

Date: 13 August 2020

TRIBUTE TO PROFESSOR LUNGILE PEPETA

By Annaline Maasdorp (Prof Pepeta's Executive Assistant)

With four consecutive "*good morning's*", accompanied by a smile addressed to Faculty Administration, Prof swiftly made his way to his office... The jovial "*Good Morning Annaline*" followed by the "*Haai Prof you are late!*" awaited.



Shortly after the banter regarding Prof's outfit of the day, an additional call was to be expected...

"Cleo... How about a cappachino?"

The foundation of Prof's day started with a cappachino, two sweeteners and not too much froth milk. If you could grace him with an upgrade to Chociato, bonus!

The Health Sciences passage, at the Dean's Office is known for its lively office culture filled with laughter and Prof checking in to see how his staff was doing. In the middle of your doorway, you would find Prof with a broad smile asking: *"Are you making yourself useful?"*

With a crisis at hand and tensions high, Prof would without fail comment: *"It is what it is?"* Prof Pepeta's 'cool, calm and collected' approach to any matters was often misinterpreted for nonchalance.

Should you distract him in a moment of deep thought, Prof would respond with a deep *"yes"* accompanied by constant blinking of his eyes. With this response we immediately knew; it was not the time, but being the Dean Prof was, he never denied you a moment. He would make time!

Working with Prof daily, an alternate perspective to what a crisis really is; had his most recent quote *"As is and to be"* serve as a gentle reminder... To breathe.

In between back-to-back meetings, Prof always welcomed a telephonic call. Having concluded, it appears to be a medical doctor's habit; Prof Pepeta fulfilled many tasks at once. With a call on loudspeaker, a quick cup of Rooibos tea and responding to an email simultaneously; this is exactly how Prof's network exceeded the reach of Most's expectation. There was always a moment to advise regarding a procedure.

My Dean, as I fondly referred to Prof, would provide insight into a procedure presently taking place without tool or patient in front of him. This... A sight to witness!

It was a sheer example of his ability to mentor and guide colleagues, as and when his input was requested.

Many days my Dean's schedule did not accommodate even a lunch break. As a result, at the end of the business day, Prof's 'goodbye' was authentic and is fondly remembered:

"Don't call me, I'll call you!"

He will remain forever the giant he was in our thoughts and hearts.
Rest in peace, my beloved Dean.

WILL MISS YOU SO MUCH!!

