



Ihhovisi Lokulandela Amaqophelo Ezempilo  
Office of the Health Ombud  
Kantoro ya Mosekaseki wa Maphelo

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## **2<sup>ND</sup> DON MKHWANAZI MEMORIAL LECTURE 31<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2017.**

**Ndonga Don MKhwanazi: An Iconoclastic Shaper**

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**Health Ombud**

## 1. Introduction

The President of the BMF, Mr. Mncane Mthunzi, the BMF Executive, the Mkhwanazi family and clan, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for the honour to be asked to deliver the second Don Mkhwanazi Memorial Lecture. The first was delivered by Dr. Thami Mazwai a year ago. I owe him gratitude for setting the scene and grounding the Memorial lecture. Of course, Dr. Mazwai was much closer in disciplines and the day-to-day activities to what the late Don Mkhwanazi was doing, i.e. the transformation and empowerment of business and empowerment of African people.

I am asked to give this Memorial Lecture at an important and critical period in the history of our national development. We are faced with a i) **leadership crisis**; we are faced with an ii) **economic crisis**; we are faced with an iii) **identity crisis**; we are faced with a iv) **future direction** crisis and finally we are faced with an v) **implementation crisis on the national development and transformation fronts**. We are good at talking but very poor at doing! Dark clouds are hovering around us and so are the ‘vultures or hyenas’. These manifest in the forms of corruption scandals, state capture, mafia state, etc.

In 2012 the country through its national parliament adopted the National Development Plan as its future blueprint strategic roadmap but 5 years down

the road, we are yet to see the national budget prioritised to underpin the 119 recommendations of this important national transformation plan. We have allowed ourselves to be distracted by catchy or sexy slogans such as '**white monopoly capital or radical economic transformation**'. We spend endless time, energy and emotions tearing ourselves apart as a nation instead of focusing on the issues that really matter. These are not my words or descriptions, but the words of many and diverse and caring South Africans who study and understand better about our **status quo**! No doubt most of you would immediately recognize that these were the issues close to Don's heart, the issues he dedicated his life to with passion.

I came to know Don by accident! I say by accident because I was a medical student during the heydays but turbulent early 70s of Saso at University of Natal Black Section and Don and the likes of Ndwandwe Dots Nxumalo and Dupree Vilakazi were students at the University of Zululand, popularly known as Ngoye. This was the era of 'Tap Tap' Makhathini and Anthony 'Blue Jaguar' Morodi. We were young and 'immortal' and believed we could change the world! Fortunately, during our times as young medical student we often came across experienced senior nursing staff who took it upon themselves to mother, tutor, guide or mentor us about the art of medical training. Don's mother was amongst that generation that took interest and care in our training and wellbeing. Many examples of this generation of nurses were to be found in

many other hospitals e.g. McCord, Jane Furse Memorial or St Rita's both in Limpopo. They literally 'mothered' us in true African traditions!

What was special about Don's mother was her pride about her son and how much she loved him. Somehow one at times felt she wished her own son should be here training to become a doctor. Her eyes would always twinkle whenever she spoke about him. At the time, I had never met Don but heard and knew quite a bit about him. It turned out as I would learn much later that Don was also besotted by his mother who he loved dearly. Very few things at the time mattered more than his mother!

Durban is such a small place with a small elite community that it would be inevitable that we would meet. Don was 'larger than life' so to speak; he enjoyed introducing important people at functions but more specifically he loved using people's traditional praises or clan names (direto or isi'thakazelo); he also had a distinctive 'operatic voice and laughter'.

He would occasionally call me just to check how things were shaping at the University or would bounce ideas about transformation. He was always encouraging. Latterly he wanted to register to study for a PhD!! ***Don eschewed any sense of betrayal from anyone*** about the mission of transformation and the empowerment of Africans. As a person in the 'hot seat',

it was always reassuring to know that people out there like him ***'were watching and ready to give guidance and support'***

### **The Memorial: An Historical View by Others**

In preparing for this memorial lecture, I read several articles on and about Don including Dr. Mazwai's tribute. Amongst the many I read, I chose two that I found revealing: one written in 1997 by Mungo Soggot and the second by Zinhle Mapumulo in 2016, when Don passed on. Many of these write-ups gave one insight or another as to who Don was and what he had done. Dr. Mazwai had also touched upon these in his inaugural lecture. I chose these two for their distinct idioms of expression in the writings: one liberal English reticent but skeptical and the other African, complimentary and proud. However, both were truthful and described the truth within these idioms and the circumstances under which they were written. After several readings, I asked if I really knew or understood who Don was? Was there something I am missing? I was not satisfied

