



Class of '61 – Reunion

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It is with great sadness that I report that **John Forbes** (Class of '49) has died. We were privileged to have invited John to, and have him attend, our Reunion Dinner last October. Our special guest sat quietly chuckling away the whole evening and had an absolute ball.

The following tribute appeared in the Daily Dispatch on the 3rd of March 2017:

City's farewell to 'doyenne' of pharmacy

DESCRIBED as a pillar of society, doyenne of pharmacy, dedicated member and past president of Rotary Arcadia and a compassionate pharmacist, John Forbes was laid to rest yesterday.

Former Selbornian Forbes, 85, was known to generations of East Londoners as the owner of John Forbes Pharmacy, an Oxford Street landmark.

He died last Friday at Life Beacon Bay Hospital following a short illness.

His daughter, Gail Vlok, said her father had joined the family business in 1954 after qualifying as a pharmacist at the Durban Technikon.



John Forbes Pharmacy was established by Forbes' uncle – also John Forbes – in 1903.

John Forbes Senior's twin brother, James, was also involved in the pharmacy after the twins emigrated from Scotland. Forbes's Scottish roots were evident in his dedication to the Caledonian Society and his passion for the sound of bagpipes.

Forbes was also a committed member of the Rotary Club of Arcadia, which he joined about 45 years ago after first serving as a Round Table member. "He was passionate about being involved in Rotary projects and had a very good sense of humour, so he was the compère at many events," Vlok said.

Vlok said her father, who met her late mother, Alette van der Merwe, when she was a Clarendon pupil and he was at Selborne College, was also very dedicated to the Old Selbornian Club.

She said her father loved people and spent time advising customers.

"He really cared. He was a very compassionate man and would work on Christmas Day morning so his staff could have the day off."

Pharmacist Jackie Hendricks, who bought John Forbes Pharmacy when Forbes retired in 2002, said Forbes had been known as the "doyenne of pharmacy" in the Border region in the 70s and 80s.

"His pharmacy was the biggest in East London at that time and he was a leading light in pharmaceutical circles," she said. "He was a very good businessman and was very customer-orientated. He spoke Xhosa fluently which endeared him to many of his customers."

Forbes is survived by his daughters Vlok, Lysette Clercq, Joanne Solomon, eight grandchildren and one greatgrandchild. His funeral was held at Stirling Presbyterian Church yesterday afternoon.

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Dave Minnie, the President of the Old Selbornian Club, of which John and our very own Errol Sapire had also served as Presidents, commented as follows: "It is with sadness we record the passing of John Geddie Forbes. A great Old Boy and benefactor of the East London community at large for many many years. He will be sorely missed. Condolences to his family at this sad time."

Rest in Peace John. You lived a good life and have left a legacy that that will live on for many years to come.

