

Miscellaneous notes

TRIBUTE TO GERRIT GERMISHUIZEN, EDITOR OF *BOTHALIA*

For the past 14 years, Mr Gerrit Germishuizen edited *Bothalia*, the house journal of the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI). On 30 September 2010 Gerrit retired from full-time employment at the Institute, and his tenure as the editor of this journal has come to an end.

Gerrit was born in Pretoria on 25 February 1950, and completed his under- and junior postgraduate studies at the University of Pretoria from 1960 to 1973. Later, in 1982, he was awarded a Masters degree by the same institution. Until 1997 Gerrit was what could perhaps best be described as a career taxonomist, moving to scientific editing only after having spent 21 years as Professional Officer in the National Herbarium of the Botanical Research Institute, later to become the National Botanical Institute (NBI), and currently SANBI. Gerrit took over the editorship of the NBI's scientific publications from Dr Otto Leistner (Smith 1998). While with the Institute's Scientific Publications section, Gerrit not only edited *Bothalia* but as scientific editor he also played a significant role, with his colleagues in the section, in editing several volumes in the NBI's and SANBI's *Flowering Plants of Africa*, *Flora of southern Africa*, *Strelitzia* and *SANBI Biodiversity Series*.

During his tenure as scientific editor, Gerrit worked on numerous benchmark botanical publications for southern Africa, some of the best known and most widely used and cited being the vegetation map of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland (Mucina & Rutherford 2006) and the region's species list (Germishuizen *et al.* 2006) and, more recently, he co-authored with H.F. Glen, an update of Gunn & Codd's volume on the botanical exploration of the subcontinent (Glen & Germishuizen 2010).

When a decision is required on whether a submitted manuscript is worthy of publication in a scientific journal, an editor is inevitably guided by opinions

expressed by referees as part of the peer-review process. Admirably, Gerrit religiously followed this golden rule sometimes to the chagrin of his colleagues and friends. But to his credit, he always looked for reasons why a paper should be published, rather than why it should be rejected. In this way Gerrit played an important role in shaping the science reporting skills of several young and established scientists. But more than that, even while editor, he was always ready to assist young taxonomists in the National and other herbaria when they needed assistance with becoming acquainted with the plant groups they have to study and curate. As scientific editor of SANBI's publications, Gerrit became acquainted with a broad cross-section of the southern African botanical fraternity and beyond, all of whom will miss his input into improving their written effusions.

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