So, in order to pay tribute to Don, I adopted a ***humane personal but analytical non-academic approach.***

I therefore asked the following simple questions:

- i) Who was Don Mkhwanazi?

ii) What did Don do?

iii) ***What made Don stand out and succeed in the projects he undertook?***

Having asked these 3 simple questions, I arrived at the title of this tribute i.e ***Ndonga Don Mkhwanazi: An Iconoclastic Shaper.***

In an Opinion piece entitled '**Who is Don Mkhwanazi?**' Mungo Soggot wrote in the Mail & Gaurdian: **14<sup>th</sup> Nov 1997**

**'Don was Born:** April 11<sup>th</sup> 1953 in Durban; Defining characteristics: ***Confident, ambitious***

**Ambition:** "The economic emancipation of my people"

**Favourite car:** He is fond of his Jeep

**Favourite people:** Thabo Mbeki, "a great thinker and a strategist". And his mother, who is "humble and dedicated to the betterment of all people"

**Least favourite people:** No names, but "***what I hate most is betrayal***"

**Likely to say:** "It's all for the good of black empowerment"

**Least likely to say:** "Let me just check that with the relevant authorities"

The irony is that his most sensational effort in that direction has been the enrichment of Liberia's former finance minister, who emerged this week as one of the West African country's most notorious rogues.

Mkhwanazi, the man at the centre of the controversy surrounding the appointment of Emanuel Shaw II to a R3-million a year state job, took the stand this week at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's hearings into business's contribution to apartheid. As one of South Africa's foremost black empowerment gurus, Mkhwanazi was naturally not appearing to confess, but rather attended in his capacity as chair of the anti-apartheid debt committee.

It was, nevertheless, not the ideal week for Mkhwanazi to pay a visit to the truth body. For Mkhwanazi's only other public statements this week have been aimed at explaining his bizarre decision to appoint Shaw chief adviser to South Africa's state-run oil company.

Mkhwanazi's chairmanship of the company is one of a string of posts he holds as a leading light in South Africa's black business community. He chairs at least 10 other corporations, and sits on many other black empowerment and business organisations.

Mkhwanazi's family wanted him to become a doctor, but he says he nursed a passion for the law. In the end, however, he pursued a bachelor in business administration at the University of Zululand. He does not have any post-graduate qualifications, but his curriculum vitae states that he completed "90% of an MBA" at Wits Business School.

It also states that in 1992 he was “humbled, but declined a nomination by the University of Zululand students to become a candidate for the university rectorship and vice-chancellor position”.

The Mail & Guardian reported last week that, wearing his hat as chair of the state oil company, Mkhwanazi gave Shaw the job in July without going through a public tender and without the imprimatur of the Minister of Minerals and Energy, Penuell Maduna.

Mkhwanazi, who has impeccable African National Congress connections, also said he introduced Shaw to the liberation movement in 1992, effectively launching Shaw’s lucrative South African career.

Mkhwanazi has no experience in the vastly complicated, highly regulated South African oil industry, at the centre of which lies the operation he runs, the Central Energy Fund. His staff is predominantly white and male, inescapably tinged by the sanctions- busting operations it carried out on behalf of the apartheid government.

With this in mind, one can understand how Shaw could have appeared as a refreshing antidote to this white, National Party edifice.

With his eye on so many balls, Mkhwanazi has devoted little time to the Central Energy Fund since taking over the chair in March. He briefed Parliament on the company for the first-time last week, fighting off with boisterous charm any suggestion that he had neglected his duty to report to Parliament.

He is frequently abroad - either on his own business trips or as part of government delegations - and has developed a reputation for being South Africa's "Mr. Malaysia" - after striking a number of important deals with the Asian country. All of which makes it easy to see why one of the few criticisms openly levelled at Mkhwanazi is that he is far too overstretched.

After leaving university, Mkhwanazi worked in several South African companies for about 12 years, reaching senior executive positions which were the preserve of whites, before going on to team up with Dr Nthato Motlana to found South Africa's pre- eminent black empowerment company Method, now called New Africa Investments Limited.

His main focus, however, is his National Empowerment Trust Investment Fund over which he also consulted with Shaw.

While he developed his business empire Mkhwanazi nurtured his links with the ANC, becoming the movement's senior economic adviser in 1990. He worked closely with Thabo Mbeki on international business relations until 1993.

