

Bongani Mawethu Mayosi

Professor Bongani Mayosi was the preeminent cardiologist in Africa, known by many for his visionary, altruistic, and collaborative approach to dealing with the continent's fundamental health issues. On 27 July 2018, he died by suicide, following a diagnosis of depression. His enduring legacy will be one of research excellence, academic development, and the transforming effect he had on individual lives, institutions, and countries, particularly on the African continent.

Bongani Mayosi was born on 28 January 1967 in Umthatha, South Africa, the second son of Dr George Mayosi and Mrs Nontle Mayosi. He completed high school, passing six subjects with distinction, aged 15. His first two degrees were a BMedSci completed in 1986 and concurrently an MBChB in 1989, at the University of Natal, South Africa, both obtained *cum laude* and at the top of his class. He was a medical intern at Livingstone Hospital, Port Elizabeth. Moving to Cape Town the following year, he worked at Groote Schuur Hospital (GSH) and the University of Cape Town (UCT). Within 3 years, he had been admitted to the Fellowship of the College of Physicians of South Africa. Immediately after, he was awarded the prestigious Oxford Nuffield Medical Scholarship, allowing him to read for a DPhil in Cardiovascular Medicine at the University of Oxford, UK. He returned home to complete his clinical training in cardiology at GSH and UCT. He was appointed as the 7th Chair and Head of the Department of Medicine at UCT and GSH in 2006, at the age of only 38 years. Following an illustrious tenure, during which he transformed the Department of Medicine, growing it to be the largest and leading medicine department on the African continent, he was appointed as the dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at UCT and occupied this position until his untimely death.

His research focused on cardiomyopathy, heart failure, rheumatic heart disease (RHD), tuberculous pericarditis, HIV-associated heart

disease, rare genetic disorders among Africans, and strengthening of health-care systems in South Africa and the African continent. He was the doyen of cardiomyopathy, RHD, and pericardial disease in Africa and clarified the clinical profile, epidemiology, and genetic basis of these conditions. He discovered many novel genes that cause dilated cardiomyopathy, hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, arrhythmogenic cardiomyopathy, coronary artery disease, and hypertension. His cardiogenetics laboratory was leading unique studies of the genetics of RHD and congenital heart disease in Africa. He provided the most complete investigation of the contemporaneous causes, clinical profile, and optimal approaches to management of heart failure among Africans. He advanced our understanding of the biology of RHD, the role of screening, and the use of a strategy of syndromic treatment of pharyngitis. His research has influenced policy and guidelines on the management of this disease globally, which have been adopted by the African Union, the World Heart Federation, the World Health Organization, and the World Health Assembly. Through his investigation of tuberculous pericarditis, he clarified the appropriate diagnostic strategy and role of adjunctive steroids in management. This breakthrough led to the recommendation for the selective use of adjunctive steroids in individuals without HIV infection, resulting in the revision of clinical practice guidelines for tuberculous pericarditis.

Although these contributions will influence future generations, I believe that Bongani's life will be remembered most for the relationships he built. He made friends everywhere he went. He recognized potential and invested substantially in the development of human capability. He developed research capacity and infrastructure on the African continent.

His professional achievements and accolades are too many to mention and include South Africa's highest honour, the Order of Mapungubwe, in 2009 and an A-rating by



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the National Research Foundation. He was a member of the Academy of Science of South Africa and president of the College of Physicians of South Africa, and in 2017 he was elected to the US National Academy of Medicine. Bongani was a long-serving member of *Nature Reviews Cardiology's* Advisory Board and was instrumental in fostering a working relationship between the journal and the Pan-African Society of Cardiology, of which he served as president.

Bongani's character was one of outstanding integrity, humility, intelligence, and passion for the pursuit of knowledge. He will be remembered as the consummate professional and an exemplary leader. He imagined an Africa capable of driving its own agenda, using science to improve the health of its nations. He will be remembered for his love of the UCT students and his unwavering belief in the potential of others, for his excellence in research and translation of that research into work with a meaningful effect, and for his absolute love of his family. He was a devoted husband and father and never missed an opportunity to share how much his family meant to him. He spoke of the gratitude he had for the support of his wife and the love of his daughters, whom he referred to as his pride and joy.

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