

Media Statement

29 July 2018

TRIBUTE BY DR ZWELI MKHIZE ON THE PASSING OF PROF BONGANI MAYOSI

We have been shocked by the sad news of the sudden departure of Prof Bongani Mayosi.

Prof Mayosi was a highly revered chief specialist, a brilliant academic and researcher as well a world renowned cardiologist. He was respected both as a clinician and as a competent administrator both as the head of department of cardiology at Groote Schuur hospital and the Dean in the Faculty of Health Sciences, which incorporates Medicine, in the University of Cape Town.

How does one bid farewell to such an illustrious life cut too short! How does anyone bid farewell and accept the loss of so brilliant a mind, ranking amongst the best brains that South Africa and our continent can offer the world of modern medicine!

No tributes will suffice to commemorate a doctor who dedicated his entire life as a committed servant of our people. He was one of the rare breed of African physicians to have scaled the climax of this complex and highly technical specialist field of cardiology.

Prof Mayosi was rightfully honoured with the highest award of our land, the Order of Mapungubwe in silver for his contribution to scientific advancement and for his patriotism and selfless service to the nation and the country.

He could have been recruited to a lucrative job, as a full time top specialist earning millions of rands in private health care institutions in this country. Any international institution of his specialty would have been honoured had Prof Mayosi applied to be part of their specialist staff establishment. Prof Mayosi however, elected to serve the poor and ordinary underprivileged citizens who depend on the public health care service for their needs. He knew our people invested in all the knowledge he possessed and also deserved the best.

Prof Mayosi dedicated his talent, skills and his whole life to save the lives of others and trained many more in the art of healing as a specialist and lecturer in internal medicine and cardiology. He represented the best in Black excellence and was the epitome of outstanding professionalism and world class medical care that reflects the high standard in medical care that the world has come to accept from South African health workers.

His successful career has been abruptly halted in a manner that has been acute and traumatic to family, friends, protégés, students and colleagues all of whom are left wondering why they have been singled out to be recipient of such painful a calamity.

There is no underplaying the obvious fact that Professor Mayosi was an inspiration to South African youth especially those training in the medical sectors.

Many of us who qualified in medicine ahead of or together with and after him held him in high regard as a symbol of pride and encouragement for more Black students to aspire to the greater heights of the medical profession. In this sector Prof Mayosi was a role model and a hero of a democratic South Africa. He represented the actualization of the dreams and aspirations of the previously oppressed and the celebration of our newly found freedom.

Prof Mayosi possessed a rare combination of a brilliant mind, yet remained very friendly, warm and sociable due to his humble and extremely down to earth personality.

As former colleagues and Alumni from the Nelson Mandela School of Medicine of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, we bow our heads and dip our banners as we salute one who rose from our humble ranks to conquer the heights that had seemed impossible. From the neglected barracks named Alan Taylor Residence, has emerged many Black professionals in total defiance of apartheid regime which could not countenance Black people assimilating knowledge and expertise rising to become top professionals in direct challenge to the notion of white supremacy.

May it comfort the beloved family to know that we share in their grief. No words can heal a grieving heart of a wife and soul mate left abruptly or comfort children and relatives who have lost a father, brother, an uncle or role model. We nevertheless wish the family to know that our thoughts and prayers are with them at this difficult time.

To his dear wife Nonhlanhla, the children and the entire Mayosi family and relatives as well as colleagues and students, we convey our deepest and heartfelt condolences.

Farewell friend and colleague!

Your achievements were a source of pride and inspiration to us all. You ran a good race and you fought a good fight.

May his soul Rest In Peace

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