

SASCI Visiting Professor Program 2018 – 3rd Report

Prof David R Holmes Jr

6 March 2018

The SASCI VPP 2018 journey continues as Prof Holmes travels through South Africa, teaching wherever he finds opportunity. After his week in Durban, he made his way to Bloemfontein, visiting the University of the Free State Department of Cardiology.

It has been another extraordinary week in Bloemfontein getting to know the people and systems, learning from them as we work and interact with a diverse group of patients who travel long distances for care. The staff are tremendous – they work hard and efficiently.



Prof David R Holmes with the UFS Department of Cardiology Cath Lab team

*I remain amazed how quickly the catheterization lab rooms turnover between patients. We no sooner sit down before being called for the next patient which allows for efficient use of everyone's time. The commitment of the staff is tremendous. After one very long night during which Prof Makotoko spent most of the night in the hospital caring for a very ill patient, when I saw her the next morning and expressed my thought that she must be very tired, she said **"That is what we do – we do what is needed, to take care of our patients"**. A great example for us all.*

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As you can see from the picture (which captures it all) not all things always go as smoothly as they should. In the middle of a case, I became aware that the lead radiation skirt I was wearing was drifting. Very rapidly it slipped off to the floor taking my scrub pants with it – leaving behind my knobby ugly knees and under garments. There was a moment of rather shocked silence when the staff realized the situation and then rather raucous and explosive laughter. A great moment to remember with the wonderful staff we work with.



Prof Holmes posing for a picture after a “complication” during one of the cases at Universitas Hospital

The moments visiting with Prof Makotoko and the fellows, the chance to visit with and learn from the cardiovascular surgeon, Prof Smit and the chance to get to know our industry partners Ilze Lock and Anna-Marie Pretorius, make everything special. Then, an amazing Basotho blanket from Prof Makotoko – spectacular.

An amazing time living multiple dreams.

The final stage of Prof Holmes’ visit started off with a bang in Cape Town, arriving on Friday, 2nd March. During his stay, he will visit Tygerberg Academic Hospital, Groote Schuur Academic Hospital and get exposure to the private sector. Prof Holmes also forms part of the SASCI Annual Fellows Workshop and AfricaPCR faculty. Herewith more feedback on Prof Holmes’ South African experience thus far:

We have now been here for one month to the day on this SASCI adventure journey. We arrived with a mountain of luggage (travelling lightly) with things and accouterments we have not used to this amazing place, to this amazing country.

It has been full of wonderful experiences – meeting old friends, making new ones, interacting with wonderful catheterization laboratory staff and working with great patients with interesting and complicated/complex

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issues. The hospitals both public and private have been extraordinary – ranging from the history and work at Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital, to the modern-ness of City Park and everything in between. Getting to know our Medtronic partners all along the way. We have learned much about the practice of medicine, the training programs for developing new cardiologists, the needs of the patients, the physicians and the needs of society and the challenges and the opportunities of each.

*Along the way we have had experiences of different and wonderful kinds – Shakaland Zulu dance, the Cradle of Humankind, Soweto, the history of Apartheid, Black Rhino game reserve, Victoria Market and now most recently, the walk/climb up to the Gorge and then across **to the top of Table Mountain** and then Signal Hill at Sunset.*



The rocky road up Table Mountain, captured by Prof Holmes – Truly inspiring

A series of interesting interaction on the 3.5-hour one-way rock climb to the Gorge and the top of Table Mountain. I am at that stage in life when in Rochester, when I stop at a traffic light before crossing the street, passers-by often stop and ask I they can help me cross the street. On the 3.5-hour rock climb, other climbers would stop and either ask if I needed a stretcher or they wanted to take my picture so that when they became as ancient as I am that they might have a goal to also climb these cliffs. It was a wonderful adventure.

Wonderful people, wonderful country, wonderful patients.

Paton's "Cry the Beloved Country" clearly lives here..

Prof Holmes is not only an inspiration to the field of Cardiology, but society as a whole. The impact he has in South Africa will live for years to come.

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