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UCT mourns the passing of economics doyen, Emeritus Professor Wilson

The University of Cape Town (UCT) is in deep mourning following the passing of Emeritus Professor Francis Wilson on 24 April 2022. He was the founder of the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU).

UCT Vice-Chancellor, Professor Mamokgethi Phakeng, shared: "UCT is in deep mourning since we heard of the passing of Emeritus Professor Francis Wilson. He was a student at UCT who went on to become one of the most impactful staff members, and a brilliant and leading scholar in his field. He had a deep and lasting impact on his students, on research, on his faculty and the university as a whole. He served selflessly in many capacities. He was deeply appreciated and loved and we honoured him for all his achievements with a honorary degree in 2016. He was a giant in the halls of our institution and made a significant impact in society. We mourn this loss with his family."

Wilson spent more than 30 years teaching at the School of Economics, where he made seminal contributions to unearthing the exploitation of South Africa's migrant labourers, particularly in the gold mines. He founded and directed SALDRU and published a bibliography's worth of books, book chapters and journal articles on labour, poverty and inequality.

In a tribute, acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Transformation, Emeritus Professor Martin Hall, said: "Through a lifetime dedicated to teaching and research, Francis Wilson has made a contribution both to economics and to a far broader scholarship, which continues to have a major impact on the way we think about inequality, social justice and public policy." His legacy is being continued by the current SALDRU director Professor Murray Leibbrandt and his formidable team.

When delivering the citation as Wilson was conferred the honorary degree in 2016, former Dean of UCT's Faculty of Health Sciences Professor Marian Jacobs said: "You have been a refuge for the poor, a refuge for the needy in their distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat."

UCT has been privileged to have this academic maverick who played an integral part within the university.



Emeritus Professor Francis Wilson

ENDS

**Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing
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