

Tributes pour in for Botman

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By SAPA



Professor Russel Botman

Professor Russel Botman, Rector and Vice-Chancellor of Stellenbosch University, was hailed as an inspiration following news of his death.

The university said in a statement that Botman died in his sleep at his home in Stellenbosch yesterday.

The University of the Witwatersrand praised Botman for his contribution to education and South African society.

“Professor Botman has been an influential and inspiring figure in the higher education landscape, leading one of our top universities through important periods of growth and transition,” it said in a statement.

“Professor Botman has of course also played a much wider role on the South African stage, giving far-sighted leadership to our society in transition and playing an important role in addressing social fabric issues.”

Archbishop Thabo Makgoba praised Botman for the special concern he showed for poor and disadvantaged students, creating an enabling environment for them to succeed.

“Russell's contribution, especially within the ecumenical movement, will be remembered and hopefully recorded,” he said in a statement.

“May this great South African, a husband, a preacher, teacher, an ecumenist and a leader, rest in peace.”

Democratic Alliance leader Helen Zille said in a statement that Botman enriched the lives of many South Africans and would be sorely missed.

“In my encounters with Professor Botman, I was always encouraged to see that South Africa had dedicated men and women committed to seeing our education centers constantly improved and developed.”

AfriForum Youth chairman Henk Maree said: “Prof Botman dedicated his life to the academics and the promotion of quality tertiary education in the country.”

Earlier, Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu said Botman's death was a loss to educational institutions.

“He demonstrated that black people can manage complex educational institutions splendidly and we were very proud of him,” Tutu said.

He described Botman as a precocious and courageous young church leader who emerged in the struggle against apartheid to stir up older church leaders.

The municipality of Stellenbosch added its tribute to Botman.

“Botman had so much more to offer in terms of leadership, a vision for promoting justice, transformation and reconciliation.

“The world has been left poorer because of his death,” municipal spokesman Vernon Bowers said.

The municipality would continue to promote Botman's ideals.

“The university, Stellenbosch, South Africa and the world lost a leader who fought for justice, transformation and reconciliation since his days as a student at the University of the Western Cape,” Bowers said.

All conveyed their condolences to Botman's family and friends.

The SABC reported that Botman joined Stellenbosch University in 2000 as a professor in the department of practical theology and missiology. In 2002 he was appointed Vice-Rector.

He was an internationally-known theologian who advised the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in Geneva on several topics.

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<http://www.iol.co.za/capetimes/tributes-pour-in-for-botman-1.1711167#.VCE0lxacxfg>