There are so many people who have helped us in the care of my uncle Emile over the past many months – too many to mention them all in person. But we would like to offer our thanks to a few, whose generosity and kindness helped us all through a very difficult time. Often we would have to call in last-minute favours or ask people to go beyond the call of duty to assist us, and we were always so humbled by the spirit of giving that engulfed us.

Firstly, we would like to thank those who cared for Emile tirelessly, and often thanklessly – Zukie Dyofile Njokweni, Phindiwe Makaphela, Thandiswa Puza, Ntombi Qhola and Vuyiseka Njemdaka. Your selflessness in the face of Emile’s increasing disability and often grumpy attitude is greatly appreciated.

To Aziza Kamaldien and Moira Mouton from Pathcare, who went out of their way to arrange to take Emile’s blood at home despite a very demanding schedule, sometimes at very short notice – thank you. Our demands for your services were regular and intense, and you never flinched in trying to accommodate us.

To Marilyn Schmidt, Millicent Wolmarans and Zeena Erasmus from the care agencies who helped us along the way, as the requirements for Emile’s care evolved in intensity over time.

To Bilqis Amerika, Desmare Magerman, Clare Manicom and Dr Gregory Hart from GVI Oncology (Rondebosch) – thank you for your compassionate care, not only for Emile but for all of us who surrounded him, as the disease progressed despite our best collective efforts. Your services to us embraced the full scope of our needs, punctuated with some very trying and difficult moments. Through these, we knew we could always come to you for help, you had seen this so many times before.

To sister Elise Oz from the Wynberg area of St Lukes Hospice, who came into Emile’s life only in the last week or so, through his own choosing. You stepped in with such grace and professionalism in the last days of Emile’s life and held us all through his last days, helping us with perspective and understanding of the process; and easing Emile’s pain.

To all those friends and family who visited Emile regularly – he wasn’t always able to reciprocate during your visits to him but we know that your presence and support comforted him greatly. Thank you also to Greg Naidoo and Emile’s other neighbours, who were constantly checking on his condition and offering support. To Chris Ferndale, for helping us carry, fix and clear things at the house – resourceful as he always is.

Thank you to Premesh Lalu and the team at the Centre for Humanities Research at UWC, who helped to sustain Emile through this period – way beyond what we could have expected – creatively, financially and professionally.

To all those who have contributed to the spiritedness of this funeral through their music – Tina Schouw, Lloyd Jansen and Basil Snayers.

To the Dean Michael Weeder and the cathedral staff for generously assisting us with this beautiful venue and your blessings as he departs us, despite the fact that Emile was not a church-goers.

And most of all to Cheryl Davids, Michael Schmidt and Bryan Slingers – for accompanying Emile on this the last phase of his life, day in and day out – tirelessly administering his medication, tending to his every need and comfort, adjusting to and arranging for each consecutive stage of this journey, practically managing such a range of unforeseen circumstances with such efficiency and generosity. Your friendship and love for Emile was unconditional and magnanimous. And we as his family will be eternally grateful. We are a small family, and we would never have been able to do this without you.

Thank you all for coming to join us in saying goodbye to Emile Maurice. Please join us at his home, 5 Byrnes Avenue Wynberg, after the service, for a gathering in his honour.