

## **UWC Honorary Doctorate Acceptance Speech**

14 December 2018

Thuthukile Skwayiya

*On behalf of Dr Zola Skweyiya*

On behalf of the Skweyiya family, I thank the University of Western Cape (UWC) for the initiative to honour my late husband Zola with a Doctorate posthumously. He was a beloved husband and a father to our children. To the Skweyiya family, he was a brother, uncle and a grandfather. To many others, he was a friend, a colleague and a comrade in arms.

We all miss him dearly. Our hearts still gape the wounds that whine his cross over. We thank God for his life and good deeds in this world.

Today's occasion, on 14 December 2018, humbles us greatly. The honour which is being bestowed upon him today brings excitement to the Skweyiya family and Zola's great community of friends and comrades as it affirms what we have known best about him.

Zola was a selfless disciplinarian who was very loving and very caring. He was a gentle giant to us and many. He was a man of few words. He felt his love of the poor in this country very keenly, yet he was a man of few words to talk about it. Instead he chose to act upon it.

As we have known him, Zola harboured a deep Social Conscience. He acknowledged the selfless contributions of those who had worked with him tirelessly in the task of creating the foundation of the new South Africa as a constitutional democracy. He embraced the role played by women and the youth in building our democracy. Amongst those who journeyed with him he would have singled out one special woman, my sister and comrade – Bridget Mabandla, who has played an important role in the ANC constitutional affairs committee which is one of the highlights that was taken into account when UWC decided to bestow this honour upon him.

The same honour goes to the departed souls Dullar Omar, Kader Asmal, Pius Langa, and Louis Skweyiya. Justice Alby Sachs, Sandile Nogxina, Jobo Dwane and many more are acknowledged for their role and active participation on the Constitution Committee of the ANC and its Legal Constitutional Affairs Department.

If he was here today, it was not going to be about him. With utmost humility, he was going to elevate his acceptance speech rather on the role that UWC played in nurturing the constitution of our country. He was going to impress upon us all that UWC is the cradle that carried South Africa into its current democracy.

As Zola's family we hope that this honour will not just end here today, but rather will go a long way in reminding people of our country, especially our future generation of leaders that our constitutional democracy was not just received on a silver platter. It was achieved through a protracted struggle waged on many fronts and the moral high ground of selflessness, dedication and hard work.

Zola died a worried man. He was unhappy and felt he had failed the people of South Africa through his political party. He was vocal about his unhappiness with wrong things that were happening within the governing party, but unfortunately, due to his advanced age and declining health, God took him before he could do much about it.

We believe that with the honour bestowed upon him today the moral and political conscience of South Africans from all walks of life will be revived to cherish and honour our constitutional democracy, in order to pursue the dream of a better life for all especially for the vulnerable and excluded members of the society – the poorest of the poor.

Thank you, Enkosi nangomso!

**Thuthukile Skweyiya**