Nagin Parbhoo passed away peacefully in Cape Town on 21 January 2009 after a long illness. He was born in Wynberg Village, Cape Town in May 1942, matriculated at Livingstone High School and received a Government of India Scholarship for Medical Studies to study medicine at Grant Medical College in Bombay.

On his return to SA he worked in Port Elizabeth, first in the Livingstone Hospital and later as a general practitioner with a special interest in anaesthesia. He subsequently specialised in anaesthesia at the University of Cape Town (UCT) obtaining the FFA (SA) in 1983 and became a specialist on the staff at Groote Schuur Hospital. Since 1987 he has been in private practice in Cape Town whilst retaining links with Groote Schuur Hospital as a part-time senior lecturer until 1995.

Early in his anaesthetic career he developed a keen interest in historical aspects of anaesthesia and subsequently contributed much time and effort in collecting and researching old anaesthetic equipment. The Department of Anaesthesia, University of Cape Town honoured him in March 2000 by naming this unique collection housed in the department ‘The Nagin Parbhoo Museum of Anaesthesia’.

Throughout his career Nagin contributed much time and effort to the wider aspect of professional life. He played an important role in the affairs of the South African Society of Anaesthesiologists (SASA) both locally where he served as Western Cape Branch Chairman in 1990 and nationally as Councillor. In 1987 Nagin was invited to be the Society’s Honorary Archivist and it was in this capacity that he authored the Society’s history in a publication ‘Five Decades – The SA Society of Anaesthetists 1943-1993’. This book was launched at the Society’s Jubilee Congress and has been widely distributed both locally and internationally.

In 2002 Nagin was awarded the Degree of Doctor of Medicine by UCT for his thesis ‘The Department of Anaesthesia, UCT 1920–2000. A History’.

The South African anaesthetic fraternity owes a great deal to Nagin for the legacy he left through his meticulously researched history into the development of anaesthesia at UCT, Cape Town and South Africa.

Above all Nagin was a caring father to his three daughters Anita, Lavina and Shakila to whom we extend our sympathy.

Prof PC Gordon
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