Mkhwanazi also co-chairs the finance and investment working group of the USA/SA Business Development Committee, part of the team set up to promote trade between the United States and South Africa by Mbeki and his counterpart Al Gore.

Mkhwanazi clearly has substantial power within the ANC. Although Maduna's office - and perhaps the minister himself - complained about the appointment

of Shaw, probably after receiving advice from the National Intelligence Agency, ***Mkhwanazi stood his ground.***

It may reflect the confidence of a man who wields more power in the government than is generally appreciated’.

**In ‘Don Mkhwanazi – A giant of BEE has fallen’** *Zinhle Mapumulo*

2016-07-03 15:00 wrote in City Press

‘A major champion for ***radical economic transformation*** has been lost, **President Jacob Zuma** said on Saturday, commenting on the death of businessman Don Mkhwanazi.

The Presidency, in a statement, said Zuma was shocked and saddened at the entrepreneur's passing. Mkhwanazi reportedly died of a heart attack on Friday.

The Presidency said Mkhwanazi played a critical role in the pursuit of black economic empowerment and the ‘***struggle for the deracialisation of the ownership and control of the South African economy***’.

"Mr. Mkhwanazi was a ***pioneer of black economic empowerment*** and a role model for many young black entrepreneurs. He served in various capacities advancing economic empowerment,’ the Presidency said.

Many referred to him as the godfather of BEE. Others knew him as an ally of President Jacob Zuma’s. To many black business people, Don Mkhwanazi

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was a business mentor who never compromised on business principles.

Businessman and former president of the Durban Chamber of Commerce, Moses Tembe, who was with Mkhwanazi moments before he died, said his death still felt unreal.

“One moment, he was chatting as usual and the next he was gone,” he said.

**Sandile Zungu**, vice-president of the Black Business Council, described Mkhwanazi as “very loyal, courageous and fearless. He was principled to the core on issues he believed in and was ready to die for those issues.

“His commitment to BEE was impeccable. He was a person who stood for BEE when it was least fashionable to do so,” he said.

**Mzwanele Manyi alias Jimmy Manyi**, former president of the Black Management Forum (BMF) and president of the Progressive Professionals Forum, recalled how Mkhwanazi, also a founder of the BMF, used to say he was raising corporate guerillas who would transform the corporate world.

“I would call him in the middle of the night asking him for advice, and he would gladly assist. He always advised me to be principled and true to the call [entrepreneurship],” Manyi said.

**Telkom CEO Siphon Maseko** echoed the same sentiments, saying a fearless

black business giant had fallen.

“When others went with the flow, Don dared to be different and stood for what he believed in,” Maseko said.

Apart from being the pioneer of BEE and its implementation before it became government policy, he started the National Empowerment Trust in 1992, founded the BMF and was the chairperson of the anti-apartheid debt committee that made presentations to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 1997. His critics cited his close relationship with Zuma as the reason for this good fortune.

Mkhwanazi had strong ANC links and helped form the Friends of Jacob Zuma Trust. Earlier this year, Mkhwanazi and other businessmen offered to help Zuma repay the debt he owes on Nkandla.

Mkhwanazi is survived by his family, clan and five children.

**iii) What made Don stand out and succeed in the projects he undertook?**

a) Firstly, Don was a **leader** of **distinction**, with vision, courage and integrity. He was second to none and was very much aware of this. He fell

more in the category of **shapers** as compared to the **coordinators** and the **plants** in the Meredith Belbin Team Role analysis;

### a) SHAPERS

**Strengths:** Challenging, dynamic, thrives on pressure. Have the drive and courage to overcome obstacles. They ***provide the necessary drive to ensure that the team keeps moving and does not lose focus or momentum.***

**Allowable weaknesses:** Can be prone to provocation, and may sometimes offend people's feelings.

**Don't be surprised to find that:** They could risk becoming aggressive and bad-humoured in their attempts to get things done.

### b) PLANTS on the other hand;

Tends to be highly creative and good at solving problems in unconventional ways.

**Strengths:** Creative, imaginative, free-thinking, generates ideas and solves difficult problems.

**Allowable weaknesses:** Might ignore incidentals, and may be too preoccupied to communicate effectively.

**Don't be surprised to find that:** They could be absent-minded or forgetful.

### c) CO-ORDINATORS

Needed to focus on the team's objectives, draw out team members and delegate work appropriately.

