

**PROFILE OF
FORMER CHIEF JUSTICE PIUS LANGA
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY, PhD
14/10/2011**

Former Chief Justice Nkondo Langa was born in Bushbuckridge, South Africa on March 25 1939. He is married and blessed with six children. He enjoys walking and jogging, listening to music of various kinds, reading and watching a variety of sports. He is best known as Chief Justice, Deputy Chief Justice, Deputy Judge President and Judge of the Constitutional Court of South Africa.

He holds a degree of B. Juris and LLB from University of South Africa. He was admitted as an Advocate of the Supreme Court of South Africa in June 1977 and practiced at the Natal bar and attained rank of Senior Counsel in January 1994. His work as an advocate reflected the struggle against the apartheid system and thus his clientele included the underprivileged, various civic bodies, trade unions and people charged with political offences under the oppressive apartheid security system.

With the establishment of the Constitutional Court of South Africa in 1994, Justice Langa was appointed together with ten others as the first Judges of the new Court. He became the court's Deputy President in August 1997 and, in November 2001, assumed the position of Deputy Chief Justice of South Africa.

He was appointed as the country's Chief Justice and head of the Constitutional Court with effect from June 2005 until his retirement in October 2009. As Chief Justice, he is the chairperson of the Judicial Service Commission and is also the current chairperson of Southern African Judges Commission, a forum for Chief Justices in the Southern and East Africa. He is also a member of the permanent Court of Arbitration.

He was founder member of the National Democratic Lawyers (NADEL) and served as its president from 1988 until 1994. He has served on the boards and as trustee of various law-related institutions, and was involved in the founding of the South African Legal Defense Fund (SALDEF). He was also the Commissioner of the pre-Constitutional Human Rights Commission (later known as the Human Rights Committee).

Over the years he has organised and/or participated in numerous conferences, workshops and seminars on human rights, justice and other constitutional issues and also delivered speeches on various related topics in South Africa and in many countries abroad.

Mr. Justice Langa played a monumental role in the negotiations leading to transition to the constitutional democracy in 1994. He was the resource person in the work of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) and of the Multi-Party Negotiating Forum. As a member of the Constitutional Committee of the African National Congress and of the Advisory Technical Group during the “Groote Schuur Talks” and Pretoria Talks about Talks”. Justice Langa played a crucial role in the drafting of the Constitution, one which has been universally praised as one of the most progressive constitutions in the world.

On April 22, 2008, former president of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki bestowed upon him the order of the Supreme Counselor of the Baobab: Gold.

On the 14 October 2011, North-West University bestowed on him a Doctor of Philosophy (Honoris Causa) for his distinguished contribution to the crafting of the Constitution, the development of this country’s human rights jurisprudence as a member of the Constitutional Court for over fifteen years and his sterling work in the service of humanity.