

OBITUARY:ANDRE ENGELBRECHT

Andre Engelbrecht was born in June 1964 in Springs, residing for most of his life in the Johannesburg area. He attended a Jewish nursery school, a Catholic convent, and then St Andrews College. After doing his army training in Outshoorn, he enrolled at Hotel School, with cooking being one of his two passions. The other was gardening. He was a co-owner of a Spur franchise before joining (the then) Real Landscapes when his gardening passion overrode his love of cooking. This was life-changing for him.

He started up the sales department 20 years ago and developed it into the current Servest Sales Division. He was fondly known by all in Servest as 'Andre E', by his family as 'Booz' and by his only son Adam as 'Dad'. Andre was not a facebook friend, he was a legit friend, a man of integrity and values with a love for nature, his garden, scuba diving and his dogs Fudge and Colby.

Melanie Belcher-Vosges, who provided the information for this obituary, says she had the privilege of visiting Andre in hospital, and it reminded her of a previous, similar experience she had shared with him some years ago when he suffered one of a few heart attacks while driving them back to Pretoria. "His calm and composure amidst this life threatening situation was remarkable and commendable. After asking him several times to shift roles so that I could drive (which never happened), the two of us managed to shift the gears together, work the clutch together and get off the highway to reach the nearest hospital. I kept waving my hand at him, asking him how many fingers he saw, trying to keep him focussed during this stressful time. He kept on saying:"Keep your hand still Mel, I see five fingers!" On arriving at the hospital I had him walk to the emergency room. He was a man of endurance under pressure. Shortly before he was taken into theatre for an emergency heart operation, I saw him and waved my hand at him again. He exclaimed 'Still five Mel!'

When I stood next to his hospital bed shortly before his death, I waved my five fingers at him yet again, asking him 'How many fingers Andre?' he did not respond, but in my heart I knew his answer - five Mel.five."

Andre passed away suddenly in November 2016 after suffering an abdominal aortic aneurism, shortly after returning from a business trip.

His impact within the green industry and especially Servest will remain for many years to come, and I sense we have still not come to terms with the gap his sudden departure has left. A special message of condolence to all who were near and dear to him. His legacy will live long in our hearts.

Andre Engelbrecht

