Oom Sakkie and the roses ...

It is generally accepted that there would be no rose fair in Greyton, without Sakkie Buys. It would be hard to find anyone, who is even prepared to give it what this 80+ year old does. His wife, Ilse, supportive helpmate, secretary and personal assistant, stays quietly in the background, but she, too, goes those extra miles for what has become one of the Overberg’s main tourist attractions.

Sakkie always had a sense of what he feels is his responsibility to the community. In the early years in South West he was elected Charter President of the Lions Club in Tsumeb, later becoming zone president. Ilse says he always worked well beyond the hours expected of anyone else - first there in the morning, and the last to leave his post as Senior Pharmacist at the State Hospital in Windhoek. While in South West he was commissioned to the armed forces where he became a member of the 83 Ambulance Unit.

For many years Sakkie lectured in pharmacology to nursing students, from 7-9am, four days a week. He served on the local housing committee as a represent-tative of the Department of Health and Welfare.

One of the highlights of his career was undoubtedly becoming involved in establishing one of the first primary health care units on the African continent. They managed to take their services to the remotest corners of Kaokoland. Sakkie was also chairperson of Radio Monitor 21 with 44 specially selected and trained members, allowing 24 hours coverage each day.

Ilse, meantime, had worked her way up the ranks in Truworths to become their Area Manager, later returning to teaching. Originally this was to fill in a gap while someone was on leave, but this developed into the full time teaching of languages. She speaks three languages fluently.

In 1986 Sakkie and Ilse retired and came to live in Greyton, and it was not long before both became involved in the community. Sakkie was elected to the village council in 1988, subsequently becoming mayor, which post he held until 1995. He also served on the regional services council of the Overberg Hospital Council for eight years and helped resuscitate the ratepayers association. He is an honorary life member of the Conservation Society and helped institute the Aesthetics Committee and the Police Forum. He was also involved in the installation of electricity for Heuwelkroon and was chairperson of the Publicity Association for several years.

During this time, Sakkie had also been organising the Rose Fair and through the years it has grown and become the institution it is today, thanks to the hours, days and weeks of work put into it by this indefatigable man. We look forward through the winter months to this spectacle of nature’s beauty, produced by so many who love these wonderful blossoms.