

## Farewell, Mr “Sampie” Essack

(Dr Ismail Vadi)

Last Friday, Lenasia lost one of its veteran educators, Mr Abdul Samad “Sampie” Essack. Mr Essack, aged 81, passed away peacefully at his home in Extension 7, after a short struggle with cancer.



Mr Essack had an illustrious educational career. He served as the principal of Libra Primary School from 1993 until 2002, when he retired. Prior to that he was appointed to various posts at the Roodepoort Indian High School (1967), MH Joosub Technical High (1974), Head of Department at Nirvana High School (1979), Deputy Principal at Topaz High (1990), and Senior Deputy Principal at MH Joosub Technical Secondary (1992).

Between 1988 and 1989, he was the Acting Superintendent of Education for Humanities in the Inspectorate division of the education department in Transvaal.

Former Wits lecturer and convenor of Lenz70 campaign, Dr Ismail Vadi, said that “Sampie” Essack was a soft-natured, compassionate and dedicated educator.

“He was humble and down-to-earth even when he held the position as the Geography/History inspector, and his focus always was on teacher development and improving teacher performance in the classroom,” said Vadi.

He added that Mr Essack also will be remembered for his sterling contribution to the development of school sports. He served for many years on the administrative and leadership structures of the Lenasia Primary and High Schools’ Sports Association and the Lenasia Table-Tennis Association.

“As a youngster I remember Sampie as a professional soccerite playing for Dynamos United FC in the non-racial Federation Professional League. But we worked more closely together in later years when we formed the Progressive Teachers’ League and the SADTU-Lenasia Branch,” said Vadi.

“Sampie” Essack was an associate of anti-apartheid activist and teacher, Ahmed Timol, who was brutally tortured in detention by the apartheid security police and

killed by being thrown down from the 10<sup>th</sup> floor of John Vorster Police Station in Johannesburg. Both were students at the Transvaal College of Education and taught at the Roodepoort Indian High School.



Based on his association with Timol and the politically active Pahad brothers, “Sampie” Essack supported the Congress movement and worked in the ANC-Lenasia Branch when it was established in 1990. He also served on the Shanul-Islam Mosque Committee and was the Chairman of the Talimul-Islam Board, which oversees the affairs of several mosques in Lenasia.

Vadi said that “Sampie” Essack’s “contribution to education, sport, politics and religious affairs will be sorely missed. Farewell, dear friend.”

Mr Essack is survived by his wife, Julaykha, also a retired teacher, and children, Zain and Zeenat.