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27 December 2021

UCT pays tribute to Archbishop Tutu

Vice-Chancellor Professor Mamokgethi Phakeng has, on behalf of the University of Cape Town (UCT), paid tribute to the late Emeritus Archbishop Desmond Tutu – “a fervent supporter of higher education.”

Tutu visited UCT and other learning institutions often and lent his name to many research-led initiatives at a wide range of universities. At UCT, the Desmond Tutu HIV Centre in the Faculty of Health Sciences reflects his compassion for those who were affected by the disease, and the Nansen-Tutu Centre for Marine Environmental Research in the Science Faculty reflects his love of the environment.

Phakeng said: “We remember Archbishop Tutu not only for his firm, principled stand on issues of justice, human rights and democracy. We also remember him for his infectious smile, unflinching sense of humour and especially his demonstrations of love for his fellow South Africans.

- [Watch the tribute by Phakeng.](#)

“He taught us to appreciate our own human failings even as we identified ways we need to improve. By sharing his acceptance and love with us, he motivated us to become better people.

“On behalf of the University of Cape Town, I express to Mrs Leah Tutu and her family our heartfelt condolences. This is a loss we all share and we each need to take the time to process what Archbishop Tutu’s life and example meant to us.”

To honour Archbishop Tutu and his legacy, the university will in the next days be commemorating a life well lived on a [dedicated feature page](#) on the UCT website.

“We cannot forget the role he played in focusing world attention on the atrocities of apartheid,” said Phakeng.

Tutu was awarded the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize. The citation read: “Like his countryman Albert Lutuli, Anglican Bishop Desmond Tutu was honored with the Peace Prize for his opposition to South Africa's brutal apartheid regime. Tutu was saluted by the Nobel

Committee for his clear views and his fearless stance, characteristics which had made him a unifying symbol for all African freedom fighters ... Despite bloody violations committed against the black population, as in the Sharpeville massacre of 1961 and the Soweto rising in 1976, Tutu adhered to his nonviolent line."

In 1986, he was named the first black Archbishop of Cape Town in 1986 and used his unique position to serve South Africans who were treated as non-citizens in their own country.

"His infectious personality helped to attract world admiration for the struggle against apartheid. After South Africa became a democracy, he focused his energy on many different issues to improve the lives of South Africans – most notably on HIV/Aids, but also on projects like the *It Gets Better* campaign in South Africa, supporting sexual minorities who experience discrimination, and interventions against poverty and inequality," added Phakeng.

She concluded: "His life signifies what we can achieve when we live by our principles and are fearless in the face of injustice, whatever form it may take. We will miss Archbishop Tutu's laughter, his wisdom, his sparkling enthusiasm for this wonderful country.

"But he has left us a rich legacy of memories to encourage us to complete his vision for a country that celebrates diversity, that welcomes those who are different, that meets the needs of the poor and suffering. His spirit is so vast that it embraces us all. Let us follow his example, embrace his vision and make it real."

- [Read the full obituary.](#)
- [See the photo essay.](#)

ENDS

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