

Dr Rudolf Daniel Bigalke

* 5 May 1931 - † 28 January 2024

SASAS is saddened to hear of the passing of Dr Bigalke, a man who made significant contributions to the livestock sector and veterinary science in South Africa.

He was born in Pretoria on 5 May 1931. Matriculated in 1948 from Afrikaans Hoër Seunskool and obtained his BVSc-degree (Cum Laude) at the University of Pretoria in 1953. In 1964 he obtained the Diploma in Applied Parasitology and Entomology (with distinction) from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and in 1969 he obtained his DVSc degree at the University of Pretoria.

Dr Bigalke started his career as a private veterinarian and joined Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute (OVI) 2 years later, moving through the ranks to eventually become the 9th director of the Institute in 1980. He was promoted to Chief Director for Animal Production in the Department of Agriculture in 1988, from which he retired as Deputy Director General of the department in 1996.

Dr Bigalke served as president of several local societies, such as the South African Biological Society and the Parasitological Society of Southern Africa. He was also the chairman of the Protein Research Trust. He has been a member of the Transvaal Advisory Council for Nature Conservation for many years. Dr Bigalke was also part of the South African Veterinary Council as an elected member, an Executive Committee Member of the Federal Council and a member of the History and Awards Committees.

Dr Bigalke received numerous awards during his career, including the Gold Medal from the SAVC in 1994, the Gold Medal from the Fertilizer Association of South Africa in 1997 and 'Elected Fellow of the Royal Society of South Africa (FRSSAf)' in 2004. He received an honorary Doctorate in Veterinary Science from the University of Pretoria, recognizing his unique contributions.

He was married to Rita in 1954 and 4 children were born.

Dr Bigalke was a truly refined, intellectual gentleman. Through his personality, he could deal with matters calmly and quietly. May his legacies be honoured.

The news of his passing has left a void that cannot be filled, and he will be greatly missed by all who had the privilege of knowing him.

Wishing his family strength and peace as they come to terms with this profound loss.

With deepest sympathy