

# ADVOCATE HISHAAM MOHAMED THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE SABFS RECEIVES: UWC CHANCELLOR'S OUTSTANDING ALUMNI AWARD

On 20 October 2015, the University of the Western Cape awarded to distinguished alumni, who have made an outstanding contribution in the categories of Science and Technology, Health Sciences, Law, Women in Leadership and Sports or Sports Education/Administration.



## **Adv Hishaam Mohamed**

Regional Head: Justice and Constitutional Development in the Western Cape

*"Recipient of the 2015 UWC Chancellor's Outstanding Alumni Award in the category of Law"*



### **An extract of the speech delivered by Adv Mohamed:**

Chancellor, the most reverend Dr.Thabo Makgoba, Rector & Vice-Chancellor, Professor Tyrone Pretorius, Fellow Alumni, friends and comrades.

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

It is indeed an honour to be back at UWC as a recipient of the 2015 Alumnus Award in the category of Law. I am deeply humbled by this gesture. In receiving this award tonight I ask myself what is it about UWC that Commands one into action to assist in the plight of the poorest of the poor.

It can be argued that UWC more so - better than any other university - understands our roots and inspires us all to greatness. As a young man having come from Lotus River, a suburb affected by drugs, alcohol abuse and gangsterism – I yearned to study law. Particularly having had to endure the might of the apartheid police brutality and the sickening smell of teargas during the 1980s. Back then we were inspired and driven by a need for freedom.

UWC provided me with the space to fulfill that lifelong dream– and fight the cause from a legal footing. It was truly the impact and great wisdom provided by great stalwarts like the late Rector and Vice Chancellor Prof Jakes Gerwel who guided and supported us in showing our dissatisfaction against oppression, with his clear vision for non-racialism.

I have also been privileged in having had the guidance from stalwarts - such as Prof Kader Asmal and Dullah Omar who crafted our Constitution from right here, changing our lives and that of our children.

So, when I ask myself what is it about UWC that inspires so many - I can only come to the conclusion that it was the camaraderie shared between students irrespective of race,

background, colour or creed, brought together under the banner of this Home of the Left called UWC. UWC commanded us into action to make a difference in people's lives – a command that was propelled by values deeply rooted in human rights and inculcated by this alma mater.

Since graduating – I've been privileged to apply my trade in the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development where I am currently serving. I have been blessed with a dynamic team of great people who are far stronger than me and with whom I have been working for the past 20 years. Today I want to thank them for their immense contribution in bringing justice services to the most vulnerable in our society and for ensuring that our people experience and enjoy the benefits of the rights as entrenched in our constitution.

Then there are the community activists, who sacrifice their own time to assist me to provide free legal advice to those who cannot afford it from the Southern Suburbs Legal Advice Centre in Lotus River.

But most importantly – before I get myself in trouble at home – of the many who deserves my thanks for this award – topping the list would be my family, in particular my understanding wife, Rachmat who is here tonight, a fellow alumni from UWC, and my children Haneem and Imraan who are also present this evening. Rachmat, your patience, love, encouragement and tolerance warrant you to share in this Award.

I want to leave you with the following –“It is through cooperation, Transparency, Accountability, Trust, exercising public power to the benefit of public good only and ethical dealing in business, by labour, by government, by our people generally that we can build this nation.

Thank you for this award; it gives me the assurance and the affirmation that we are making a difference in the lives of ordinary citizens.



***The UWC Chancellor's Outstanding Alumni Awards are presented to those UWC alumni who have made outstanding contributions in their fields of study and towards nation-building in South Africa. Established in 2014, the Chancellor's Outstanding Alumni Awards recognised eight alumni who became Rectors and Vice-Chancellors of Universities in South Africa. Collectively, they have made a significant contribution to the higher education landscape.***