

Mbusowemvelo Bhukumtheto Mtshali

Mbusowemvelo (Mbuso) Mtshali was born in Mahlabathini, a rural village in northern KwaZulu Natal. Originally he wanted to be a doctor, but friends at KwaDlangezwa High School convinced him that since he enjoyed arguing so much and won most of those arguments, he would make a very good lawyer.

Mbuso's father was a labourer and his mother a housewife and they battled to educate their children. After matric Mbuso worked as an inspector at a motor vehicle parts factory to raise the money to go to University. Wanting to broaden his horizon outside of KZN, he applied to UCT and Rhodes. UCT was tardy in responding to his application, whilst Rhodes was quick; something for which he will always be thankful, as he believes the quality of legal training at Rhodes is one of the best.

The mid 1980s and early 1990s were times of political turmoil and change and he spent three months detained under the State of Emergency Regulations in St. Albans prison in Port Elizabeth. At that time black people were not allowed in one of the two cinemas in Grahamstown and sport at Rhodes was divided along racial lines. As a protest, black students decided not to participate in certain campus activities and this included boycotting their graduation ceremony, thus Mbuso did not attend his B.Proc degree graduation ceremony in 1990. The situation had fortunately changed by the time he had completed his LLB degree in 1992 and his family could finally celebrate his achievements. While at Rhodes, he was part of the team that worked tirelessly to unite sport.

After graduation, he joined a law firm in Cape Town, moving on in 1995 to join Metropolitan Life, where he stayed until joining Sanlam in 2004. He is now Company Secretary and Head of Legal and Compliance at Sanlam Investments. He also serves on the Board of Directors at Simeka Consultants & Actuaries (a member of Sanlam group).

Mbuso has strong views on law ethics and believes that a legal practitioner should have honesty; build and sustain genuine relationships; give oneself without expecting recognition or reward; have unshakeable ethical conduct, treating everyone with respect and dignity irrespective of position, culture, religion, status, gender, race or sexual orientation. It is his dream that Rhodes law graduates should be associated with these attributes. As keynote speaker at the Law Faculty's opening function in 2013, he initiated a discussion on the importance of ethics. In 2015, Rhodes Law Faculty became only the second law faculty in South Africa to introduce a compulsory ethics and professional responsibility course into its LLB curriculum. He and a colleague are the sponsors of an Ethics prize for the best Rhodes University law student in the Legal Ethics and Professional Responsibility subject.

Mbuso is passionate about Rhodes University, believing that his experiences at Rhodes contributed in shaping the person he is today and his belief in a non-racial, democratic South Africa. As a direct result of the long-lasting relationships formed at Rhodes, he and fellow Law Alumni started a law bursary fund to which they contribute annually. The first recipient has now graduated and the group work closely with the Law Faculty in the selection of deserving candidates. Mbuso was mentor to the Inaugural Sanlam Investments CEO Bursary recipient who said he was a constant source of support and encouragement, guiding her and inspiring her to make her dreams a reality.

Mbuso Mtshali is a superb role model, an individual who personifies the finest qualities of a Rhodes graduate and truly deserving of the Distinguished Old Rhodian Award.

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