

Charles Craib (Merriman 1968 - 1972)

*From the Cape Star 24/03/2012:*

Charles Craib, 57, an international authority on the indigenous pelargoniums, bulbs and succulents of South Africa suffered a fatal heart attack on Monday 19 March 2012.

Educated at Pridwin Preparatory School in Melrose and St Andrew's College, Grahamstown, Charles studied law and social anthropology at the University of the Witwatersrand before going on to Cambridge University where he received a Masters degree in social anthropology.

An early interest in indigenous pelargoniums drew him into the world of botany and he later became an international expert in the field of species ecology (autecology) in SA plants. He discovered many new indigenous species and two plants were named in his honour – an indigenous aloe (*Aloe craibii*) and an umbrella flower (*Ceropegia craibii*). It was only two weeks before his death that the botanical world celebrated the launch of Craib's third book on *The Bushman's Candles* (*Sarcocaulon* spp.) co-authored with John Lavranos. His first two books were titled *Geophytic Pelargoniums* (Umdaus Press, 2001) and *Grass Aloes in the South African Veld* (Umdaus Press, 2005)

Top local photographer Connall Oosterbroek worked with Craib for over a decade. He took most of the photographs that appeared in his latest book and as a team they were collecting material for a further three books. "Charles's death was a huge shock," he said.

"Charles had enormous impact on the lives he touched," said Leigh Nieuwoudt, his business partner at Penrock Seeds & Plants. "He was a huge intellect and was highly regarded internationally for his contribution to South Africa's indigenous flora." Charles leaves his mother, 91.