

## **Advocate Dumisa Buhle Ntsebeza SC**

Advocate Dumisa Buhle Ntsebeza SC was born and bred in Cala, in the Eastern Cape. Like many young South Africans in the 70s, Advocate Ntsebeza was involved in the struggle against apartheid.

In 1966, he passed his matric with a first class pass, with a distinction in Latin at St Johns College, Mthatha. In 1967, although he passed Bachelor of Arts 1 with a distinction in African Languages in Course 1 at University of Fort Hare, he was expelled for political reasons in 1968 before completing his BA degree.

He received his BA majoring in History and African Languages (IsiXhosa) at the University of South Africa (UNISA), through distance education in 1972. Between April 1971 and December 1972, he taught for a while at Ndema Secondary School in Tsomo.

In 1973, Advocate Ntsebeza worked as a teacher at Dilizintaba Secondary School in Tsolo. In 1974 and in 1976 he taught at Jongilizwe College for Sons of Chiefs and Headmen where he had the privilege of shaping the minds of the likes of General Bantu Holomisa, General Themba Matanzima and General Derrick Mgwebi. The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Fort Hare, Prof Sakhela Buhlungu, was also a student at Jongilizwe in 1976.

He was arrested in 1976, and served time in prison, during which time he completed his law degree. In 1980, Advocate Ntsebeza acquired a B.Proc, a four-year law degree with a distinction in Accounting 1, at UNISA. Between 1985 and 1993, he was the Chairperson of Prisoners Welfare Programmes (Priwelpro). Priwelpro was set up by Advocate Ntsebeza and two ex-political prisoners in one of the Bantustans of South Africa, the then so-called independent homeland of Transkei, Priwelpro agitated for the release of political prisoners from Transkei, Robben Island and elsewhere. It also agitated for the release of all political detainees. Priwelpro was also involved in Court interdicts against the torture of those arbitrarily detained.

Advocate Ntsebeza has held various leadership and prominent positions, which include the following:

- 1987 - 1989: Founder and President of the National Association of Democratic Lawyers (NADEL).
- 1989 - 1991: President of Black Lawyers Association (BLA)
- 1991 - 1993: Assistant and then Co-Director - with former Mrs Ntsebeza in their practice - N.M. Ntsebeza Incorporated. From 1994 to 1996, he became the sole Director.
- 1991 - 1997: National Executive Committee Member (NEC), Publicity Secretary of the BLA.
- 1993 - 2002: Member of the Board of Bank of Transkei (later MEEG Bank) as a special legal advisor to the Managing Director.

In 1992, Advocate Ntsebeza received an LLB with distinctions in Jurisprudence and Advanced Criminal Law, and A minus in Advanced Administrative Law and Labour Law at the then University of Transkei (UNITRA) (now Walter Sisulu University).

He was appointed as a Member of Council for the University of Transkei between 1994 and 2000. From 1995 to 2000, he was appointed a Member of Council of the Law Society of the Cape of Good Hope, a governing and disciplinary body of all attorneys in the Eastern Cape, Northern Cape and Western Cape Provinces.

In 1995, he acquired a Postgraduate Certificate in Constitutional Litigation at the University of South Africa (UNISA). This is a one-year specialised course in Constitutional litigation offered by UNISA. In 2002, he received an LLM from the University of Cape Town, and passed International Criminal Law with a distinction.

In 1996, he was appointed by President Mandela as a Commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). In the TRC, he became the Head of the TRC'S Investigative Unit and Head of its Witness Protection programme, a structure established by statute within the TRC to protect witnesses, especially witnesses from the old order security structures who, at a great risk to their lives, came forward with very sensitive information about the atrocities of the apartheid past.

