

**Dr John Mercieca MOM, D.Sc (Honoris Causa) DDS**

Honorary President Malta Philatelic Society  
by Chev. Dr. A. Bonnici K.M., M.D., MRPSL



*Dr John Mercieca D.D.S., D. Sc. (Honoris Causa) MOM.*

It is with deep regret that we announce the demise of our beloved Hon. President Dr John Mercieca D.D.S., D.Sc (Honoris Causa) MOM, which occurred on the 21<sup>st</sup> February 2003.

Dr. John Mercieca was one of the founding members of the Malta Philatelic Society which was born on the 7<sup>th</sup> March 1966, and on the 7<sup>th</sup> September 1972 becoming President, occupying the post up to January 2002, when he felt that he could not carry on as President because of deterioration in his health. However he was unanimously elected as Honorary President of the Society at its Annual General Meeting of January 2002.

During all these years as President he was the main driving force of the Society, steadfast, calm and persevering. He kept us together.

On retiring, Dr and Mrs. A. Bonnici held a reception in his honour at their residence in Ta' Xbiex, where a silver salver was presented to him by the Society.

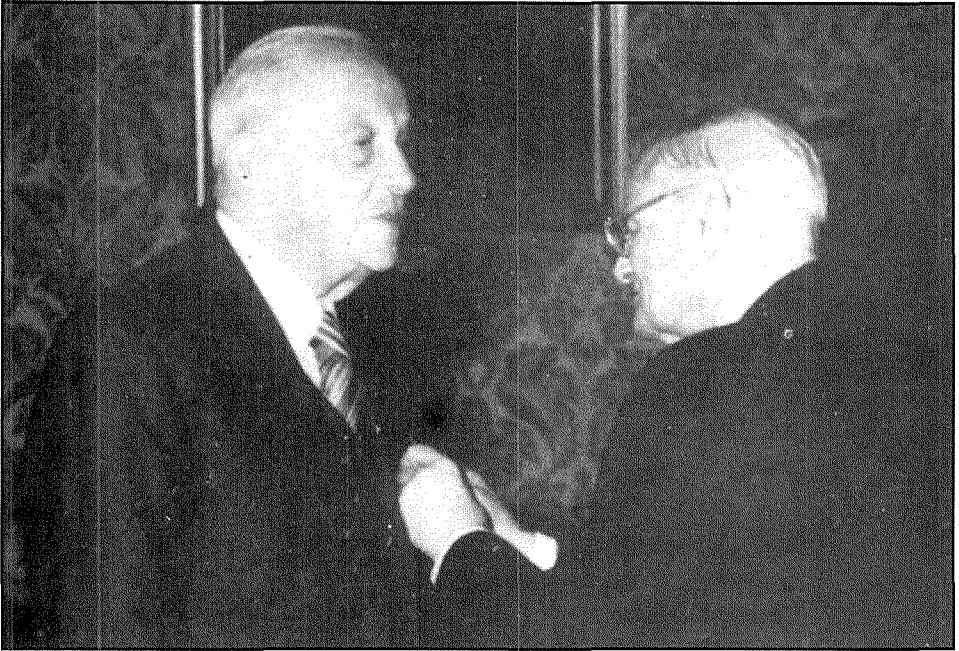
Born on the 7<sup>th</sup> November 1912, in Floriana, Dr John H. Mercieca graduated in 1937, as one of the seven students who had completed the First Course of Dental Surgery, being placed first in order of merit.

Dr Mercieca set himself in private practice, but, in 1940, at the outbreak of hostilities in Malta, he volunteered to take charge of the Dental Clinic set up in the Attard-Lija-Balzan district, to care for the needs of the hundreds of refugees who had flocked to the centre of the island, from the Harbour and outlying districts, which post he held until June 1941, when he joined the Army Dental Corps as a Lieutenant. A year later he was promoted to the rank of Captain, and was attached to the 161 Field Ambulance R.A.M.C., serving up to 1946.

In 1938, Dr Mercieca was appointed Examiner in Oral Medicine and Surgery at The Royal University of Malta, serving up to 1978.

Between 1942 and 1945 he was elected as one of the two representatives in the interests of the Dental Profession, on the Faculty Board of Medicine and Surgery,





*13th December 1993, Investiture Ceremony, The President of Malta Dr C. Tabone bestowing the decoration of Member of the National Order of Merit.*

and in 1945 was elected a Member of the Special Board of Dental Surgery. In 1954, when the Faculty of Dental Surgery was created at the University, Dr Mercieca was elected a member and continued to be regularly elected up to 1978.

From 1944 to 1959, Dr Mercieca was yearly elected a Member of the Medical Board at the Department of Health, and when it was replaced in 1959, by the Medical Council, he continued serving on it for the next forty years.

Dr Mercieca is a Founder Member of the Dental Association of Malta, which was set up in 1944, having served as its Secretary for 13 years, between 1948 and 1961. In 1961, following the retirement of the late Prof. E. Lapira, he was elected President, to which Office he was regularly, re-elected biennially up to 1981, when the Council of the Dental Association of Malta elected him Honorary Life President to serve with full voting powers on the Council. Between 1951 and 1960 Dr Mercieca held the post of National Treasurer of the Federation Dentaire Internationale.

Dr Mercieca was a Founder Member of the Malta Federation of Professional Bodies, serving for a number of years as a Member of the Council, and as Vice-President during 1980-81.

In 1958, Dr Mercieca was appointed a Member of the Stamp Design Advisory

Board at the Department of Posts, on which he regularly served up to 1973. In 1987 he was again re-appointed and was still serving until 2003. In appreciation and in recognition of this all time record of continuous service on any board or council in Malta, the President of the Medical Council, Judge M. Caruana Curran LLD, on behalf of the Council, presented Dr Mercieca an appropriate parchment card signed by all the members of the Council, as well as a beautiful silver plate.

Dr Mercieca was highly interested in, and was a keen student of foreign languages and apart from his national tongue - Maltese, he spoke fluently English, Italian, French and German and had a good working knowledge of the Spanish and Russian languages, which he could also read and write. When in 1962 the German-Maltese Circle was founded he was one of its Founder Members, and between 1967 and 1970 its Vice-President.

On the occasion of the joint celebrations held by the University of Malta and the Dental Association of Malta, between the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 11<sup>th</sup> October 1987, to commemorate the Graduation of the seven students in the First Course of Dental Surgery 1937, the Council of the University of Malta approved the resolution passed by the Senate, recommending that the Degree of Doctor of Science (Honoris Causa), be conferred on Dr John H. Mercieca, and ordered that this distinction be conferred on him, on 10<sup>th</sup> October 1987 during the Fiftieth Anniversary of the first graduates in the Course of Dental Surgery 1937.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> December 1993 His Excellency Dr Censu Tabone MD. FRCS, President of the Republic of Malta, on behalf of the Maltese Government, invested him with the decoration of Member of the National Order of Merit (MOM), in recognition of his many and varied contributions to Malta.

We shall miss him dearly.

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**The following much appreciated note of condolence has been received from The (UK) Malta Study Circle.**

*27 March 2003*

Dear Dr. Bonnici,

At the Circle's Annual General Meeting complete support was given to my wish to write to you concerning the death of your Hon. President – Dr. Mercieca.

Over the years a number of our members met Dr. Mercieca on a variety of occasions and enjoyed his interesting conversation, courtesy and hospitality.

We have no doubt that the Society has suffered a serious loss with his passing. Our thoughts and good wishes are with you.

Yours sincerely,

J.G.C. Lander

(Hon. President)