dr. Gluckman had visited the Polela Health Centre. This Centre was due to the vision of Dr. E.H. Cluver (then Secretary of Public Health) and Dr.H.S. Gear (then Deputy Chief Health Officer in Pretoria). They had pioneered as early as 1942 the concept that the health of the people was best served by providing promotive, preventive as well as curative and rehabilitative services on a family and community basis.

The Gluckman Report describes in detail the organization of this Centre, which was recommended as a model for Health Centres that should serve as a foundation for the future of the health services. The Polela Centre, with appropriate modifications for the needs of the different ethnic groups in rural, per-urban and urban communities, became the prototype for a series of Health Centres throughout the country.

Natal lent itself for the implementation of the new health policy. An Institute for Family and Community Health was created and it was alongside this development that the Medical School under the aegis of the University of Natal was established in 1948.

Before the Medical School admitted its first students, several satellite rural, peri-urban and urban Health Centres had been established in Durban and Pietermaritzburg and their environs.



Representatives of the Rockefeller Foundation of New York, on a visit to Durban, were so deeply impressed with the developments at the Institute for Family and Community Health, that the Rockefeller Foundation voted a substantial grant to the University of Natal to enable the University to establish, in conjunction with the Institute, a University Department of Social, Preventive and Family Medicine.

The late Professor George W. Gale, a former Secretary for Health and Chief Health Officer for the Union of South Africa, has pointed out that the outstanding merit of the Gluckman Report was that it made a clean break with the view that had become almost a dogma, that medical practice must revolve around hospitals. Dr. Gluckman's concept placed the Health Centres in constant touch with the entire population. Their primary aim was to promote and preserve the good health of all citizens.

It emphasized that the day of individual isolationism in medical practice was past and that medical practitioners with their auxiliary services could make the main contribution to the needs of the people through group team practice. Basic to this philosophy is the principle that the primary aim of medical practice was the promotion and the preservation of health. Thus the foundation of the practice of the Health Centre is a periodical medical examination resulting in continuous progress of health education in which the family practitioner will play a leading part rather than in the writing of prescriptions.

With the fall of the Smuts Government in 1948, the late Dr. A.J. Stals, who succeeded Dr. Gluckman as Minister of Health, although personally somewhat doubtful about the basic tenets of Health Centre practice, was open-minded enough to allow development to continue during his own period of office which, unfortunately, was soon ended by his untimely death. Thereafter the Gluckman Health Policy atrophied from disuse and disappeared from the health promotive scene. It is a striking tribute to Dr. Gluckman's far-sighted vision that the very concepts which he pioneered over 30 years ago have now been resuscitated,

phoenix-like, / ...



phoenix-like, to be given a new lease of life in our contemporary plans for promoting the health and well-being of all the peoples of the Republic.

On an occasion such as this, in the limited time at my disposal, it is impossible to do justice to the many distinguished achievements of our colleague. His role in the National War Memorial Health Foundation is well known. He has served as Chairman (now Honorary Life President) of the South African Friends of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He was closely associated with the establishment of the Fourth Medical School in Durban.

He served as an Executive Member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (Union of South Africa branch) from 1955 to 1958. He was a Regional Vice-President of the World Parliamentary Association from 1960 to 1966 and, in 1967, Rhodes University conferred upon him the degree of LL.D. honoris causa and in November 1981 he was honoured by the University of the Witwatersrand in this very hall by the conferment on him of the same degree of LL.D. honoris causa.

In looking back at these historic events, we can appreciate the great service Dr. Gluckman has given to South Africa throughout his life. They are only some of the reasons why I present to you, Mr. President, for admission to Honorary Fellowship of The College of Medicine of South Africa, Dr. the Hon. Henry Gluckman, who has scored another record by being the first nonagerian to be presented to you, Mr. President, and I do so because, as the Romans had it:

"Cum illo Henrico Gluckmano vero quis neget eum actum esse praeclare"

(Who can deny that this man Henry Gluckman has not led a noble life?)  
Or, in the language of contemporary Rock: This doc? what a guy!

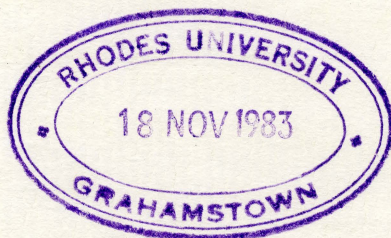
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10th November 1983

Dr. Derek Henderson  
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With compliments from Dr. the Hon.  
Henry Gluckman.





DSH/ph

(L) C.V's

18 November 1983

Dr the Hon. H Gluckman  
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Thank you for sending me a copy of the citation for your Honorary Fellowship of the College of Medicine of South Africa. I found the information most interesting.

We shall certainly miss your cheerful presence at the meetings of our Governors, but we must balance that with our gratitude for the years of valuable service which you have rendered.

I hope that you continue in good health, and that you have a pleasant holiday season.

With all best wishes

Yours sincerely

Dr D S Henderson  
VICE-CHANCELLOR