



sport, arts & culture

Department:  
Sport, Arts and Culture  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



an agency of the  
Department of Sport, Arts and Culture



UNIVERSITY OF  
KWAZULU-NATAL™  
INYUVESI  
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**28 November 2023**

## **Customary Law and the SA Legal System focus at the Albert Luthuli Annual Lecture to be delivered by Prof Thandabantu Nhlapo on 09 December 2023**

The 17th Albert Luthuli Memorial Lecture will be delivered by Prof Thandabantu Nhlapo. This year's lecture theme will focus on 'Customary Law and SA Legal System: A Role for the Courts, the Legislature and Civil Society'. The lecture takes place on **Saturday, 09 December 2023 from 11:30 - 14:00** at the University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN), Westville Campus.

Prof Nhlapo is former Glasgow University Albert Luthuli Scholarship recipient in 1974, a former Commissioner of the Nhlapo Commission on traditional leadership, and the former Deputy Vice Chancellor of UCT. The lecture focuses on 'customary law under the constitution of the new South Africa, which leaders and patriots of Inkosi Albert Luthuli's generation worked so hard for'.

How has South Africa fared in embedding customary law in the country's legal system in pursuit of Inkosi Albert Luthuli's vision of a free and diverse society?

This year's Luthuli Lecture provides an opportunity to deepen public understanding of the 'challenges and dynamics of maintaining a unified legal system based on non-identical cultural foundations'.



**Prof. Thandabantu Nhlapo**

The Memorial Lecture will be a hybrid event and will provide for physical and virtual attendance on the Luthuli Museum and the UKZN social media platforms.

For ENQUIRIES, please contact: Zinhle Nyembe: [profficer@luthulimuseum.org.za](mailto:profficer@luthulimuseum.org.za) or Pam Adams: [adamsp@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:adamsp@ukzn.ac.za) . For more information visit the Luthuli Museum website on: [www.luthulimuseum.org.za](http://www.luthulimuseum.org.za)



## **About the Chief Albert Luthuli Memorial Lecture**

The objective of the Memorial Lecture is to promote the principles and values of Chief Albert Luthuli, namely peace, human rights, justice, and the coexistence of people in harmony irrespective of race, colour, or creed. The Lecture provides a platform for public awareness, critical debate, and action on issues important to society.

Previous keynote speakers at the Lecture have included; the former Zambian President K Kaunda; the former Mozambican President Joachim Chissano; the former President of the Republic of South Africa, Mr Jacob Zuma; the former Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court, Mr Sandile Ngcobo; the former Speaker of the National Assembly, Dr Frene Ginwala; Minister N Mthethwa, MP; Dr Brigalia Bam, former Chairperson of the RSA Independent Electoral Commission and Dr Ishmael Noko, former Secretary-General of the Lutheran World Federation and the former Minister in the Presidency, Mr Jeff Radebe; poet and writer, Dr Wally Serote and the RSA Public Protector, Advocate Busisiwe Mkhwebane; the former Botswana President, Mr Festus Mogae; the Chief Justice of the Republic of South Africa, Mr Mogoeng Mogoeng, and Ms Samia Ayya Nkrumah, the daughter of Ghana's first President, Mr Kwame Nkrumah, Ms Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the UN Undersecretary and Executive Director of UN Women and the former President of the Republic of South Africa and Chancellor of UNISA Mr Thabo Mbeki, Dr Pali Lehohla, South Africa's former Statistician General.

## **About the Speaker**

Professor Thandabantu Nhlapo retired as Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the University of Cape Town in September 2014. This was after 10 years as a senior university administrator, in an academic career spanning over three decades of research, writing, teaching, public service and social activism. He was appointed by President Mbeki to chair the Commission on Traditional Leadership Disputes and Claims (which came to be known as the Nhlapo Commission), with a mandate to investigate disputes and claims arising in the traditional leadership sector.

From 2000 to 2004, he held the position of Deputy Chief of Mission and Deputy Ambassador at the Embassy of South Africa in Washington D.C. Before his diplomatic posting, Thandabantu was appointed by President Mandela in 1996 as a full-time Commissioner on the South African Law Reform Commission. As Chair of the Project Committee on Customary Law, he was instrumental in the development of significant legislation in family law, including the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act, which was passed by Parliament in 1998.

Prof. Thandabantu Nhlapo was with the Department of Private Law, University of Cape Town from 1990 to 1995 where he advanced from Senior Lecturer to Professor and its Head. After South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994, he participated in the constitution-making process as Convenor of the Technical Committee on Traditional Leaders, a committee of experts who advised the Constitutional Assembly on all matters relating to traditional leadership and to customary law. Their work contributed to Chapter 12 of the present Constitution.

Professor Nhlapo continues his work in customary law where his research interests include issues of gender, women's human rights in family law, traditional values and modern constitutions, law reform, and cultural diversity under the South African constitution. He has written and spoken widely on these topics, which continue to be the basis of his public participation.