



**Media Statement**

**20 September 2007**

**UCT Vice-Chancellor conveys message of condolences to the Corbett family**

In the passing of Justice MM Corbett, we have lost a leader of note and a distinguished UCT graduate of whom we are immensely proud. He embodied integrity and dignity, and was very committed to the fight for equal rights.

Chief Justice Corbett's stature was such that first President FW de Klerk (after consulting Nelson Mandela) asked him to stay on as Chief Justice in 1993, when he was due to retire, and then President Mandela asked him to stay on again until December 1996, to lead SA through its transition. He was awarded the Order of the Baobab (Gold Class) by President Mandela at a State Banquet in December 1996.

He contributed to South Africa in many ways. He was the Western Cape leader of the Torch Commando in its protests against the assault on voters' rights in the 1950's. His speech at the 1979 UCT international human rights conference called boldly, and at risk to his own future career, for a Bill of Rights. He was a member of the UCT Council, who faced down the police, with others, on the Jameson steps.

Justice Corbett received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from UCT in 1982.

On behalf of the UCT community, I extend our heartfelt condolences to Mrs. Peggy Corbett and family. We have lost a visionary who contributed immensely to the democratic transition in South Africa and was a champion of human rights for all. We salute him.

**Professor Njabulo S. Ndebele**  
**Vice-Chancellor and Principal**  
**University of Cape Town**

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