



Communication and Marketing Department
Isebe loThungelwano neNtengiso
Kommunikasie en Bemakingsdepartement

Private Bag X3, Rondebosch 7701, South Africa
La Grotto House, Glendarrach Rd, Rondebosch, Cape Town
Tel: +27 (0) 21 650-3733/2, Fax: +27 (0) 21 650-5682
Internet: www.uct.ac.za

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UCT African literature scholar dies

Dr Reuben Chirambo, a senior lecturer in the Department of English Language & Literature in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Cape Town, died of cancer on Thursday evening, 6 October 2011, at the age of 48.

UCT Vice-Chancellor Dr Max Price said in an announcement to the UCT community: "As a scholar of African literature [Dr Chirambo] forged a significant body of research, and his manuscript on Malawian literature had just been accepted for publication. His untimely passing deprives the academic world of an important scholar, and the Faculty of Humanities of a valued colleague and a kind friend."

Dr Price said: "Dr Chirambo inspired a passion for African literature among his students. He was a gifted scholar, specialising in Malawian poetry in particular, but his interests also included postcolonial literature and theory, cultural and literary theory, popular music and society, oral literature, and gender in African literature and popular culture. He is remembered not only for his academic zeal but also for his enormous integrity, his keen sense of humour and his unfailing kindness and respect in his dealings with colleagues and students."

Dr Chirambo came to UCT as a lecturer on 1 January 2007. He was promoted to the position of senior lecturer in January this year. Colleagues and former students describe him as a patient, selfless, devoted and soft-spoken teacher who gave generously of his time, whether he was supervising the work of postgraduates or mentoring undergraduates.

On behalf of the university, Dr Price expressed heartfelt condolences to Dr Chirambo's family and in particular his two daughters, Ruth and Khumbo, as well as to his colleagues, friends and students.

ENDS

Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department

Patricia Lucas

Tel: (021) 650 5428 Fax (021) 650 5628

Cell: 076 292 8047

E-mail: pat.lucas@uct.ac.za

University of Cape Town

Rondebosch

Website: www.uct.ac.za