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UNIVEN Alumni NEWS

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ARTICLE ON PAGE 2

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On Photo: Dr Lufuno Mulaudzi

During the Autumn virtual graduation, which was held on 30 April 2021 at the University of Pretoria, Lufuno Mulaudzi received his PhD degree in History. The title of his thesis is 'Historicising the politics of vuhosivhuhulu: The Venda Polity and state formation in South Africa, c.1800s-2020'. It has been a dream come true for Dr Mulaudzi whose love for politics and history begun in high school and endured throughout his undergraduate study period.

UNIVEN ALUMNI NEWS RECENTLY INTERVIEWED HIM THROUGH THE VIRTUAL MEETING WHILE WORKING FROM HOME IN KARENPARK, PRETORIA NORTH IN GAUTENG.

'I am humbled to have been bestowed with a PhD that will help me educate society about politics and history of Vhavenda traditional leadership succession between 1800-2020. It was a big decision to embark on this long walk to study a 200 years old history,' says Dr Mulaudzi on being asked about how he feels about this recent achievement.

Growing up poor did not stop Dr Mulaudzi from furthering his studies. Mulaudzi obtained a BA degree majoring in politics and history in 1997 at the University of Venda. He went on to study at the University of the Western Cape where he obtained a Post Graduate Diploma in Museum and

Heritage Studies in the year 2000. In 2008, he obtained his Masters of Arts (MA) degree in Heritage Studies at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

'My mother passed away when I was five years old and I was left under the care of my grandmother, the late Mrs. Alidzuli Mariba until 1981. It was a struggle for my unemployed grandmother to cope as she was also old. I relocated from Mapakophele to Mudimeli Village to stay with my elder maternal aunt, who took over the maternal responsibilities. I was almost a permanent traveller without a permanent home, sometimes homeless'.

I endure all my hardships and challenges through prayer. God fights my battles. My maternal aunt, Mrs. Sarah Nethavhani, whom I regard as my heroine, taught me to submit to God, respect other people and that one should go after one's dream in life,' says Dr Mulaudzi about his inspiration and heroine.

Mulaudzi is a man of many hats which he wears with diligence, fit for the task and trusted to carry out each mission assigned to him to the latter. He has been involved in student, alumni and workers politics in South Africa over many years.

He cut his leadership teeth in student politics in 1990 at Mudimeli Secondary School where he



served as the first Student Representative Council (SRC) President after the unbanning of political parties earlier that year. When he arrived at Nngweni High School in 1991 where he repeated and passed his matric well, his first task was to organize students to constitute the SRC of which he served on advisory capacity because he was a 'fresher'.

'In my first year of study at the University of Venda, I got involved in student politics working together with other senior student leaders. I failed in all my attempts to serve in the SRC because I was non-aligned with any student movement. However, I completed my studies in 1996.' It was when he was studying at Wits that his student activism was re-ignited and was elected to serve as the Secretary of the African National Congress Youth League on campus.

For over four years, he coordinated and organized alumni from various regions of the province of Gauteng for the re-launch of the University of Venda Gauteng Alumni Chapter. In 2013, it was

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re-launched, and he was elected as the treasurer. Dr Mulaudzi worked at Wanda, Price 'N Pride and Frazer's furnishers, and later had a short stint at AJ Makelaars, all in Louis Trichardt, where he was paid peanuts and sometimes never paid a salary. It was the harsh treatment and poor conditions of service he received during this time which led him to join the politics of the workers in the public service.

He started his public service career in 2006 in the then national Department of Arts and Culture. In the same year, he joined the Public Servants Association of South Africa (PSA) and was later elected as a Shop Steward in absentia.

Dr Mulaudzi earned his place in the trade union movement in South Africa. He has been an embodiment of the plight of the workers as a Shop Steward and board member of the PSA. Through his hard work and anticorruption stance in the Union, Dr Lufuno Mulaudzi was elected as the President of the PSA in 2018. He also serves as the Vice President: Public Sector of the Federation of Trade Unions of South Africa (FEDUSA).

'The PSA is the oldest union in the country, and was founded on the 07th of July 1920. It was formerly known as the Public Servants Association of the Union of South Africa. It was inherently white but opened its membership to all races in 1988. As the President of the Union, I intend growing membership to ensure that we reach 500 000 membership and become the largest union in the public sector. PSA is non-political and is affiliated to FEDUSA, in which I serve as Vice President: Public Sector. Our affiliation to FEDUSA maintains PSA political independence,' says Dr Mulaudzi about the history and future of the PSA.

'When I am not in the boardroom, I enjoy watching tennis, rugby and soccer. I played soccer during my younger days and my favourite club in the PSL is Kaizer Chiefs. I also have a soft spot for Black Leopards as my home team. I am of a sober habit and enjoy going out with friends, though Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted part of my social life.'

We invite you to share with us recent news of our alumni with Mashudu Ramaleba, Alumni Relations Officer on alumni@univen.ac.za or call 015 962 8338 or 071 632 3422. Please also update your details by visiting the university website www.univen.ac.za/alumni/update your contact details. This will give us an opportunity to re-connect with you and share the UNIVEN journey of engaged scholarship and continuous production of graduates who are locally relevant and globally competitive.

'Alumni are lifelong members of the University'

