

Hamba kahle, Chancellor Gerwel

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'He ran his race, it is now complete. Others must take over from where he left off.'

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Under Gerwel, UWC rejected apartheid, and committed itself to nonracialism, non-sexism and social justice and "the development of the third world communities in South Africa". Access was opened to all South Africans and UWC began to ditch its previous baggage as a "coloured" and "bush" university.

Intellectual debate flourished and UWC became an exciting space for socially committed and engaged scholarship. Gerwel took knowledge and intellectual work seriously. As he was wont to point out to the more action-oriented: "good intellectual work entails hard work of a special type. It is as difficult, if not more difficult, than organising door-to-door work, street committees and mass rallies".

He did not, however, eschew action. He stood shoulder-to-shoulder with protesters in Cape Town during the defiance campaign marches of the late 1980s. And during protests at

UWC that often spilled onto the streets he shielded students and academics confronted by riot police armed with rubber bullets and tear gas.

Gerwel's *Literatuur en Apartheid* published in 1983 remains a key text in the Afrikaans and southern African literature discourse. He also published a variety of monographs, articles, essays and papers on literary, educational and socio-political issues.

There was educational innovation that was years ahead of any other university. One area of profound work was in academic development programmes, which sought to provide "epistemological access" and real equity of opportunity for the poor.

Gerwel helped to significantly advance gender equity at UWC. Compared to men, women at UWC suffered many disabilities related to salaries, benefits, pensions, leave and the like. While the efforts of women at UWC were decisive, Gerwel's support

as the vice-chancellor was critical in creating a gender equitable institution.

The early 1990s saw UWC become a key site for policy research in support of an equitable and democratic South Africa. Gerwel brought those of us working in the arena of higher education policy development into conversation with others working on constitutional, economic, trade, health and other policy issues. Many of those involved in such policy work became cabinet ministers and leaders of institutions post-1994.

Another first was when Madiba recruited Gerwel to become democratic South Africa's first Director General and Cabinet Secretary in the Office of the President. Later he chaired the Nelson Mandela Foundation and the Mandela Rhodes Foundation, which awards postgraduate scholarships to talented students.

The numerous honorary doctorates awarded to Professor Gerwel and his extensive leadership roles in civil society, business and sport organisations are all testimony to the respect that he enjoyed in all quarters of society.

Gerwel is a magnificent symbol of intellectual, academic, social and personal integrity, professionalism and specialist expertise, courage and human good. He leaves a powerful legacy of bold leadership, critical scholarship, commitment to social justice and a humane society, and social action towards these ends.

What Colin Bundy has noted with respect to the late Harold Wolpe applies equally to Gerwel: he "was one of those rare academics who give intellectuals a good name".

And what Gerwel has written about Wolpe can also be said of him: he was "one of those citizens and intellectuals who, to borrow an evocative phrase from Habermas, never neglected to make public use of his reason at every point: whether as teacher and mentor, as scholar, as member of the liberation movement, as public intellectual, as interlocutor in private conversation".

Jakes Gerwel can rest content in the knowledge that he lived his life as advocated by an outstanding revolutionary: a person's dearest possession is their life; and since it is given to live but once, live as to feel no torturing regrets for years without purpose; so live that dying one can say: all my life and all my strength was given to the finest cause in the world – the liberation of humankind.

Xolani Nyali, a previous Rhodes SRC president who came into contact with Gerwel, wrote to me: "He ran his race, it is now complete. Others must take over from where he left off." Indeed!

Hamba Kahle, bold, humble and gentle man, leader and mentor of great integrity and intellect and dry and understated humour. You will be dearly missed.



JAKES GERWEL and Desmond Tutu.



Professor Jakes Gerwel
18 JANUARY 1946 - 28 NOVEMBER 2012

Professor Jakes Gerwel, a campaigner for democracy, will be remembered as a driver of reconciliation at a crucial time in our country's history.

In mourning the loss of an icon, we also celebrate the legacy of a leader, an intellectual, an academic and one of the architects of our democratic South Africa.

A great visionary of our time, may you rest in peace.

Adam Samle
CEO, Lion of Africa Insurance

Professor Jakes Gerwel

18 January 1946 – 28 November 2012

Suddenly fate decided to call your name.
As sad as we are today on your passing,
So Blessed are we to have been part of your life.
Fortunate were we to be cast in your shadow,
Many miles did we walk as a team.
Your love, wisdom and leadership will sorely be missed by all.

*A Visionary and Leader true to his course
Rest in Peace, our Chairman, Professor Jakes Gerwel*

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