

## THE MOTIVATION FOR THE BIRTH OF ENVIRON®

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“My concern for skin cancer in the early 1980’s was the reason why I started research that eventually lead to the Environ® Original range. I knew from my experience, and also from statistics, that skin cancer was increasing and it seemed a logical idea to attribute this to the then newly discovered “ozone hole”. I also knew that attempts to stop the damage to the “ozone hole” would not start to take effect until well into the 21st Century. Therefore, we had to do something to protect our skins.

It was my misfortune between 1979 and 1980 to have two charismatic young patients with melanoma who both died before they were 23 years old. That horrible experience leaves an indelible scar on one’s life as a doctor. We want our patients to become healthy adults and live full lives. Those two people did not get the chance because of a disease initiated by the sun. I understood that I would see more and more young people like them coming in for the diagnosis that would shorten their lives. For that reason I started reading into the mechanism of skin cancer.

I had started to use vitamin A acid (Tretinoin) on my own facial skin in 1982, just before my 40<sup>th</sup> birthday, because of the positive effects that I had noticed on my patients that I had treated for acne. By 1986 I had uncovered all the positive facts about vitamin A and antioxidants, and I started to promote the use of Tretinoin for the prevention of skin cancer. Eventually in 1987 I wrote a letter to the South African Medical Journal to urge doctors to protect their patients by using Tretinoin. That letter was not published for more than a year but was eventually published after a heated debate between myself and the Department of Dermatology in the University of Cape Town in July 1989.

Earlier I had approached two cosmetic companies in South Africa and advised them to make creams with vitamin A and free radical scavengers. At that time people laughed when I spoke about free radicals (it was not the household word that it has now become). The companies were not interested so, initially, I used to prepare vitamin A creams myself in my kitchen! I hunted for a chemist and then we created the creams which I offered to my patients (from 1988 onwards). The creams became so popular that people made appointments to see me just to obtain those creams. That was when I decided to start a company to sell the creams.

I believed that these creams would keep their skins healthy - in fact I believed that these creams were *essential* to keep their skin healthy. My concern for people’s health has always been the guiding reason for the development of these Original creams and I insisted that the cost of the creams had to be affordable to the young people in my country. My insistence on this point has meant that the

creams are offered in South Africa at a ridiculously low price so that young people can use them to minimise photo-damage.

I believe that everyone on earth has to use vitamin A topically to keep their skin safe and eventually every skin care range in the world has to include vitamin A and antioxidants. I have no doubt about that. I also do not doubt that Environ® will remain at the very front of the skin care products of the world. Fortunately, my sister Val makes sure that our company grows from strength to strength.

I made Environ® creams because no other alternative cream existed in any part of the world. I did not know it then and only later on I found that no other similar creams existed in either America or in Europe. Environ® was the natural evolution from intensive reading into the physiology of the skin and current ideas about skin pathology. It is simply based on concrete science. Of course we will learn a great deal more about how to protect and restore skin's health and beauty. I hope that both Val and I will continue to be part of this exciting field for many years.

I look forward to influencing an ever enlarging circle of people who will benefit from the burgeoning science that will progressively be incorporated into the Environ® skin care system. I also hope that I will be here to see young Environ® users grow up into mature, remarkably young-looking, healthy adults.



Remember always to protect your skin!"

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fernandes". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping loop at the beginning and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dr. Desmond Brian Fernandes