



LAW SOCIETY
OF SOUTH AFRICA

PRESS RELEASE

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LAW SOCIETY TRIBUTE TO NELSON MANDELA

The attorneys' profession has lost one of its greatest moral compasses in the passing of former President Nelson Mandela. Although we have been aware of his frailty for some time, now that this moment has arrived, words fail us.

With heavy hearts we wish to record the condolences of the attorneys' profession to his wife Mrs Machel, his family and close friends.

To the world he was an icon, to his family and our nation, a father, but to the attorneys' profession he was the embodiment of the principles that all in the profession aspire to: reconciliation, social justice and respect for the values enshrined in the Bill of Rights.

As a profession we are honoured that Mr Mandela chose to serve in our ranks. He, along with Oliver Tambo, opened the first black attorneys' firm in the country, providing hope and dignity to a people given to despair, leading the way for our current generation of attorneys.

The importance of human dignity, and the attorneys' duty to provide access to justice when this dignity is infringed, is best noted in his own words in his autobiography *Long Walk to Freedom*:

'I realised quickly what Mandela and Tambo meant to ordinary Africans. It was a place where they could come and find a sympathetic ear and a competent ally, a place where they would not be either turned away or cheated, a place where they might actually feel proud to be represented by men of their own skin colour. This was the reason I had become a lawyer in the first place, and my work often made me feel I had made the right decision.'

LALA NGOXOLO MADIBA, YEM YEM, UGQATSO OLUHLE ULUFEZILE!

ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE CO-CHAIRPERSONS OF THE LAW SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA, KATHLEEN MATOLO-DLEPU AND DAVID BEKKER

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Editor's note:

The Law Society of South Africa brings together its six constituent members – the Cape Law Society, the KwaZulu-Natal Law Society, the Law Society of the Free State, the Law Society of the Northern Provinces, the Black Lawyers Association and the National Association of Democratic Lawyers – in representing South Africa's 21 700 attorneys and 5 800 candidate attorneys.