

**REMARKS BY CLLR MPHONG PARKS TAU, EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF
JOHANNESBURG, UNVEILING OF A HERITAGE PLAQUE FOR,
SOWETO, 16 JUNE 2016**

His Excellency, Premier of Gauteng, David Makhura

Senior government officials

Members of the Edelstein family

Other families affected by the student uprising

The class of June 1976

Distinguished guests

Members of the media

Good morning

We have gathered here today to unveil a heritage plaque for Dr. Melville Edelstein, one of the two white officials who lost their lives during the Soweto insurgency of June 16, 1976.

Programme Director, Dr. Melville was a peace loving person who dedicated his life, serving the poor in the then dusty township of South Africa. On that fateful morning, he greeted students as they passed his offices here at Mputhi Street. However once the shock of the apartheid police shooting spread throughout Soweto, high spirits turned to anger, leading to the death of Dr. Edelstein.

Without doubt, Dr Edelstein was a victim of a racist apartheid system which socialised people to impulsively judge and stereotypically judge people in accordance with their skin colour.

A sociologist and respected academic, Dr. Edelstein had devoted his efforts to humanitarian and social welfare projects in Soweto. Serving as Deputy Chief Welfare Officer, Dr Edelstein instituted many projects aimed at assisting youth, disabled, poor and marginalized communities within Soweto, where he worked for about 18 years. While employed as a social worker for the Welfare Section of the Non-European Affairs Department, which fell under the City of Johannesburg, he showed great concern for the people of Soweto.

That morning, Dr Edelstein was hosting the official opening of the Sheltered Workshop Programme in Orlando East, designed to provide employment for disabled people. When news of the student protests reached Edelstein and others, the event was abruptly brought to an end, with dignitaries and others from outside Soweto ferried out of the township. Unfortunately he met his untimely death that morning.

Soon afterwards, photographer Peter Magubane came across the remains of Dr. Edelstein's body. Magubane was quoted as saying: "If they had known who he was, this would never have happened. No, not at all. He was part of the community".

Ladies and gentlemen as government we have not forgotten the good work of Dr Edelstein in the community of Soweto. And we have indeed responded positively to the family request that a monument or memorial be dedicated to Dr. Edelstein. Today we have gathered here to pay tribute to Dr. Edelstein. Today we are unveiling a plaque, recognizing the

outstanding community worker and humanitarian that Dr. Edelstein was. May his good deeds and actions be forever etched in our hearts.

Thank you