Neelan Govender (1929 - ) is a former high school teacher and currently works as a medical doctor in Merebank, south of Durban. He is one of the founding members of the South African Medical Association (SAMA) and was its President from 2002 - 2003. He was also an off-road race car driver who competed in the Roof of Africa races.

An avid reader, Govender is the author of numerous poems and short stories. He has penned *Girrmit Tales* - a collection of short stories about the Indian indenture experience in South Africa. The critical nature of this collection has received attention by academia. Betty Govinden and Lindy Stiebel have each examined *Girrmit Tales* in research papers that delve into South African Indian writing and the Indian indenture experience (1)(2).

Govender has also co-authored *Legends of the Tide* - a coffee-table book about the Seine-netters and the roots of the Durban fishing industry and “Beyond the Stethoscope - Casebook of a Township Doctor” - a collection of short stories about his 50 years as a township doctor.

*Legends of the Tide* has received a positive reception. Rasvanth Chunylall described the book as a “beautifully illustrated guide” and applauded the efforts of the writers in “documenting [a] vibrant yet sadly forgotten community who deserve to be celebrated for their contributions to our province (KwaZulu-Natal)”. A review on the “Look Local” website described it as a “great read” and urged members of the community to get a copy. Siphiliselwe Makhanya, writing for the *Sunday Times*.
commended the authors for “successfully [wrestling] the tales of Durban’s first seine-netters into a book at last”.

Besides his work in literature, Govender is celebrated for his role as a pillar of his community. He has pioneered many community initiatives and is the visionary force behind iconic projects such as Chatsworth Centre, one of the busiest malls in South Africa and Chatsmed Hospital, the successful private hospital in Chatsworth. His current community initiative is to build a community hospital in the Durban South Basin.

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/legendsofthetide/

References


With his legs spread on the golden sand at Vetch’s Pier,

folded over his work, he knit.

Fully attired in his dark working suit and felt hat,

his pants wet from surf of the day,

rolled up to his knees,
his hands made magic with the large bamboo needles -

the *koni-woosi*,

with ease come of years of mending.

Heedless of schoolboy admires,

he went about his trade,

wide arms reached the still wet net,

spotting the rents with needle sharp eyes,

his aged body supple from use,

leaned forward.

Each pull and swirl of his hands produced a knot true to the one before,
and with quick, deft thrusts,

weaves and knots the rents he did mend.

Bibliography


Co-authored with Viroshen Chetty.