

## **Kenneth Gerard Fismer (Mullins 1930 - 1931)**

Born Cape Town 25.1.1915. Died Pietermaritzburg 24.4.2010 aged 95.

A right-hand batsman and right-arm medium pace bowler who played in one first-class match for Western Province against Transvaal, in a three-day friendly at Newlands, starting on 1st January 1942 which ended in a draw. He scored 54 and four as well as bowling three overs for 15 runs in Transvaal's first innings (WP 237 and 236-8 declared; Tvl 251-8 declared and 166-6).

He played a few (non-first-class) games for Western Province in 1940/41 before he joined the South African Air Force as a medic. He was stationed in Italy and Egypt during the Second World War and told stories of the pilots letting him fly the planes.

He completed his junior school education at Wet Pups (Cape Town) and used to ride his pony to school, through the forests, from what is now Claremont Main Road. He went overseas for a stint before attending St Andrew's College (Grahamstown) and then moved to East London where he matriculated at Selborne College and played for the rugby first XV in 1934. He returned to Cape Town and studied medicine at UCT, where he played rugby amongst other sports, and was captain of the cricket side in 1941. He came from a long line of medical doctors in Germany and his father was one of the first medical students at UCT, before going to Edinburgh. Much of the family history is documented in a book on the history of the Cape Town Medical School entitled *In the Shadow of Table Mountain*.

He had many interesting stories to tell including walking up Table Mountain with Jan Smuts who was a great mountaineer. Although he spent most of his married life in Natal, he always loved Table Mountain and the Cape. He was the District surgeon in Umtata (Transkei) for eight years and then had practices in Estcourt and Wartburg. After settling in Pietermaritzburg he specialized in Psychiatry and was the Superintendent of the three Psychiatric Hospitals in Natal until almost in his eighties.

He continued to play cricket well into his fifties and tennis until he was 80 years-old. Apparently he wore holes in the carpets, skipping when he was younger, to keep fit and his vital organs were declared very fit for a 95 year-old in January 2010 when having a hernia operation. Unfortunately, three months later, he passed away after doctors could not get the better of a bleeding ulcer and he died on the operating table in St Anne's Hospital, Pietermaritzburg.

Only eleven South African first-class cricketers are known to have lived longer than his 95 years 94 days and of these only Rupert de Smidt (102 years 253 days - South Africa's oldest known first-class cricketer) played for Western Province.

He is survived by his wife Gwyneth, their sons Gerard and Christopher, daughters Sandra, Barbara and Vanessa (twins), Gwenhwyfar and eight grandchildren - and also daughters Anne and Lynne from his first marriage and one grandchild. His two brothers Dennis (also a Doctor) and Jack predeceased him. His ashes were scattered on the outfield in a ceremony at Newlands.

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