

Hamba kahle – remembering those who are no longer with us

NIOH Remembrance Day

On 24 July 2018, the National Institute for Occupational Health (NIOH) held a Remembrance Day Commemoration, honouring and remembering those who are no longer with us. The primary objective of hosting such an event was to find new ways to PREVENT workplace injuries, diseases and fatalities. The event also intended to pay tribute to all those colleagues and comrades in occupational and environmental health and safety (OEHS) – warriors for social justice – who have passed on, and to acknowledge those workers who lost their lives during the course of their duty.

As a national Institute, the NIOH strives towards better occupational and workplace environmental health and safety for all workers through the cultivation of healthy, happy, safe and sustainable workplaces. The Institute aims to improve and promote workers' health and safety and, very importantly, to be a catalyst for a mindset change towards greater prevention in OEHS.

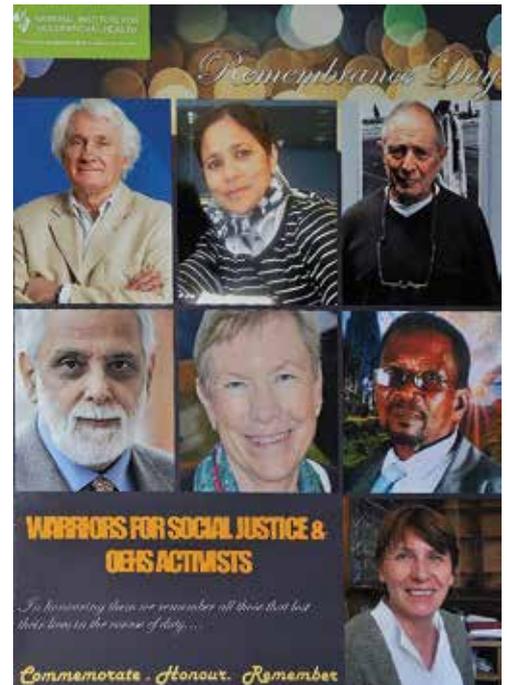
The NIOH paid a heartfelt tribute to: Prof. Jock McCulloch (activist and advocate for a global ban on asbestos); Mr David Goldblatt (photographer, whose work chronicled half a century of social and political change in South Africa); Mr Stephen Kotoloane (former head of the Asbestos Interest Group (AIG) and community leader and activist); Mrs Faieza Desai (struggle stalwart and community activist); Prof. Leslie Nickels (public health educator and activist); Dr Danuta Kielkowsk (leading researcher in improving vital registration and reporting of mortality in relation to occupational and industrial groups); and Mr Phiroshaw Camay (past General Secretary of Council of Unions of South Africa and the National Council of Trade Unions, and Director of Cooperative for Research and Education).

In ensuring that workers were represented, the event also provided an opportunity to acknowledge and pay tribute to workers who have passed on during the course of their duties, particularly those who made a significant



Prof. Jim Phillips, Ms Mary Miller, Ms Tina Da Cruz and Ms Patience Kotoloane lighting tribute candles for fallen colleagues and workers Photograph: Mr Guy Hall

A memorial poster (designed by S Hampson) paying tribute to those we have lost



contribution to occupational health and safety and strived towards decent work. Workers from the NIOH included: Mr Derrick Rendall, Mr Richard Khakhu, Mr Adriaan Greyling, Mr Jerry Moseboa and Mr Enoch Mogomotsi. Mr Mzwakhe Nhlapo, the National Head for Health and Safety from the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), attended the event and provided a passionate message about the importance of health and safety, and paid tribute to fallen comrades from a trade union perspective.

The tribute was supported by an exhibition of a collection of images and documents related to these fallen colleagues' lives and work. The event also provided Professor Mohamed Jeebhay, Head of the Occupational Medicine Division, University of Cape Town, with the opportunity to deliver a keynote address on mortality at work and the need for prevention.

Dr Sophia Kisting (NIOH Executive Director) expressed her gratitude to these good men and women – heroes who have shared their research and knowledge to help create a “gentler, more just and equal world of work and society”. “It’s crucial”, she said, “that their colleagues and future generations continue the work in a transparent, inclusive manner with the shared purpose of protecting the human rights of every man and woman at work and at home. It is in their honour that we should all pledge to continue to make workplaces safer – every day.”

We should all aspire to emulate those honoured on the day; they lived for the ideal that our common humanity can be strengthened through shining a spotlight on toxic substances that harm workers' health and safety; being actively engaged in civil society discourse; educating workers on their rights and responsibilities; and through applauding and being involved in community-based interactions and interventions. Together, we can find inclusive and sustainable ways to protect and promote workers and their surrounding communities' health and wellbeing.

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