



**Cónaidhm Éireannach na Múinteoirí Ollscoile
Irish Federation of University Teachers**

MEDIA RELEASE

**IFUT mourns death of its former President,
Kader Asmal**

24 June 2011

The Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT) has expressed its sorrow at the sudden death of Dr Kader Asmal, who served as President of IFUT from 1974 to 1975.

Daltun O’Ceallaigh, former IFUT General Secretary, who worked with Kader for many years said: “It is with the deepest sadness that I learned of the death of my old friend and comrade of 37 years, Kader Asmal. We met in Trinity College Dublin when he was a young lecturer and I was a younger student. He gave his life to the cause of freedom and it was wonderful that he lived to see a liberated South Africa. I never thought I would witness it myself.

“I visited him when he was a Minister in the new South Africa and he flew me and my wife up to an official function for the opening of a water project. On the plane, he leaned over to me and said: ‘Sometimes, I have to pinch myself to make sure that it is true.’ Well, it was, and is. The path we tread is long, the foe we fight is strong, but those who fight for freedom never fail.”

Anne Clune, a fellow former IFUT President (1992–1993 and 1993–1994), said: “Memories of Kader and IFUT are inextricably mingled in my mind. Kader during the Maynooth case: a most difficult time for IFUT. Kader conducting a meeting from the doorway because there was a ban on smoking in the room; Kader speaking with indignation of how the university authorities were treating us all as ‘kaffirs’; Kader always reminding us that there was more to a trade union than just protecting the interests of its members and that the principles of academic freedom and human rights could very easily be extinguished if not zealously guarded. He was truly an inspiration!”

Mike Jennings, General Secretary of IFUT, said that Dr Asmal had been a highly committed and inspirational member of IFUT for many years during his time in Ireland.

“He emphasised the importance of academic freedom and human rights just as strongly as defending the general interest of our members. He will be fondly remembered by his former colleagues in Trinity College, Dublin as well as the many members of IFUT throughout the country who worked with, and were inspired by, him. While his heart was always in South Africa, it would be true to say that he was genuinely one of our own.

“I last met Kader when I had the honour to arrange a lunch where we presented him with the ceremonial badge and ribbon that is presented to every Past President of IFUT. I recall that Kader was genuinely moved and he recounted with typical animation and much nostalgia important IFUT campaigns in which he played a central rôle.

“When we pinned the badge on his lapel he responded in a combination of cheekiness and a characteristic lack of modesty by saying, "I shall wear it with pride... along with the *Légion d'honneur* presented to me by the Prime Minister of France!"

IFUT extends its sympathy to his wife, Louise, his family and his many friends in Ireland and internationally.

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