

# Thousands mourn death of Dr Nkomo

By a Staff Reporter

**DR WILLIAM FREDE- RICK NKOMO** is dead and all over the city Africans are today mourning the death of the gentle and humble man who not only attended to their medical needs, but who

led them towards justice and race amity.

Barely three months after he was elected the first Black President of the South African Institute of Race Relations, the 57-year-old Dr Nkomo died of a heart attack in his home in Atteridgeville in the early hours of yesterday morning.

Once a firebrand who was expelled from the African National Congress because he preached bloodshed and revolution, he gradually turned away from violence to become a man of peace with a passionate longing for justice for his people.

His two main concerns were to improve the lot of the urban African and to bring about Black-White co-operation.

After dedicating himself for years to bring about racial harmony, it was ironical that Dr Nkomo had to fall victim to racial intolerance in Pretoria last year.

### SLAPPED

A traffic inspector — later cautioned and discharged by the court — slapped Dr Nkomo in the face and called him a "vuilgoed" when he tried to enter an area near Church Square where the students of the University of Pretoria were crowning their rag queen.

His life was a pageant of "firsts" for Africans:

He was the first to serve on the Student's Representative Council at Wits, the first resident of Atteridgeville to be given a "special day" and the first Black President

of the Institute of Race Relations.

Since he died tributes have poured in from all sections of the community, from Black and White.

His death was described as "a terrific blow" by Mr Fred van Wyk, Director of the Institute of Race Relations.

"There is a clear emergence of Black consciousness today, and Dr Nkomo — who was aware of this — was a very real link between Black and White," Mr Van Wyk said.

### TAUGHT

Many African children owe their education to Dr Nkomo's sponsorship.

He himself went to school in Mafeking, Klerksdorp and St Peter's School in Johannesburg and matriculated in Fort Beaufort.

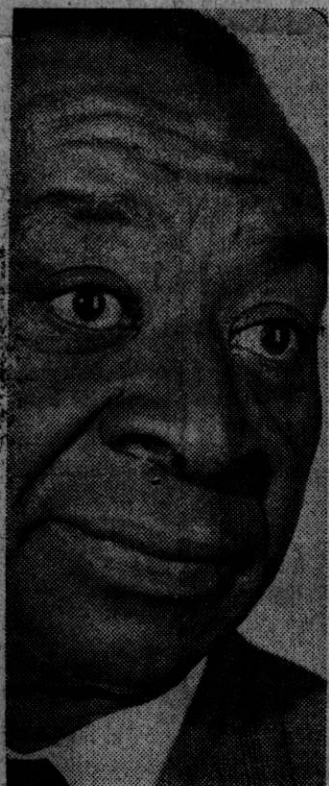
At Fort Hare he took his BSc degree, taught for six months at the Kilnerton Institute, then opened the first all-African secondary school in the Dougal Hall, Marabastad.

Always a restless mind, he soon tired of teaching and took first a BA degree and then, after winning a scholarship, studied medicine at Wits.

After being turned down by numerous hospitals where he applied for an internship, Dr Nkomo went back to teaching.

Despite personal frustrations his name and reputation grew to such proportions that in 1961 he was one of only three African leaders chosen to meet the secretary-general of the United Nations, Mr Dag Hammarsjöld, on his historic visit.

His reaction to the turbulent events of the early sixties was to call on Black and White to sit down and talk. His call went unheeded, but he refused to give up.



**Dr Nkomo**