

Citation: Dr Reuel Khoza

Reuel Khoza was born in 1949 at Arthurseat in Bushbuckridge. His father was an evangelist who set a high standard of academic achievement. During school holidays, he looked after his grandfather's cattle, which instilled a love of farming. He completed his undergraduate and Honours degrees in Psychology at the University of Limpopo (previously University of the North). After graduating in 1974, he became a junior lecturer at the university, but his involvement with student politics led to his dismissal. Decades later, in 2007, he was asked to be Chancellor of the same university.

Dr Khoza's dismissal from academia led him to start his business career. After spending four years as a marketing assistant and product manager at Unilever, he obtained a scholarship from Shell South Africa to pursue a Master's degree in Marketing at the University of Lancaster in the United Kingdom. In 2006, he completed an Engineering Doctorate, with a focus on business leadership, at the University of Warwick, United Kingdom.

In 1981, he established his own marketing and management consulting firm. He needed an office in downtown Johannesburg, but this was at a time when black people were prohibited from applying for offices in 'white South Africa.' He had to forego a 51% stake in his firm so that it could come across as a white company. At the same time, he joined and later became one of the founding members and directors of the Black Management Forum (BMF), which was established in 1976 to empower and develop black managers in South Africa. Historically, the BMF has played a crucial role in promoting black economic empowerment and employment equity in South Africa. As a prominent figure in South African business, Dr Khoza's contributions have extended beyond the BMF to various sectors, including corporate governance, education, and music.

In 1983, Reuel Khoza was invited to join the Standard Bank's Advisory Board. Later, he led a turnaround at Eskom as Board Chairman from 1997 to 2005. He attributed the successful turnaround to strong collaboration between board members and the executive team, and significant investment in acquiring and developing the right skills. Under his leadership, Eskom greatly improved its productivity, financial performance, and creditworthiness. In 2001, Eskom won the Financial Times award for the best global power utility. By 2004, Eskom was operating in more than 30 African countries.

Dr Khoza has been an outspoken critic of political mismanagement in South Africa, and, as Nedbank Chairman in 2011, he earned the wrath of the governing party for stating that South Africa's socio-economic crisis was the product of a failure to implement proven good governance and leadership strategies. He argued that the "integrity, health, socio-economic soundness and prosperity of South Africa were the collective responsibility of all citizens, corporations and individuals. He pointed out that South Africans had a duty to build and develop the nation and to "call to book the putative leaders who, due to sheer incapacity to deal with the complexity of 21st-century governance and leadership, cannot lead." He contended that national success requires cooperation between the state and the corporate sector, which "should operate in a near perfect tango". Without this, he maintained, "we will be witnessing a further unravelling degeneration into a kleptocracy unless South Africans of goodwill, of which there are many, definitively intervene."

In 2019, Dr Khoza, together with his wife Mumsy, started the Reuel and Mumsy Khoza Foundation to uplift communities. They support the Ekurhuleni Orphan and Vulnerable Children's Centre in Acornhoek, with food and books. When he chaired the Bethel Hook's Trust, he was able to raise enough capital to build a school that is a combined effort of the public and private sectors. He was also able to secure donations of desk computers distributed to schools in Mpumalanga. Moreover, he has encouraged schools to have vegetable gardens, becoming a source of food for students and revenue for the school.

Dr Khoza has earned numerous accomplishments. In 2021, he became the first African to be inducted into the Thinkers50 Management Hall of Fame, described by the Financial Times as "the Oscars of management thinking." In June 2022, he received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the All-Africa Business Leader Awards in tandem with CNBC Africa. His philanthropy extends to

securing donations for desk computers and helping establish vegetable gardens, amongst others.

In 2024, he was awarded the Chancellor's Medal from the University of Pretoria for his outstanding achievements and contributions to the business and academia fields, and for his authorship as a businessman and leader. In the same year, he received the Sunday Times Lifetime Achievement Award. He holds honorary doctorates from the University of Warwick (2020), Rhodes University (2019), and the University of Free State (2021). In addition, he is also a qualified Chartered Director.

He has served as Chairman of many leading blue-chip companies, including the Assupol Group and Nedbank Group Limited. He also served as Director of many organisations, such as the JSE Limited, IBM South Africa, Liberty Life Group, and President of the Institute of Directors in South Africa.

He serves as Emeritus Professor Extraordinaire of the University of Stellenbosch Business School and is currently a Visiting Professor at Rhodes Business School, the University of the Free State Business School, and the Wits Business School. He previously served as Chancellor of the University of Limpopo (2007-2017) and Medunsa (2007 – 2014) and is currently Chancellor of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal.

He played a crucial role in shaping South Africa's corporate governance architecture, particularly through his work on the King Codes, setting benchmarks for ethical business practices globally. He was involved in the formulation of the King Codes on Corporate Governance in King II, King III, and King IV, serving as Deputy Chair of the King Committee in the last two instances.

Dr Khoza is a prolific author and has authored influential books, which include, amongst others, *Attuned Leadership: African Humanism as Compass* (2012), *Let Africa Lead: African Transformational Leadership for 21st Century Business* (2006). He also writes lyrics and produces music, and has lately dedicated more time to writing lyrics for compositions by his late cousin. He has orchestrated and recorded 60 of his cousin's 850 compositions.

Dr. Reuel Khoza's contributions have left a lasting impact on South Africa's business landscape, promoting ethical leadership, African values, and transformational governance practices. He has cemented a global reputation as a distinguished Africanist, thought-leader, author, business leader, public speaker, lyricist, and change agent at the forefront of the transformation of the South African political economy. Throughout his distinguished career, he has made significant contributions to various fields and is renowned for promoting African humanism in leadership practices, emphasising the importance of Ubuntu (humanity towards others) in business and governance.

Based on these significant contributions in business, academia, and broader social transformation in South Africa, it is befitting that the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, bestows an Honorary Doctorate Degree in Commerce, *Honoris Causa* on Dr Reuel Khoza.