

CITATION – DR ZST SKWEYIYA

Dr Skweyiya was born in Simonstown. He was offered a scholarship at Lovedale High School and matriculated in 1960. His intellectual abilities were soon recognised and in 1968 the movement arranged for him to study law as a guest of the German Democratic Republic. In 1978, he received an LLD at the University of Leipzig.

Dr. Skweyiya played a central role in the development and negotiation of a new constitution for a democratic South Africa. In exile, he was the chairperson of the ANC Constitutional Committee from 1985, and he also set up the ANC's Legal and Constitutional Department in Lusaka.

With the normalisation of politics and the unbanning of the ANC, Dr Skweyiya and his colleagues joined UWC's Community Law Centre, then under the direction of Adv Dullah Omar. Crammed into two offices the Centre became the cooking pot for the new constitution. Dr Skweyiya, and the other members of the ANC Constitutional Committee, were responsible for many of the key policies and positions around negotiating the interim constitution of 1993.

He also wrote seminal papers which still resonate still today. They were scholarly and measured, balancing hope with reality, confronting the big questions of the day with clarity of thought. Two papers stand out: "Rooting Democracy on African Soil" and "Chieftaincy, the Ethnic Question and the Democratisation Process in South Africa".

Dr. Skweyiya's contribution to evidence based policy making was significant. In partnership with the National Treasury and the UK Department for International Development (DFID), he championed an innovative programme to develop the generation and use of research findings in government. Strengthening Analytical Capacity for Evidenced-Based Decision-Making (SACED) was a 10-year program supporting researchers concerned with social and economic policy at South African universities, while providing a link to decision-makers in government. The program strengthened the capacity of Statistics South Africa to collect the data required by users and assisted new work in the measurement of poverty. Most importantly, the program has shown the value that Dr. Skweyiya attached to rigorous analysis conducted by the academic community.

Dr Skweyiya's first ministerial position was Minister of Public Service and Administration from 1994. He was given the mammoth task of integrating and transforming the public service – at the national level, three race-based administrations into one, and at provincial level 10 bantustan administrations and four provincial administrations into nine provinces. Moreover, these institutions had to shed their apartheid-based personnel and ethos, and be transformed into a modern capable state.

During his period of office as the Minister of Social Development from 1999, Dr. Skweyiya was responsible for the rollout and expansion of an unconditional Child Support Grant (CSG) that currently reaches some 12 million children in South Africa. The CSG is now considered to be one of the most important strategies of the South African government for the reduction of poverty and is internationally recognised for its innovative approach.

Dr Skweyiya also made a significant contribution to the field of population studies. During the apartheid era, demography and the study of population was stigmatised at most progressive universities due to its association with population control and the policies of the government. Dr Skweyiya was responsible for the implementation of the Population Policy of South Africa

and the rehabilitation of population studies at South African universities. He played an active role in this, supporting the annual conference of the Population Studies Association as well as the training of young demographers.

Dr. Skweyiya died on 11 April 2018 and was given an official state funeral on 21 April 2018.