

Judge Edwin Cameron

Constitutional Court Judge Edwin Cameron is regarded around the world as an inspirational figure for his work in human rights activism, championing gay and lesbian equality, and his outspoken stance on HIV/Aids.

Edwin was born in Pretoria in 1953 and finished his schooling at Pretoria Boys High. He was able to study at Stellenbosch University after receiving the Anglo-American Corporation Open Scholarship award, and went on to complete his BA Law degree and Honours in Latin.

His brilliant legal mind truly came to the fore during his studies at Oxford University in 1976, where he obtained a BA in Jurisprudence with first class honours, the Jurisprudence Prize, Bachelor of Civil Law with first class honours, and the Vinerian Scholarship. Not stopping there, Edwin later attained his LLB from the University of South Africa *cum laude* and was awarded the Johannes Voet Medallion for Best Law Graduate.

Cameron practised at the Johannesburg Bar from 1983 to 1994. From 1986 he was a human rights lawyer based at the University of the Witwatersrand's Centre for Applied Legal Studies (CALS), where he was awarded a personal professorship in law. His practice included labour and employment law; defence of ANC fighters charged with treason; conscientious and religious objection; land tenure and forced removals; and gay and lesbian equality. From 1988 he advised the National Union of Mineworkers on AIDS/HIV and helped draft and negotiate the industry's first comprehensive AIDS agreement with the Chamber of Mines.

While at CALS, he drafted the Charter of Rights on AIDS and HIV, co-founded the AIDS Consortium (a national affiliation of non-governmental organizations working in AIDS), which he chaired for its first three years, and founded and was the first director of the AIDS Law Project. He oversaw the gay and lesbian movement's submissions to the Kempton Park negotiating process. This, with other work, helped secure the express inclusion of sexual orientation in the South African Constitution. In September 1994, he was awarded silk (senior counsel status). President Mandela appointed him an acting judge and later a judge of the High Court. In 1999/2000 he served for a year as an Acting Justice at the Constitutional Court. In 2000 he was appointed a Judge of Appeal in the Supreme Court of Appeal. He was appointed a Justice of the Constitutional Court in 2008.

He was appointed as Assistant General Secretary of the Rhodes Trust in Southern Africa and since 2003 became the General Secretary.

Cameron is an accomplished author. He has written many scholarly articles on the judiciary, labour and employment law, as well the law of trusts, AIDS and HIV, and the legal rights of gays and lesbians.