



**TRIBUTE TO  
 PROFESSOR EDWELL KASEKE**  
 9 October 1954 to 28 August 2017



The 28<sup>th</sup> of August 2017 will always be remembered as a sad day in the history of Social Work in Zimbabwe, as the profession lost Professor Edwell Kaseke (appears as Edwin in other documents) following a battle with cancer. He was buried at Zororo Memorial Park, near Harare, Zimbabwe on 02 September 2017. His obituary reads, “ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept, the faith (2 Timothy 4 vs 7).

Professor Kaseke obtained a Doctor of Philosophy, Social Studies from the University of Zimbabwe in 1994 and was a holder of a Master of Science in Social Planning from the London School of Economics and Political Science (1982), a Bachelor of Social Work (1980) and Diploma in Social Work, University of Zimbabwe (1979). He was a former Principal (later Director) of the School of Social Work, University of Zimbabwe. He also served as Secretary to the Board of Governors of the School of Social Work. Away from his normal duties he served as Chairman of the Core Group of Social Security Experts in SADC.

At the time of his death, he was current Chair of Social Work in the School of Human and Community Development at University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa. Apart from this core responsibility, he also served as a member of the Editorial Board of the Journal of Social Development in Africa; a member of the International Advisory Board of the African Journal of Social Work, Overseas Corresponding Member for the Journal of Social Policy and Administration; and as an Editorial Board member of internationally acclaimed International Social Work Journal. He served as Africa region representative on the Executive Committee and sat on the Board of Directors of the International Association of Schools of Social Work. He was also a member of the Southern African Social Protection Experts Network (SASPEN) Advisory Council. At one point he served as President of the Association of Schools of Social Work for Eastern and Southern Africa.

In Zimbabwean culture, when a person is deceased relatives and friends make contributions (called *chema* in Shona language) to the deceased’s family to reduce the economic burden associated with funerals. *Chema* is also a way of paying respect to the deceased. Since Edwell’s professional colleagues were living and working in different parts of the world a Whatsapp forum was created and this saw over 50 Zimbabwean social workers

around the world joining. the forum was coordinated by his former students dotted around the globe.. Close to US\$2000,00 was raised within a space of a couple of days and handed over to the family. This just goes to show how highly he was regarded by members of the social work fraternity scattered around the world.

Besides financial contributions towards the funeral costs, colleagues spoke glowingly about the life of the Professor and shared ideas about keeping his legacy alive.

Professor Rodreck Mupedziswa, a long time work colleague of his, had this to say: “Dear Social Workers. Just wanted to express sincere gratitude for the spirit of solidarity you have shown. I am greatly touched. This is a befitting send off to a hero of this human service profession called social work. Prof Kaseke, was a larger than life figure. I knew him better than most people. We both did our BSW degrees at the School of Social Work. We both did our Masters degrees at the London School of Economics. For 15 of the 20 years that I taught at the School of Social Work he was Director and I was Deputy Director. We worked very closely together. We encouraged each other to attain PhDs. The UZ awarded us professorships on the same day. We at times travelled together sometimes to faraway places like Vienna, Austria. We published academic materials together. We also shared happy many moments, and shared our challenges. When after 20 years of working together I one day informed him of my intention to move on, he was devastated, but he indicated he perfectly understood. We remained in touch to the very end. We always consulted each other on all manner of issues. We both belonged to a regional network of social protection experts, called SASPEN. That ensured we saw each other at least once each year. The reunions were always special. Earlier this year, we concluded a Consultancy project that we were working on together. We often communicated by email, by cell phone, by land line. I knew when he was happy, and when he was concerned. We were like brothers. The Professor was hugely respected across the globe. He was gifted with a sharp intellect. His services were often in great demand. At one point he had to fly from Harare to South Africa once a week to teach a course. That's how highly he was regarded in academia. His publications too were highly regarded. What a scholar; an academician par excellence. Indeed he was simply a giant in the world of academia. He touched many lives...always in a positive manner. Yet he remained humble to a fault. Without him the profession has become much poorer. May his soul rest in eternal peace”.

Constantine Mupangani, NASWZ President had this to say about the overwhelming response to the call to give the Professor a resounding send-off, “I do not have words enough to express my humility and gratitude for the great efforts we all put up towards the sending off for our beloved Hero. The Professor was a man of integrity, honour and excellence. He was a visionary who built institutions and groomed a lot of individual practitioners across the globe.”

A memorial lecture was suggested, and in support of the idea, Musekiwa Makwanya said, “There is an undertaking from the SSW (School of Social Work) to push for an Annual Memorial Lecture in honour of Prof Kaseke and also plan events that celebrate the contributions of many stalwarts who contributed to the social work profession in Zimbabwe”. Other colleagues suggested a donation of books to the School of Social Work in honour of Professor Kaseke while others suggested the setting up of a Kaseke Foundation.

Edwell attended Kaseke Primary, Musanhi Primary and Nyamuzuwe High School. Professor Edwell Kaseke is survived by his wife, Florence, three grown sons, a daughter-in-law and a granddaughter.

May His Soul Rest in Peace.

*Professor Rodreck Mupedziswa is Professor and Head of Department of Social Work, University of Botswana. Rodreck worked with the late Professor Kaseke for a very long time.*

*Dr Jacob Mugumbate is a lecturer at University of Wollongong, Australia and is Associate Editor of the AJSW. Jacob is a former student of the late Professor Kaseke.*

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