Obituary for Ben Magubane by his daughter, Zine Magubane

Bernard Makhosezwe Magubane was born August 26, 1930 on a farm near Colenso in Natal, South Africa to Xhegwana Elliot and Ella Magubane. His family moved to Durban in 1937.

His first opportunity to attend school came at the age of ten, when his parents enrolled him at Mazenod primary school in Chesterville. In 1949 he obtained his T3 Teaching Certificate and returned to Mazenod as a teacher in 1950. In 1953 he entered the University of Natal and registered for the Sociology honours programme. Two years later, while completing his M.A., he was awarded a scholarship from the Institute of International Education which allowed him to enroll in the PhD program in Sociology at the University of California, Los Angeles. He departed for California on December 21, 1961 where he completed his PhD in 1967. Professor Magubane’s dissertation was on African American Consciousness of Africa and it became the basis for his award winning book, *The Ties That Bind*.

While lecturing at the University of Zambia from 1967-1970 he worked closely with the leadership of the ANC. In 1970 he accepted a faculty position as a professor of Anthropology at the University of Connecticut where he taught for 27 years. During his long career he published *The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa*, the book for which he is best known as well as articles about the political economy of South Africa which appeared in such publications as *Contemporary Sociology, African Studies Review, Journal of Modern African Studies, Critical Anthropology*.

As a committed anti-apartheid activist the Professor founded the Connecticut anti-Apartheid movement that successfully lobbied the state of Connecticut to divest from South Africa. Throughout his stay in the United States he never missed an opportunity to raise the consciousness of the American people and the world at large about the plight of the African masses in South Africa.

After returning to South Africa, Professor Magubane joined the Human Sciences Research Council as a Chief Research Specialist. In September 2000 he was appointed project leader and Director of the South African Democracy Education Trust, a project organization set up to study the political history of South Africa since 1960. The Trust produced ten volumes of *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, a comprehensive history of the country. Amongst his many honours, he was conferred with the Order of the Star by former President Mandela.

He was Chair of the Luthuli Museum in KwaDukuza and advised the Ministry of Arts and Culture on the production of a documentary about Nkosi Luthuli. Professor Magubane served as Trustee for Liliesleaf Farm in Rivonia, a heritage site as well as on the Advisory Council for Freedom Park.

His illustrious career as an academic, historian, sociologist and researcher spanned four decades and had a profound impact on many lives around the world.

He married Thembelihle Kaula in 1952 and they were blessed with four daughters, Gugu, Bongi, Vukani and Zine. Professor Magubane passed on peacefully in his home on 12 April 2013. He is survived by his wife, daughters and ten grandchildren, a brother and sister.

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