

Pius Langa

Chief Justice Langa is an inspirational jurist who is the first African Chief Justice of South Africa. He rose from humble beginnings as a worker in a shirt factory, to a court interpreter and messenger; subsequently a prosecutor and magistrate and a Judge of the Constitutional Court. During his legal career he served the cause of the larger marginalised population and appeared in numerous political trials. Throughout this period he sought justice for his people.



He has been awarded honorary Doctor of Laws degrees by the University of Zululand, the University of the Western Cape and the University of Cape Town. In April and May 2006 he received further honorary doctorates from the University of South Africa and the Northeastern University in Boston, USA respectively. In 1998 he was appointed honorary professor in the Department of Procedural and criminal Law at the University of Natal and subsequently Chancellor of this University. He has served as the Distinguished Visiting Professor at the Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, USA. Chief Justice Langa has also served on the boards of and as a trustee of various legal institutions and was centrally involved in founding the South African Legal Defence Fund to pay for legal assistance for those accused of crimes under apartheid laws. He chaired the Langa Commission investigation into Lesotho elections on behalf of the Southern African Development and Economic Community. In 2000 he was appointed Commonwealth Special Envoy to assist the Fiji Islands return to democracy. He has participated in Constitutional Review Commissions in Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe, Rwanda and Tanzania.

Chief Justice Langa has always been involved in attempts to improve the quality of life of his fellow South Africans. He continues to assist civic organisations, townships residents association and youth and recreational groups.

In an extremely competitive profession, his rise from humble beginnings in apartheid in South Africa to the Chief Justice of a free South Africa is truly remarkable and bears testimony to a courageous and indefatigable personality.