

OBITUARY

Prof. Mkhuseleli Kenneth Mashiyi (19 November 1964 - 8 February 2025)



The news of the sudden passing of Maduna Mashiyi on the morning of 8 February 2025 came as a huge surprise and shock to the medical fraternity at Nelson Mandela Academic Hospital and the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at Walter Sisulu University.

Mkhuseleli Kenneth Mashiyi was born on 19 November 1964 in Matshongwe village, Umtata, to the late Nomamelika Nolungile and Mvulehlobo Lavayi Solomon Mashiyi, as the second-last born of five children.

After completing his primary education, he proceeded to St John's College in Umtata, where he matriculated in 1981. He enrolled for the Bachelor of Science degree at the University of Transkei (Unitra), now Walter Sisulu University, in 1983. When the MB ChB programme was introduced at the Unitra Faculty of Health Sciences in 1985, under the deanship of Prof. Marina Xaba-Mokoena, he became part of the first cohort to enrol for the programme in the same year. Despite the trials and tribulations of a new programme in rural Transkei, he persevered with his peers until they graduated in 1990. He worked as an intern at Umtata General Hospital in 1991, then spent a further two years as a medical officer before joining the Department of Internal Medicine at King Edward VIII Hospital, Durban, as a registrar in Internal Medicine.

Maduna returned to Umtata General Hospital in November 1997, where he was appointed as a principal medical officer in Internal Medicine. He was appointed as acting medical superintendent at Umtata General Hospital during this period, because of his visionary leadership. He

was admitted to the Colleges of Medicine of South Africa (CMSA) as a Fellow of the College of Physicians (FCP) in May 2001, becoming the first specialist physician to have graduated from the Unitra medical programme. The establishment of the first haemodialysis unit at Umtata General Hospital under his leadership in 2000, to cater for all the patients with chronic kidney disease in the Transkei region, was a revolutionary achievement that improved the quality of lives in the region. He rose through the ranks from specialist in Internal Medicine until his appointment as head of the clinical unit in Nephrology in 2008. His appointment as Associate Professor in Internal Medicine was the first such achievement by a graduate from Unitra.

Maduna spent all his academic life serving the rural poor communities in the eastern region of the Eastern Cape, both as a teacher and as a clinician, showing an unwavering passion for clinical care in disadvantaged settings over three decades and setting a shining example for rural-based clinicians to follow. He served as the only specialist physician in private practice for a considerable period, providing healthcare to many in the region. The establishment of the Herolim Private Hospital in Mthatha in 2024 was born out of the need he identified and the entrepreneurial mind he developed while working with his people. His practical bedside teaching style ensured that all his students were able to learn and benefit while clinical care continued.

Maduna's inspiring teaching methods captivated both under-graduate and postgraduate medical students, fostering a love for learning and encouraging excellence in every student he encountered. He had a remarkable ability to simplify complex concepts, making them accessible and engaging, which earned him the admiration and respect of all who had the privilege of learning from him. When the request was received to establish a satellite examination centre for the CMSA in Mthatha in 2008, he dedicated his efforts and time to ensuring its success and continuity, setting up the examination site at the Health Sciences Resource Centre next to Nelson Mandela Academic Hospital and ensuring that candidates from all the

disciplines of medicine were able to write the national postgraduate examinations in their own background, an effort that made a considerable contribution towards the increase in uptake of postgraduate studies in the region. He served as a liaison person between the university and the CMSA during the COVID pandemic, leading a team that ensured successful implementation of the virtual platform for the CMSA examinations in Mthatha.

Throughout his illustrious career, Maduna Mashiyi trained thousands of medical students, imparting not only knowledge but also a deep sense of compassion and dedication to patient care. His impact on the Mthatha community and the Eastern Cape at large was immeasurable, and he was deeply loved and respected by all who had the privilege of knowing him. As a teacher and examiner, he was respected by his peers nationally. He was a regular examiner for the College of Physicians examinations from 2010, and an external examiner for the undergraduate medical programme at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, on numerous occasions. Despite his quiet demeanour, his contributions were very valuable and much appreciated among his peers, especially during the examination process of the College of Physicians.

Maduna's legacy will endure through the many lives he touched – students inspired by his teaching, colleagues motivated by his passion, and patients who benefited from his expertise. He will be profoundly missed, not only for his professional accomplishments but also for his kindness and generosity, and the genuine care he had for everyone around him. His smile and gentle laughter will play in our minds for many years to come. His jokes will always be a source of comfort when we are reminded of him. His exemplary clinical skills and his commitment to the service and upliftment of the rural poor communities in our region will always be a source of pride, and something we will strive to emulate.

Maduna was a loving, caring and stern parent and husband. He instilled the core attributes of hard work, humility and discipline in his children. He is survived by his wife, Pumeza, four children, Siphesihle,

Khala-Khulu, Msuthukazi and Onako, and his two sisters Lulama and Tandeka.

Rest in peace, Maduna, Gubevu, Nokhala, Jiyana, Tiba. Your contributions to medicine and education will continue to inspire generations to come.

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