

# OBITUARY

## Professor Lungile Pepeta



The Council of the College of Paediatricians of South Africa is sad to record the passing of Prof. Lungile Pepeta from complications of SARS-CoV-2 infection. He was a gentle-hearted giant of South African paediatrics, an inspirational leader and a formidable mentor.

Lungile was raised in Bizana in the Eastern Cape, the second born of Nondyebo Pepeta, and matriculated from Bizana Village High School in 1991. He joined the Faculty of Health Sciences of the University of Transkei (now Walter Sisulu University) in 1992 and graduated with an MB ChB in 1997, obtaining his Diploma in Child Health in 1999. He then went on to specialise in paediatrics at

the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban and obtained the Fellowship of the College of Paediatricians in 2003. After working for a time in Queenstown, he joined Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital and the University of the Witwatersrand to pursue his training in paediatric cardiology, which he completed in 2008.

Lungile returned to Port Elizabeth to start a paediatric cardiology unit at Dora Nginza Regional Hospital, where he trained many paediatricians and four paediatric cardiologists. His commitment to public health and his ability to inspire and lead were leant on heavily in the years that followed. He went on to become Head of the Department of Paediatrics in 2010, and then served as acting Clinical Governance manager of Dora Nginza several years later. In 2016 he was appointed as an Associate Professor of Paediatrics at Walter Sisulu University, and he was finally appointed Executive Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at Nelson Mandela University (NMU) in 2017.

In all these roles Lungile made a massive contribution to building paediatric education and paediatric services in the province, all the while touching individual hearts. He served as Chair and President of the Paediatric Cardiac Society of South Africa, and was admitted as an International Fellow of the Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions in 2014. He served on the Medical and Dental Board of the Health Professions Council of South

Africa, and was recently appointed by the Minister of Health to serve as Chair of the Council of Medical Schemes. He was also a member of the Eastern Cape Premier's advisory committee on COVID-19.

We will remember Lungile as an educator who served the College with distinction as an examiner and moderator, and also as the mentor of countless young paediatricians in training. He took that commitment and experience to NMU, so to lose him just as NMU was establishing a transformative MB ChB degree is a further blow. Even in his passing he continues to unite us. Our community celebrates him as a larger-than-life figure who despite his achievements remained absolutely approachable. We marvelled at the effortless way in which he brought people together, supported colleagues who needed his help, and mentored junior doctors. We will be the poorer without his gentle heart and wonderful sense of humour.

Lungile leaves his wife Nolvuyoyo, who is a general practitioner in Port Elizabeth, and his children, Kungawo and Lungaka. The College extends its deepest sympathy to the family at this time.

He will be sorely missed and long remembered. His spirit lives on in his legacy.

**Alan Davidson, Refiloe Masekela**

*For the Council of the College of  
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