

Professor Thandinkosi Enos Madiba

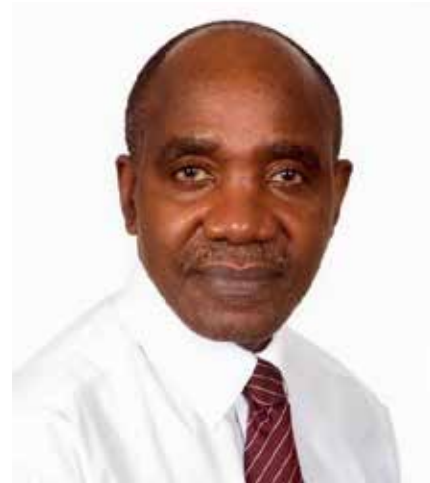
12 November 1949 – 1 August 2021

Professor Thandinkosi Enos Madiba was born on 12 November 1949 in Umkomaas in southern KwaZulu-Natal. He matriculated with merit pass from Amanzimtoti Zulu Training School in 1969 and thereafter pursued an MBChB degree at the then University of Natal, graduating in 1976. He completed internship and a subsequent year as a medical officer at Edendale Hospital. He then ventured into private practice for a short period before returning to King Edward VIII hospital and the University of Natal as a surgical registrar and completed his FCS in 1987.

He worked as a junior consultant at King Edward VIII and Addington hospital before his appointment as a consultant in charge of a general surgical firm at King Edward VIII in 1991 which remained his home base until retirement. He was promoted to principal specialist in 1994 and as his seniority increased, his clinical and research interests became focused on colorectal surgery. This led in 1999 to a productive six months sabbatical period at Mr David Bartolo's colorectal unit in Edinburgh. His return coincided with the commissioning of the Inkosi Albert Luthuli Central Hospital (IALCH) where he and others established a Surgical Gastroenterology Subspecialist Unit which incorporated a fully-fledged colorectal unit. Following this, he was awarded an International Scholarship of the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons and became a member of their society. These endeavours led to his certification as a surgical gastroenterologist by the HPCSA in 2006. He was a firm believer in subspeciality development within general surgery and was a founder member of the South African Colorectal Society and its President from 2016 to 2017.

Professor Madiba was a consummate academic surgeon from the very beginning of his career. In 1995 he obtained his Masters in Medicine degree from the University of Natal, a postgraduate diploma in International Research Ethics from the University of Cape Town in 2006 and in 2007 his PhD from UKZN. He was the most accomplished academic surgeon of African ancestry in South Africa with over 140 peer reviewed articles and 10 book chapters. His status as an academic in his fields of interest resulted in invitations to speak at many local and international meetings. He was instrumental in establishing the UKZN Surgical Student Society to foster an interest in a surgical career and research. His commitment to research was evident in his participation in the Surgical Research Society of South Africa, culminating in his highly successful hosting of the 2014 annual congress in Durban. His academic and leadership skills led to his appointment as the head of the department of surgery in 2009 until his retirement in 2015.

He actively encouraged research and not only supervised Masters and PhD theses but also was a true mentor to his students. He assumed a pivotal role in the lives of many, including ours, for over a decade. A leader in every aspect of our academic and clinical careers, he encouraged the



pursuit of excellence. He remained steadfast in assisting us and others to achieve our goals and never faltered in the face of our shortcomings, instead choosing patience over negative criticism and quietly enjoyed our successes with a smile and a kind word.

Professor Madiba dedicated his life to the medical profession. He had an executive role on several national bodies including the Colleges of Medicine of South Africa, the Health Professions Council of South Africa and the South African Medical Association. He also had active roles on international society executives and journal editorial boards.

He was very proud when he was awarded, as adjudged by the students, the Teddy Sarkin Prize for the best lecturer in the Faculty no fewer than eight times, but perhaps his proudest honour was when his service to the local surgical community was acknowledged in 2017 when he became President of the Association of Surgeons of South Africa.

Thandinkosi was part of many community-related projects including founding a colorectal cancer awareness and stoma support group. He was the chairman of the Forum of African Excellence and Equity for nearly a decade. Amongst the many awards he received, the Living Legend Award from the Ethekwini municipality in 2011 and the Life Achievement Award from the Medical Association of South Africa in 2016 attest to his lifelong contribution to society in general.

For those who knew him well, he was a man of few words and a true gentleman, quiet and courteous, measured and never hurried in speech. He was a good listener, rarely judgemental and made his point with diplomacy and commanded respect by the example he set. He never forwent formalities or manners and was always polite and professional. No one can recall a single time when he referred to a colleague, either junior or senior, by their first name.

Not even illness could slow him down. He met with adversity and ill health on many occasions throughout his life and triumphed. He attended to his own responsibilities and did not burden others with his personal matters. I recall him emailing and returning text messages from hospital still concerned about his patient's well-being and tasks at hand. He refused to let his health deter him and he maintained his composure to the very end. One of his not so well known interests was the sport of wrestling, apart for his love for reading and academia.

He is survived by his loving wife Puseletso, five children and four grandchildren. Professor Madiba will

be remembered fondly by the many patients, colleagues, academics, students and nurses who had the opportunity to have met and interacted with him.

Professor Madiba was a truly remarkable academic surgeon. He reached the pinnacle of his profession by dogged determination and hard work. His death has left a void and it is incumbent on those he inspired to fulfil his legacy.

Zaheer Moolla
Maseleen Naidoo
Shakeel Kader