

Johannesburg

05 May 2014

PROFESSOR STEVEN FRIEDMAN: DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE INFUSED

Many South Africans have become more vocal about the problems of our country; and the debates about matters such as crime, corruption, unemployment and poor standards of education will no doubt continue for some time ahead. Whilst the nature of these challenges is not easily overcome -- especially in a young democracy -- what *is at least* positive is the fact that the citizens of our country are free to discuss these issues openly. This was most certainly not the case in the previous apartheid-led government. The consequence of speaking out against the apartheid-led government at the time was either some form of detention or long-term (life) jail sentence. Today, and notwithstanding the challenges we still face as a country, people are free to protest against injustice, or establish their own public discussion forums and even form their own political parties. This is progress; although the progress may not be as fast for some as it may be for others.

Indeed if we cast our minds back just twenty years ago, South Africa was not -- in all honesty -- a country that was a popular destination, or for that matter liked by the international community. Prior to 1994, South Africa was boycotted by most internationals, we had a weak trading position, the majority of South Africans had few democratic rights, extreme poverty and low-class education was rife in black communities, segregation of race and discrimination against black people was legislated, and so the list went on. On the opposite end of this scale, white people had unrestricted access to most things that life could offer in South Africa at the time, barring perhaps that white people still had to 'toe the line' as far as politics was concerned. Back then, most white South Africans were either not sufficiently informed upon political matters, or they were just too scared to enter this highly controversial arena.



Professor Steven Friedman accepts an Honorary Patronship from CGF Research Institute

Of course there were, relatively speaking, a few white people who were very outspoken against the atrocities the apartheid-government imposed upon the people of colour in South Africa. Some of these activists included Beyers Naudé, Helen Suzman, Dereck Marsh, John Aitchison, Peter Brown, Hans Meidner, Renfrew Christie and Neil Aggett; the latter being a young South African doctor who was the only white anti-apartheid activist to die in detention.

South Africa is no stranger to democracy; and as our country continues to develop its institutions and legal frameworks to ensure that all its citizens are afforded their basic rights, expectedly this must be underpinned by the highest standards of good governance and the rule of law. It is in this respect -- as 'democracy and governance meet' -- that we are truly honoured to announce that *Professor Steven Friedman* joins the prestigious ranks of CGF Research Institute's Honorary Patrons.

The Honorary Patron appointments -- which are rotated every two years -- have expectedly had a positive effect upon the governance services being offered by CGF to its broad range of clients, which extends well beyond our research and reporting. To this extent, the additional value Professor Friedman brings to CGF is invaluable,

MEDIA RELEASE

especially considering his first class experience regarding the study of democracy, which is inseparable from the principles for good governance (be this in business and civil society).

Professor Friedman is a political scientist and is the director of the *Centre for the Study of Democracy* at Rhodes University and the University of Johannesburg. During the 1980s, Professor Friedman produced a series of studies of reform apartheid and its implications for a democratic future. He researched and wrote widely on the South African transition to democracy both before and after the elections of 1994 and has written--over the past decade--largely on the relationship between democracy on the one hand, social inequality and economic growth on the other. In particular, Professor Friedman has stressed the role of the citizen's voice in strengthening democracy and promoting equality.

As is the case with all our esteemed Honorary Patrons, who include Amy Kleinhans-Curd, Professor Jonathan Jansen, Wendy Luhabe, Tina Eboka, Bernard Peter Agulhas, Michael Judin, Devi Sankaree Govender, Professor Shirley Zinn and Dr Mathews Phosa; each Patron is carefully selected not only because they are exceptional leaders with great depth, knowledge and wisdom, but also because they act as a sounding board for CGF when difficult matters or decisions need to be considered within our company, but also for our clients.

"Political accountability and effective governance will be South Africa's real challenges over the next few years."

*Professor Steven Friedman
Political Analyst
05 August 2009*

Professor Friedman was born on March 31, 1953 and is a well-known academic, newspaper columnist, widely quoted public intellectual, activist, former trade unionist and journalist. His book *Building Tomorrow Today: African Workers in Trade Unions 1970-1984* has been described as a classic South African text. He has written regular opinion pieces for Thought Leader and The New Age and currently writes a weekly column for Business Day. During the South African 1994 elections, he was appointed as the National Head of the Independent Electoral Commission's Information Analysis Department.

Indeed it is with great pride that we welcome Professor Friedman in our midst. This is especially true knowing the critical importance his role plays for promoting good governance at all levels of our society, which includes all the relevant actors from government and the private sector. To this extent, there is no time more relevant as South Africans head for the election polls on 07 May 2014, to understand that the promotion of good governance goes beyond the government's role in itself. As South Africans, if we are to stand true to the values we espouse in our Bill of Rights, we all need to focus upon common goals in order to make South Africa a better place for all. This includes reducing poverty, ensuring the impoverished people across South Africa have access to basic services, dealing decisively with corruption and ensuring unemployment is urgently addressed.

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Words: 981

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