

Tribute by the MEC for Education, Mrs. Reginah Mhaule on the passing away of Professor Connie Mokadi

Umndeni Waka Mokadi

Pastors

Leadership of the National Institute of Higher Learning

Members of the Interim Council of the Mpumalanga University

Representatives from Higher Education and Training

Students

All protocol observed

Today we pay homage to one of the most outstanding personalities, a woman of substance with a humble character and the first black female professor to be appointed at UNISA.

Indeed South Africa and Mpumalanga will never be the same again without her. Her passing on has made us feel so empty for it is very seldom that you find a learned, focused, dedicated, influential and courageous person like Professor Mokadi.

Since she graced the shores of our province and worked for NIHE Mpumalanga in 2005, she did not look back but poured out all she had; time, skills, insight and knowledge to ensure that the mandate assigned to her was executed without fail.

She was one of a kind and we thank God that we lived to be touched by her warm, gentle and highly intelligent character.

Her prowess added impetus on government's quest to leverage Higher Education and Training programmes within Mpumalanga and the whole nation.

Today we take pride that the University of Mpumalanga is operational thanks to her never ending energy and foresight.

She was one passionate person who would each time, she had to brief you on something, made it so fascinating to an extent that you would look forward to that project.

Professor Mokadi was the first woman to head a Technikon in South Africa. I came to know her as a complete person who had everything that a country like ours needed in this developmental phase and it is for this reason that we lament her untimely departure.

Her contribution transcended the world of academia as she also served on various committees and boards of Weskoppies Psychiatric Hospital, Health Professional Council of South Africa, National Research Foundation amongst others.

We find solace in fact that she lived to witness the coming to fruition, of the Mpumalanga University.

We do not have any doubt that had it not been her zeal this was not going to be as seamless as it has been.

We will forever remain indebted to her patriotism, love of education and the people of Mpumalanga.

We salute this daughter of the soil because we lived to witness her at her best, at the time of conceptualising the kind of University to be established in Mpumalanga.

Remember this University was the first to be established by the democratic government, so it needed to have features that resemble this dispensation. It was not an easy exercise but at no stage did the team under her guide complain because they knew the bigger picture and were resourced to soldier through.

The country and Mpumalanga Province have all the reasons to grieve her passing on as it has robbed us of a resourceful person and a phenomenal woman who was well endowed and prepared to fast track processes leading to a better South Africa as espoused in the National Development Plan.

On behalf of our Honourable Premier, Mr DD Mabuza and the people of Mpumalanga we take this time to extend our profound condolences to the family, friends colleagues, relatives and to all who are affected by this bereavement.

Please find solace in the book of Jeremiah 29: 11

“I alone know the plans I have for you plan to bring you prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for. Then you will call to me. You will come and pray to me, and I will answer you”

May Her Soul Rest in Peace.