**Biography: Prof André van der Merwe**

Since being awarded the Karl Storz Golden Cystoscope for the most outstanding young urologist in South Africa in 2008, Prof André van der Merwe has gone from strength to strength.

He is an esteemed surgeon whose achievements include the first laparoscopic removal of a kidney in South Africa and the first person to perform and publish on retroperitoneoscopic single site kidney donor surgery in the world.

Since then, the boy who grew up in the coldest town in South Africa, Sutherland in the Northern Cape, and dreamed of becoming an astronomer, has achieved worldwide fame after he conducted the world’s first successful penis transplant in 2014.

On 11 December 2014, Prof Van der Merwe, Associate Professor and Head of Urology at Stellenbosch University’s Tygerberg Academic Hospital, led a team of surgeons through nine hours of microsurgery to transplant a penis from a deceased donor to a patient. The recipient had lost his penis when he developed complications after a ritual circumcision. The transplant completely restored the recipient’s urinary and reproductive functions and he was able to perform normal sex after a period of five weeks.

Since then, Prof Van der Merwe has been inundated with requests for penile transplants from across the world. Although he had to disappoint them, since the procedure is done as part of a pilot study on South African citizens only, he has happily been sharing technical details about the procedure with his counterparts abroad.

When asked why he chose urology as a specialty, he answered that it enabled him to improve most urological patients’ quality of life in a short time.

This father of 3 completed his MB,ChB at Stellenbosch University in 1993 and has authored more than 40 publications, as well as authored the book *Percutaneous nephrolithotomy – a manual for the urologist*, which was published in 2012.

Since obtaining his MB,ChB he worked and furthered his postgraduate studies in South Africa, England and Scotland. His qualifications include: Membership of the Royal College of Surgeons of England (MRCS [England]), MRCS (Edinburgh), Fellowship of the College of Urologists of South Africa, a Master of Medicine in Urology (UCT) and a Master of Clinical Epidemiology.