- 1997 - 1999: Member of Council of the University of Cape Town.
- 1996 to 2000: Chairperson of Council of the University of Transkei
- 2000 to 2007: A Trustee of the Nelson Mandela Foundation.
- 2001 to date: Chairperson of Equillore, a leading Dispute Settlement provider spearheading court-based mediation in South Africa

From 2001 to date, Advocate Ntsebeza was appointed a Trustee of the Desmond Tutu Peace Trust/Centre, and was its Chairperson since 2004. The organisation was unwound in about 2014 to give way to the emergence of the Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation, also founded by the same Founders, Desmond and Leah Tutu.

- 2003 to date: A Trustee of the South African History Archives (SAHA) and its Chairperson in 2005.
- 2007 to 2020: Chairperson of Barloworld Limited, a multinational trading company with interests throughout the world, including in Siberia, Spain, and the African continent.
- 2008 to 2011: Chairperson of Avusa Limited (Now Tiso Black Star Group), a Media and Entertainment Company.
- 2008 to 2012: a Member of the Society of Advocates/Johannesburg Bar chairing Treasury, Transformation and Bursary Committees, and later, the Professional Subcommittee [ProfCom] of the Bar Council dealing with disciplinary issues.
- 2008 to 2017: National Chairperson of the Advocates For Transformation [AFT], a lobby group of progressive advocates focused on the transformation of the profession and the Judiciary.
- 2009 to 2016: Appointed to the Judicial Service Commission (JSC), having been nominated to that position by the former President of the Republic of South Africa, President Jacob Zuma. Was designated the JSC's official spokesperson by fellow commissioners. The JSC interviews judge candidates and recommends them to the President of the country for appointment under the leadership of the Chief Justice. It also deals with complaints levelled against judges.

- 2007 to 2019: Joined the Victoria Mxenge Group of Advocates in Sandton Johannesburg, practising as a Silk/Senior Counsel (SC).
- 2009 to 2014: Professor Extraordinaire in the University of Stellenbosch Business School (USB). The USB and Equillore are the Founder members of the Africa Centre for Dispute Settlement (ACDS), which offers courses in negotiations, conciliation, mediation and arbitration techniques intended for usage in conflict areas in the continent and beyond.
- 2001 to 2013: Lead Counsel: South Africa in the Apartheid Litigation in re: *Ntsebeza v Citibank and Others (New York Court)*: Case Number: 09-2778-civ-L: US Court of Appeals: Second Circuit.
- In 2012 he was instructed by the Socio-Economic Rights Institute (SERI), as Lead Counsel on behalf of the families of the 37 mine workers who were killed by the Police in Marikana.
- He represented the families throughout the Commission, which was chaired by Farlam JA [Ret] throughout the judicial Commission of Inquiry into the Marikana tragedy.
- He represent the families as their Lead Counsel, in a damages claim against the Police, on behalf of the widows and other dependents of the 37 mine workers who were killed by the Police in Marikana.
- He once came to Rhodes University to speak on the Marikana Inquiry, at the invitation of Prof Hendricks.

In 2002, Advocate Ntsebeza was a Distinguished Visiting Professor of Political Science and Law at the University of Connecticut in the US. In 2005 he served as a Commissioner on the United Nations International Commission of Inquiry in Darfur, a position he was appointed to by the then UN Secretary General, Mr Kofi Annan.

The most recent appointment for Advocate Ntsebeza SC was in February this year, when he was voted by a large majority of members of the All Council for a judgeship position, for an initial period of six years, in the African Court for Human and People's Rights. He is the Chancellor of Fort Hare University. He has recently been appointed

as the Cricket South Africa's new Social Justice Ombudsman.

Advocate Ntsebeza is a true embodiment of cream of the crop, and a son of the soil. The Senate and Council of Rhodes University have voted to confer the degree of Doctor of Laws (LLD) (honoris causa), to be bestowed on him at the Rhodes University 2021 graduation ceremonies in April. This is in recognition and celebration of Advocate Ntsebeza's sustained and exceptional contribution as an attorney, advocate and an activist for political and human rights, human dignity and social justice in our country and beyond.