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Wits, UCT to host symposium to honour Justice Moseneke

Date: 7 December 2016, time: 08h45, venue: Smuts Hall, contact: Azwi Mufamadi on 021 650 6065 or email azwi.mufamadi@uct.ac.za

The University of Cape Town and the University of the Witwatersrand will host a joint symposium on 7 December 2016 at Smuts Hall (UCT) in honour of Justice Dikgang Moseneke, for the immense contribution that he has made to society.

A former activist, and one of the country's leading jurists, Justice Moseneke has served South Africa and the continent with distinction, both in the courtroom and beyond its walls.

Dr Max Price, Vice-Chancellor of UCT, said: "Few public figures have the moral authority of Justice Moseneke. At this symposium we look to pay tribute to this courageous and compassionate leader and thank him for his many years of faithful service to South Africa."

Professor Adam Habib, Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Wits University, said: "Justice Moseneke's service to the nation has been second to none. He is one of our country's most eminent judges and his legal authority, intellectual integrity and personal calibre has had a deep impact on the judiciary and society. Always honourable, principled and righteous, Justice Moseneke is one of the best legal minds in our country and has made a profound contribution towards transforming the South African judiciary."

About the symposium

The symposium will focus on two broad themes that characterise Justice Moseneke: "the Activist Judge" and "the Intellectual Judge". Participants will also delve into the jurisprudence of particular cases and participate in interactive panel discussions.

The theme focusing on 'Moseneke, the Activist Judge' will include presentations on judicial accountability, the role of the courts and social change in relation to Justice Moseneke's judgments and writing, and broader activist themes with which he is associated. "We are inviting young scholars, lawyers, researchers and activists to participate in creative ways," said Cathi Albertyn, Professor of Law at Wits University. Theme two addresses the intellectual themes in Justice Moseneke's cases and scholarly writings in the areas of transformative jurisprudence; private law and the Constitution;

and executive power, amongst others. "Participants will engage directly with his core ideas, across cases and writings," Albertyn added.

Professor Penelope Andrews, Dean of the Faculty of Law at UCT, said: "Justice Moseneke is an inspiration for all South Africans, particularly young, black South Africans, who can see how he has achieved greatness in the face of tremendous obstacles. His professional achievements are exceptional and are matched only by his extraordinary personal triumphs. This symposium will try to do justice to those achievements."

About Justice Dikgang Moseneke

Dikgang Moseneke was born in December 1947 in Pretoria, where he attended primary and secondary school. At the age of 15, when in standard eight, Moseneke was arrested, detained and convicted of participating in anti-apartheid activity. He was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment, all of which he served on Robben Island. Moseneke studied for his matric as well as two degrees while in jail: He obtained a BA in English and political science, as well as a B Juris degree. He later completed an LLB. All three degrees were conferred by the University of South Africa.

Moseneke holds honorary doctorates from the former University of the North; the University of Natal and the Tshwane University of Technology.

Other awards include the KVV Award of Excellence, the Black Lawyers Association Excellence Award (1993), the UNISA School of Business Leadership Excellence Award (1997), the Black Management Forum Empowerment Award (1998), the Sunday Times Businessman of the Year Nominee (1998), International Trial Lawyer of the Year Award (from the International Academy of Trial Lawyers) (2000) and the Soweto Achiever Award (2002).

Professional career

Moseneke started his professional career as an attorney's clerk at Klagbruns Incorporated in Pretoria in 1976. In 1978, he was admitted and practised for five years as an attorney and partner at the law firm Maluleke, Seriti and Moseneke. In 1983 he was called to the Bar and practised as an advocate in Johannesburg and Pretoria. Ten years later, he was elevated to senior counsel. That same year, Moseneke served on the technical committee that drafted the interim constitution of 1993 and a year later he was appointed Deputy Chairperson of the Independent Electoral Commission, which conducted the first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994.

In September 1994, while practising as a senior counsel, Moseneke accepted an acting appointment to the Transvaal Provincial Division of the Supreme Court. Before his appointment as Justice of the Constitutional Court, Moseneke was a Judge of the High Court in Pretoria. In June 2005, he was appointed Deputy Chief Justice of the Republic of South Africa, a position in which he served with distinction.

Between 1995 and 2001 Moseneke left the Bar to pursue a full-time corporate career and served as the chairperson of Telkom South Africa Limited, African Merchant Bank,

Metropolitan Life, African Bank Investments and in various other capacities at New Africa Investments, New Africa Publications, Phaphama Holdings, Urban Brew and the Life Officers' Association, amongst others. He resigned from all these positions when he returned to the bench.

He is a founding member of the Black Lawyers' Association and the National Association of Democratic Lawyers of South Africa. In 1986, Moseneke was appointed visiting fellow and lecturer at Columbia University School of Law, New York. He has served in several community and non-governmental organisations, including Project Literacy, the Sowetan Nation Building project and as deputy chairperson of the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund.

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