**Strengths:** Mature, confident, identifies talent. Clarifies goals.

**Allowable weaknesses:** Can be seen as manipulative and might offload their own share of the work.

**Don't be surprised to find that:** They might over-delegate, leaving themselves little work to do.

- b) Secondly, Don was also more importantly an **iconoclast**; a person who attacks cherished beliefs or institutions. A skeptic a destroyer of images often used in religious worship, in particular
- c) Finally, Don had a '**killer instinct**' approach; a total believer and confidence in himself, -a complete finisher of projects he undertook-his ideas and his approach and totally unapologetic about these. He understood individual sovereignty to the core and what being master of one's destiny more than many meant. Sadly, this is a feature lacking amongst South Africans. *We are so well colonized!* The late Don had liberated himself from the shackles of this ailment

Here below are 5 examples of **iconoclasts**:

1. **Imam Khomeini** - **The Man Who Changed The World | Iran & The West**

**Ayatollah Khomeini**, was an Iranian Shia Muslim religious leader, philosopher, revolutionary, and politician. He was the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the leader of the 1979 Iranian Revolution that saw the overthrow of the Pahlavi monarchy and Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the last Shah of Iran. Following the

revolution, Khomeini became the country's [Supreme Leader](#), a position created in the [constitution](#) of the Islamic Republic as the highest-ranking political and religious authority of the nation, which he held until his death. Khomeini was a [Marjah](#) ("source of emulation") in [Twelver Shia](#) Islam, a [Mujtahid](#) or [faqih](#) (an expert in [Islamic law](#)) and author of more than 40 books, but he is primarily known for his political activities. He spent more than 15 years in exile for his opposition to the last Shah. In his writings and preachings he expanded the theory of [velayat-e faqih](#), the "Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist (clerical authority)", to include [theocratic political rule by Islamic jurists](#).

This principle (though not known to the wider public before the revolution), was appended to the new Iranian constitution after being put to a referendum. According to [New York Times](#), Khomeini called *democracy the equivalent of prostitution*.

**The *father* and founder of modern Islamic Republic of Iran**

**Famous Quote**

***We are not afraid of economic sanctions or military intervention. What we are afraid of is Western universities.***

## **2. Fidel Castro**

***The *father* and founder of the Cuban Revolution***

**Quotes**

*A revolution is a struggle to the death between the future and the past.  
They talk about the failure of socialism but where is the success of  
capitalism in Africa, Asia and Latin America?  
I find capitalism repugnant. It is filthy, it is gross, it is alienating...  
because it causes war, hypocrisy and competition.  
Every country must be absolutely free to adopt the type of economic,  
political and social system that it considers convenient. – **Fidel Castro***

### 3. Steven Bantu Biko or Kwame Nkrumah

**Bantu Stephen Biko** (18 December 1946 – 12 September 1977) was a South African [anti-apartheid](#) activist and philosopher. Ideologically an [African nationalist](#) and [African socialist](#), he was at the forefront of a grassroots anti-apartheid campaign known as the [Black Consciousness Movement](#) during the late 1960s and 1970s. His ideas were articulated in a series of articles published under the pseudonym of **Frank Talk**.

Biko is regarded as the **father** of Black Consciousness and a [political martyr](#).

#### Quotes

*‘The most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed’.*

*'Being black is not a matter of pigmentation - being black is a reflection of a mental attitude'.*

*'Black Consciousness is an attitude of the mind and a way of life, the most positive call to emanate from the black world for a long time'.*

#### **4. Kwame Nkrumah**

Kwame Nkrumah PC led Ghana to independence from Britain in 1957 and served as its first prime minister and president.

He is regarded as the **father** of Pan-Africanism

#### **Quotes**

*We face neither East nor West: we face forward.*

*The best way of learning to be an independent sovereign state is to be an independent sovereign state.*

*Freedom is not something that one people can bestow on another as a gift.*

*They claim it as their own and none can keep it from them.*

#### **5. Albert Einstein**

Albert Einstein was a German-born theoretical physicist. Einstein developed the theory of relativity, one of the two pillars of modern physics. Einstein's work is also known for its influence on the philosophy of science.

He is the **father** of modern physics

### **Quotes**

*Imagination is more important than knowledge.*

*The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing.*

*Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new.*

6. **Don Ndonga Mkhwanazi** is the **pioneer and godfather** of BEE. His works live in most of our daily activities as we continue to define our own destiny. His legacy is assured

All these examples of iconoclastic individuals were people who were able to **see or identify simplicity** in a complex world; were able to **identify invisible but common stories** and tell them so **simply** that these stories inspired generations, continue to inspire and gave us hope as we struggle to transform and map new destinies in the worlds in which we live for the better.

These are what made Don so very special in us and in our history

Thank you

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