

## NEWS RELEASE

### Legal officer in the Presidency graduates from UP with a PhD



*Dr Reason Misiwa Baloyi at his graduation ceremony.*

PRETORIA - Reason Misiwa Baloyi, the legal administrative officer in the [Presidency of the Republic of South Africa](#), recently graduated from the University of Pretoria (UP) during its autumn graduation season with a [Doctor of Laws \(LLD\)](#) degree, fulfilling a lifelong dream to make a significant contribution to law and public service.

His journey from a rural village in Limpopo to one of the highest offices in the country and obtaining a doctoral degree is a powerful reminder of what's possible with commitment, courage and community support.

Baloyi, who's from Mapapila village in Malamulele township, Limpopo, says his passion for law started in childhood. "It was just a dream," recalls the 48-year-old, who was set on following a career that would see him either representing people or enforcing the law. There was no career guidance, he adds: as the first-born son, no one in his family had completed matric, and no one in the community had ever studied law at a tertiary institution.

Baloyi attended Mapapila Primary School and EPP Mhinga Secondary School, where he obtained matric before

going on to improve his matric results at Lemana College. In 2003, he completed an LLB at the University of Limpopo and has since built a career in the public sector, working in legal units across several national departments including the Departments of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development; Home Affairs; and Human Settlements. He then joined the Office of the Premier in the Western Cape, and in 2012, was appointed as the legal administrative officer in the Presidency, a role he holds today.

His key responsibilities include scrutinising executive acts against the Constitution and relevant legislation, conducting legal research, providing legal opinions, liaising with government departments, and contributing to the drafting of legislation, policies and international agreements.

Baloyi chose to pursue both his LLM and LLD at UP, citing the [University's](#) reputation and quality of academic support. His doctoral research focused on the liability of state officials in instances of irregular public procurement, a topic he believes is essential for strengthening governance and public accountability.

"I was motivated by the constant reports of fraud and corruption in public procurement," he said. "Public trust in the state depends on officials doing their work with integrity. If there are irregularities, there must be accountability whether disciplinary, civil or criminal."

His thesis examined how legal frameworks – including administrative, criminal and contract law – can be used to hold officials to account for misconduct in the procurement of goods and services. It argues that enforcing these responsibilities is vital for the protection of public resources and to combat the culture of impunity.

Baloyi's academic journey was not without setbacks. He faced disruptions during the COVID-19 lockdown and when his original supervisor retired in 2022. He had to temporarily pause his studies.

"That was a very challenging time," he says. "I had to motivate for readmission and wasn't sure if the University would allow me to continue. I was relieved and grateful when it did."

Balancing his demanding role in the Presidency with postgraduate research required strict time management and personal sacrifice.

"I set my own timetable, focused on work when required and studied in my free time, often juggling it with family responsibilities."

To young South Africans pursuing careers in law and public service, Baloyi offers this advice: "Law and public service go hand in hand. Studying law puts you in a position of responsibility, one where your role is to serve others. It's not about personal gain; it's about making a difference."

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## ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

The University of Pretoria (UP) is one of the largest contact and residential universities in South Africa, with its administration offices located on its Hatfield Campus in Pretoria. This 115-year-old institution is also one of the

largest producers of research in South Africa.

Spread over seven campuses, it has nine faculties and a business school, the [Gordon Institute of Business Science](#) (GIBS). It is the only university in the country with a [Faculty of Veterinary Science](#), which is ranked the best in Africa. UP has 120 academic departments and 92 centres and institutes, accommodating more than 56 000 students and offering about 1 100 study programmes. It has the most academic staff with PhDs (70%), NRF-rated researchers (613).

The 2025 Times Higher Education subject rankings placed UP first in South Africa in the fields of [Accounting](#) and [Finance](#); [Architecture](#); [Electrical and Electronic Engineering](#); Law; Sport Science; and Veterinary Science. UP's Faculty of Law has been ranked as the top law school in Africa for a remarkable eighth consecutive year.

Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) ranked the University among the top five in Africa, as part of their [2024 World University Rankings \(WUR\)](#). UP was the only South African university featured in the [2023 World University Rankings for Innovation \(WURI\)](#), falling within in the 101-200 range of innovative universities.

For more information, please go to [www.up.ac.za](http://www.up.ac.za)