

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



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President Hage Geingob's tribute to the Honourable Kosie Pretorius

Over the past several weeks, Namibians have had to deal with the death of many outstanding personalities of Namibian politics, sports and culture.

On July 14, 2017, we were dealt another blow when we learned of the passing of Honourable Jacobus Willem Francois Pretorius, better known as Kosie Pretorius. He was a veteran of the Namibian political spectrum and as someone who played a role in the drafting of the Namibian Constitution, he is one of the founders of independent Namibia.

Since Honourable Pretorius had emerged from the Apartheid era governance architecture, it was no

surprise that initially there was a distrust between him and those of us who had returned from exile, having fought a long and bitter struggle against Apartheid South Africa. However, as fate would have it, I had a chance to speak to him, shortly before Independence, at a function organized at the Canadian Ambassador's Residence.

It was during this encounter that we had "agreed to disagree", but agreed to hold hands as Namibians from different persuasion. I was impressed by his cool-tempered demeanor and his gentlemanly disposition. His outstanding personal qualities were revealed again when we travelled to London to meet the Queen. I was impressed by the respect he showed, especially to the female members of the delegation, irrespective of their race or ethnicity. I remarked that I was surprised that such a gentleman could have fit into the pre-independence Apartheid architecture.

Although he was a respectful individual, he was also steadfast in his views and I recall during the discussions we had while drafting the constitution he held constant reservation, which I simply remarked that I had taken note of. So every paragraph I will just enter his reservation.

After independence, Honourable Pretorius played his role in contributing to Namibia's democracy, as a Member of Parliament. He always asked well researched questions and showed the utmost respect to whoever he was posing the question to. Members of the SWAPO Party would carry out research in order to do justice to his questions by providing detailed answers. His questions were never aimed at political points scoring but were genuinely aimed at seeking clarity on critical issues of national concern.

Although he came from a divided society, his intrinsic character allowed him to become a unifier in an independent Namibia.

Our thoughts go out to his family who have lost a grandfather, father, uncle, husband and brother. Mathew 5:4 reads as follows, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.” In this time of sorrow, may the Lord provide comfort to all those who mourn the passing of Honourable Kosie Pretorius.

May his soul rest in eternal peace.