

**THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
(HONORIS CAUSA)**

**(POSTHUMOUSLY)**

**DR ELIJAH BARAYI**

ELIJAH BARAYI WAS BORN ON 15 JUNE 1930 IN CRADOCK, EASTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA. HE ATTENDED LWANA PRIMARY SCHOOL AND COMPLETED HIS JUNIOR CERTIFICATE AT NUWELL HIGH SCHOOL, THEN PROCEEDED TO THE FAMOUS HEALDTOWN INSTITUTE WHERE HE MATRICULATED. HE JOINED THE ANC YOUTH LEAGUE AS A TEENAGER AND DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF AS AN ABLE SPEAKER AND EFFICIENT ORGANISER. DURING THE EARLY 1950S ELIJAH BARAYI WAS ARRESTED FOR HIS PARTICIPATION IN THE DEFIANCE CAMPAIGN.

UPON HIS RELEASE, ELIJAH BARAYI WORKED BRIEFLY FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF NATIVE AFFAIRS BUT RESIGNED ON CONSCIENTIOUS GROUNDS AS HE FELT IT WAS AT THE FOREFRONT OF ADMINISTERING APARTHEID. AS AN ALTERNATIVE PATHWAY, HE HELD A VARIETY OF JOBS UNTIL 1960 WHEN HE LEFT THE EASTERN CAPE TO TAKE UP EMPLOYMENT AS A CLERK AT STATE MINES, BRAKPAN. HE WAS AN ORGANISING SECRETARY FOR THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS AND WAS DETAINED DURING THE 1960 STATE OF EMERGENCY AND HELD FOR SIX MONTHS.

IN MAY 1973, BARAYI MOVED TO CARLETONVILLE AND, IN 1976, BECAME A PERSONNEL ASSISTANT ON THE MINE. IT IS HERE THAT HE EXPERIENCED FIRST-HAND THE CONDITIONS OF MINERS UNDERGROUND. VOCAL AS HE WAS ABOUT THE PERILS, GROSS EXPLOITATION AND ALIENATION OF THE WORKERS FROM THE MINERALS THEY UNEARTHED, HE WAS DULY ELECTED TO THE LIAISON COMMITTEE. FOLLOWING THE REPORT OF THE WIEHAHN COMMISSION IN 1979, BARAYI BECAME ACTIVE IN ESTABLISHING THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT ON THE MINES. IN 1981 HE BECAME A SHAFT STEWARD AT BLYVOORUITZICHT FOR WHAT WAS TO BECOME THE NATIONAL UNION OF MINeworkERS (NUM). HE BECAME NUM VICE PRESIDENT IN 1982.

IN MAY 1985, ELIJAH BARAYI LED 9 000 MINERS AT BLYVOORUITZICHT ON STRIKE IN PROTEST AGAINST THE DISMISSAL OF TWO SHAFT STEWARDS. IT IS AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND IN DECEMBER 1985 AT THE LAUNCH OF THE CONGRESS OF SOUTH AFRICAN TRADE UNIONS (COSATU), THAT BARAYI WAS ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE NEW ORGANISATION, A POSITION HE HELD UNTIL 1991. AT THE LAUNCH OF COSATU HE CALLED FOR THE ABOLITION OF THE PASS LAWS, GIVING THE GOVERNMENT SIX MONTHS TO COMPLY WITH THIS DEMAND BEFORE COSATU EMBARKED ON A PASS BURNING CAMPAIGN. DURING THE SECOND STATE OF EMERGENCY IN 1986, BARAYI WAS DETAINED FOR TWO WEEKS AND RELEASED WITH ORDERS RESTRICTING HIM TO THE DISTRICT OF CARLETONVILLE, IN THE THEN WESTERN TRANSVAAL. HOWEVER, IN 1987 HE WAS BACK ON PUBLIC PLATFORMS MOBILISING WORKERS.

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA RIGHTFULLY RECOGNISES THAT THE LATE ELIJAH BARAYI SPENT HIS ENTIRE LIFE FIGHTING FOR THE RIGHTS OF POOR, EXPLOITED AND MARGINALISED WORKING CLASS MINERS. HE ROSE FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS TO BECOME A LEADER OF SOCIETY AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE MOST POWERFUL TRADE UNION IN THE COUNTRY, COSATU. HE CONSTANTLY FOUGHT AGAINST THE APARTHEID GOVERNMENT AND ITS INHUMANE LAWS. AS A CHAMPION FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE, ELIJAH BARAYI WAS THE UNWAVERING EMBODIMENT OF UNISA'S VISION OF STANDING IN THE SERVICE OF HUMANITY. THE LATE ELIJAH BARAYI'S WORK IN THE LABOUR MOVEMENT REMAINS INSPIRING AND REASSURING, AND CHALLENGES US TO THINK ABOUT OUR PARTICIPATION IN WORK POLITICS AND WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A RESPONSIBLE CITIZEN.

UNISA HAS THE HONOUR OF BEING ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF HISTORY BY RECOGNISING THE MEMORY OF A GIANT IN THE STRUGGLE OF EXPLOITED MINERS AND REAFFIRMING HIS VALUES OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND LABOUR JUSTICE. WE ARE PROUD TO POSTHUMOUSLY AWARD THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (*HONORIS CAUSA*) TO THE LATE ELIJAH BARAYI.