



FAWU Tribute to comrade Nathi Mthethwa.

The Food and Allied Workers Union (FAWU), together with the South African Federation of Trade Unions (SAFTU), bows its banners in sorrow and pride as we pay tribute to comrade Nathi Mthethwa, a son of the working class, a fearless organizer and worker leader, and one of our own.

A shop steward at Just Juice (1986)

FAWU remembers comrade Nathi Mthethwa not only as a national political figure, but as a shop steward of FAWU at Just Juice in Pinetown in 1986. At that time, he worked side by side with women whose hands and bodies were severely scarred by chemical exposure from cleaning industrial containers. Comrade Nathi brought these women workers into FAWU's fold, standing with them against exploitation, unsafe conditions, and employer arrogance.

It was at Just Juice that he led the struggle for recognition of the union FAWU, building majority membership and forming the factory steering committee. When the company retaliated by victimising and dismissing him, FAWU fought a long and bitter battle. With the assistance of progressive lawyers, and after 18 months of struggle, we won the case. But the victory was not simply legal, it was moral; the employer failed to crush the spirit of worker organization.

From Factory Floor to Youth Congress.

Rather than to return to the workplace determined to silence him, comrade Nathi chose to dedicate his life to full-time activism. From his home in Clermont, Durban, he immersed himself in the youth movement, becoming

active in the Natal Youth Congress, which later merged into the historic South African Youth Congress (SAYCO). He was part of the generation that linked shop-floor struggles with the energy of the youth movement, ensuring that the fight for living wages and safe workplaces was bound together with the broader struggle for liberation.

A Legacy Rooted in Worker Struggle.

FAWU and SAFTU honour comrade Nathi's legacy not only for his later contributions in government and politics, but for his roots in worker struggles, his commitment to justice for women workers, and his courage in facing the dismissal, victimisation, and the harsh conditions of apartheid-era factories.

His journey from FAWU shop steward at Just Juice in 1986 to National leadership reminds us that the strength of our movement lies in ordinary workers who take extraordinary risks for the collective good.

Our Final Salute and Condolences.

FAWU salutes comrade Nathi as a comrade who never forgot the call of workers, and whose political life was shaped in the furnace of class struggle. His passing is a painful loss to FAWU, TO SAFTU, and to the broader working class of South Africa.

On behalf of FAWU and SAFTU, we extend our deepest and heartfelt condolences to his wife, comrade Philisiwe Buthelezi, and the entire Mthethwa family. May they draw strength from the knowledge that his life's work will continue to inspire generations of workers and youth.

Hamba kahle, comrade Nathi Mthethwa,

Your place is secure in the history of FAWU, SAFTU, and the working class of South Africa.

Slogans

An Injury to one is an injury to all!!!!

Long live the spirit of comrade Nathi Mthethwa!!!!!!

Long live FAWU, long live!!!!

Long live SAFTU long live!!!!

Forward to worker's unity and socialism!!!!!!

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