**14310, Johan du Plooy-Award:**

Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen,

When I received notification that I was selected by the Doctors of Manitoba Board of Directors to receive the 2015 Physician of the Year Award for "significant contribution to the practice of medicine and/or to the community by a member of Doctors Manitoba" I was in total shock. I had no idea anyone had even submitted my name for this award. It is a great honor. I’m not entirely convinced why they chose me but I am honored and I thank you for this award.

Allow me to introduce you to the love of my life, my wife of 40 years, as well as my 3 children and their wives. I also want to welcome my friend and partner in medicine for the last 12 years, Erika Moller. She has a great sense of humor and also hails originally from South Africa like me. She is very humble. She tells me she worries that when I cover her patients while she is on vacation that I will discover mistakes that she has made but I can assure everyone there never are! She and I work as GPOs and now do full time medical oncology.

You might think that working with cancer patients would be very morbid and depressing work. Actually, there is a lot of hope, humor (sometimes black humor) and joy as well. We make a point to validate what our patients are feeling. They are what is important and they are serious about the battles they face. Humor is one of the best weapons in their arsenal. It is for the most part not a sad place to be (though at times we do tear up with our patients).

For those of you who don’t know, I was born in Zimbabwe, and did my medical training in Pretoria South Africa and emigrated here 30 years ago. We had our 1st encounter with snow when we came to Manitoba. What a shock! Our clothing was miserably inadequate. I had a pair of thin soled leather shoes that actually cracked from the cold on the day we arrived in January 1975. We lived for 7 years in Neepawa Manitoba where my wife attended Brandon University to train as a nurse. But, she later persuaded me to move to the larger Brandon because of better shopping opportunities of course.

Coming from South Africa I speak with a rather strong accent. Strangely enough some people complain they can’t understand me. I just don’t get it; I understand me perfectly. Oh well, I hope you’ve all understood me just fine tonight.

Thank you for your time and for this award.