

In Memorium Dr Dieter Reusch

Dieter Reusch was born to Pastor Willie Reusch and his wife Agnes nee Dieterich in Glencoe, Northern Natal on the 14th of September 1929. He had 2 older brothers, Werner and Martin. He was christened and confirmed by his father at the Lutheran church in Uelzen. As a young child he was already helpful delivering church notices, sometimes by bicycle, to the farmers. From being a mischievous young boy at Uelzen Primary, he matriculated at Dundee High School. He then studied at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, where he qualified Cum Laude with a BSc Degree in Genetics and Plant Breeding. In 1953 he was awarded a Scholarship to study at Aberystwyth University in Wales. He travelled there by ship. In Wales he attained his Doctorate in Plant Breeding in 1956. After working in Cedara for a few years, he spent five years as a maize breeder in Lichtenburg in the Northern Transvaal. He was then appointed as Senior Lecturer and Researcher in Agricultural Genetics at the then University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg. He was a popular Lecturer, though also known for his strict discipline. Barefooted and noisy students would be sent out. He was ambidextrous - he would use his left hand to write on the left side of the blackboard, and then continue the notes on the right with his right hand. He could spin around and accurately target a disruptive student with a piece of chalk. Following his retirement in 1990, he consulted at Cedara, and became involved in the breeding and development of new varieties of foraging grasses, some of which were named after his grandchildren. At Cedara he also mentored and inspired young researchers. These proved to be some of his happiest working years. Dieter married his childhood sweetheart, Rosemarie Schroeder in 1957. The marriage was blessed with three daughters, Karin, Ingrid and Gisela. He was a devoted husband and father. He was also particularly proud of his four grandsons Gareth, Matthew, Daniel and Luke, and also of his two granddaughters Alex and Jenna. Even beyond work, Dieter was a man of the earth. He loved gardening and planting. He nurtured his children with the vegetables and fruits from his garden in Scottsville. In place of insects fertilizing the delicious pawpaws, he personally brushed on the pollen at night. When Dieter and Rosel moved to Montrose, he planted up a semiforest of indigenous trees in front of the complex, creating a beautiful park, for which he was recognised with a conservancy award. Every week he physically mowed the grass of the steep hectare-sized park, until he had a stroke at the age of 82. He loved the birds, which his plants attracted. The undulating flight of the Drongo birds, which he'd trained to catch morsels of cheese in midflight, was a delight to watch. Woodwork was his passion and the homes of his children were filled with the beautiful furniture and mirrors he made. He generously loved to give these to friends and family. He made painting easels and miniature ovens for his grandchildren. Dieter had a great sense of humour, and was full of fun. He enjoyed his beers and braais.

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The fresh fish he caught and fried for breakfasts were delicious. Family music evenings became more festive when he accompanied songs on his mouth organ – a favourite being *Muss i denn muss i denn zum Staedele hinaus* He was a friend to those in need. Dieter loved the congregation and community at large and found much joy in helping others who were in need and was a committed man of God. He served the Kirchdorf and Pietermaritzburg Church communities as an Elder for many years. He and Rosemary regularly visited the sick and needy. His daughters were sometimes amused and impressed about how heartily he would sing the hymns. With pride and joy he helped design and build a Church Altar, and planted the white roses along the path in the gardens.

Dieter was ready to meet his Maker. Significantly, he died on the eve of his 58th wedding anniversary on the 28th of May 2015. All these years Dieter and Rosemary had supported each other in sickness and in health. On the previous Sunday, when the Carers at Amberfield Frail Care carried him to the front, to hear the uplifting songs of this Church's Choir, Dieter asked Rosemarie in sincere belief, "Am I in Heaven?"

The family would like to sincerely thank the congregation, friends and the Amberfield carers for the all the care and support that Dieter and Rosemarie received.

Compiled by: Gisela Rushmere

