

## **LAUNCH OF PROF MANAKA FESTSCHRIFT- 28 NOVEMBER 2015**

*LIASA President Ms Segametsi Molawa's congratulatory message at the Launch of Prof Manaka's Festschrift and Celebration of his 39 years of Excellence in Library and Information Services (LIS) education and training at the University of Limpopo*

It is indeed a privilege and a pleasure to speak on behalf of the Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA) and to honour a living legend in the LIS sector: Prof Seth Manaka. Prof Manaka has contributed significantly to the transformation of the LIS sector: he fought for a non-racial LIS profession; was one of the transformation agents of the LIS through intellectual contribution to the field of study and, was instrumental in shaping the future of several generations of students who came to the study Library and Information Science at the institution previously the University of the North, presently the University of Limpopo.

He was like a father to us, providing emotional support to and building hope among the young first year 18 year olds arriving at the University. While other lecturers were telling us that we are nothing, we are failures and that by the second semester we would not return to the University (the semester system was used to exclude students who failed), he remained encouraging and supportive. He had a special way of building confidence but yet was a strict disciplinarian who was not prepared to settle for anything less than performance excellence. He believed in his students and had a dream that South Africa can be a better country if all of us could use the key we were getting at the university to open the correct doors. He inculcated the vision of building an informed and reading nation among his students. He has been a lecturer, a teacher, a coach, a mentor, community builder; the list is endless.

He told every one of his students that he is teaching leaders and they better behave and carry themselves likewise. I thank Prof. Manaka for making life so simple, by simplifying complex concepts, instilling the love of reading despite the fact that because of rural backgrounds and other shackles of the imbalances of the time, it was only once at university that most of us gained access to a formal library.

He used his education and wisdom to touch the lives of many in a positive way and inculcated good values of life in those who were receptive. Through his integrity, he has built a legacy in Africa and globally.

Through Prof. Manaka's hard work and sacrifice, together with other men and women who gave their all to ensure that the Library and Information services in South Africa are transformed, a democratic association, LIASA, was born on the 10<sup>th</sup> July 1997. LIASA is a home for all people working in the Library and Information sector. It has provided leadership in the holistic development of the sector and has promoted service excellence since its inception.

LIASA has enjoyed growth in many areas: receiving grants to build leadership in the LIS sector, to establish a full time office that is proudly hosted by the Nation Library of South Africa and to train a new generation of public librarians. A number of sponsors and partners are also committed to the development of the LIS sector through their unfailing support to LIASA. LIASA has hosted the first IFLA world conference in 2007 in Durban and had an opportunity once more to host the 2<sup>nd</sup> South African IFLA conference from 15- 21 August 2015 at the Cape Town ICC. At the 2015 IFLA

conference, Ministers from African Countries pledged support for libraries in their countries, having acknowledging the critical role libraries play in the development of the country. The Cape Town Declaration 2015 was launched.

A few highlights to confirm to you Prof Manaka that your labour was not in vain are: The LIS Transformation Charter was launched in April 2014 and, LIASA has been awarded Professional Body status by the South African Quality Assurance (SAQA) which means that a regulation of the sector and, ongoing development of appropriate skills of practitioners.

I am not ashamed to acknowledge that the reading culture is still a challenge nationally but LIASA is working with relevant stakeholders to instil the culture of reading among communities in South Africa. Ladies and gentlemen, you and I can contribute immensely to this matter by leading by example, reading for pleasure and, simultaneously guiding others to do the same.

Even today, the tenacity to press on against all odd that we as students learned from Prof Manaka assists our profession. Librarians are making a positive impact on the lives of South Africans by providing access to information regardless of the prevailing conditions. LIASA salutes you and other legends who have built the LIS sector which in turn, by responding to the information needs of all South Africans is contributing to national development.

I thank you!!!

**Segametsi Molawa**

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***“Libraries for development: Action, Integration and Collaboration”***