

Prof Willie Esterhuysen (1936 –)

ORDER OF LUTHULI IN SILVER

**AWARDED TO
WILLIE ESTERHUYSE
FOR HIS OUTSTANDING
ROLE IN OPENING AND
MAINTAINING DIALOGUE
BETWEEN THE ANC AND
THE APARTHEID
GOVERNMENT, WHICH
CONTRIBUTED BOTH TO
THE REMOVAL OF
OBSTACLES TO
NEGOTIATIONS AS WELL AS
TO THE RESUMPTION OF
NEGOTIATIONS TO END
APARTHEID AND CREATE
A DEMOCRATIC,
NON-RACIAL, NON-SEXIST
SOUTH AFRICA**



Professor Willie Esterhuysen was born in 1936 in Laingsburg, Western Cape. From humble beginnings Esterhuysen rose to become a leading Afrikaner writer, philosopher and intellectual.

Prof Esterhuysen has published extensively over a wide area including philosophical and political issues. He has authored amongst others: *Apartheid must die* and *The Road to Reform*.

Among other awards, Prof Esterhuysen has been the recipient of the Stals Prize for Philosophy from the SAAcademy of Arts and Science, the *Sunday Times* Prestige Prize for Political Literature and the Leon/Fox Community Relations Award.

Prof Esterhuysen is a leading figure in the Afrikaner community who, through immense foresight and profound love for his country, realised the futility of trying to sustain apartheid. In an attempt to forestall a bloodbath and at great risk to his own standing and credibility, he doggedly persevered with the task of convincing other significant leaders within his own community of the need to open negotiations with the ANC.

These initial talks, at first testing the waters, paved the way to real engagement and enabled both sides to develop a deeper understanding of the fears, desires, needs and wants of the other. Later when real negotiations stalled, Prof Esterhuysen's cool head and keen sense of fair-play and justice prevailed to drag negotiators back to the table.

Prof Willie Esterhuysen made a humble yet significant contribution to the ultimate success of negotiations, which finally led to the interim Constitution that laid the basis for full democracy in South Africa.