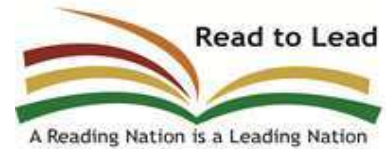




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**05 January 2021**

## **THOMPSON DESCRIBED AS MORE THAN JUST A UNION LEADER, HIS PASSING A SAD LOSS TO THE BASIC EDUCATION SECTOR**

The Minister of Basic Education, Mrs Angie Motshekga, has described the late Allen Thompson as more than just a president of a teacher union.

The President and the long-serving national office-bearer of the National Teachers' Union (NATU), succumbed to Covid-19 related complications.

Upon receiving the news of Mr Thompson's passing, Minister Motshekga expressed her shock and sadness. She conveyed her condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of Mr Thompson who had impacted many people through the work he was doing. Mr Thompson was a fearless leader who made a huge contribution to the sector.

"In October I shared a stage with him in Newcastle at a NATU ceremony. That event will remain forever etched in my mind. Amongst others they had families of their members who had perished from COVID 19 and a moving ceremony indeed. Thompson gave of his time, talent and soul. I shared a lot of ideas with him on different matters with matric rewrite as the latest matter I shared views with him on. With Thompson we had a scholar and a patriot," said Minister Motshekga.

The sector will miss him dearly as a leader who truly put the interest of the learners and teachers when engaging on matters affecting basic education.

Deputy Minister, Dr Reginah Mhaule, said: "His passing is a really a sad loss especially because he was young and I believe he had a long life ahead of him. He still had a lot to contribute," she said.

Dr Mhaule has, on behalf of the Department and the sector, conveyed her sincere and heartfelt condolences to Mr Thompson's family, friends, the leadership and colleagues of NATU and other structures he served in. May his soul rest in peace.

The Deputy Minister has urged South Africans to continue to strictly adhere to the health and safety protocols in order to prevent and manage the spread of COVID-19 especially in social settings such as funerals, parties and to avoid mass gatherings.

### **Media Enquiries:**

**Elijah Mhlanga** - Head of Communication: 083 580 8275 | **Hope Mokgathe** - Spokesperson to Minister: 079 817 0427

**Terence Khala** - Media Liason Officer: 081 758 1546



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She reminded everybody to always wear a mask, sanitize, wash hands and observe social distancing at all times.

“Compliance is the cheapest way to stay safe; so please play your part and save your life and those around you,” she said.

**ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY OF BASIC EDUCATION**

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