

# Tribute to Dr. Phikeni “Pix” Phandliwe

Dr. Phikeni Lazarus Phandliwe was born in Thabong township, Welkom (Free State Province), on 12 November 1967. He started schooling at Dirisanang Primary, then Lebogang Secondary, and finished his high school at Leseding Technical School.

He studied Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery (BVMCH) at the then Medical University of Southern Africa (MEDUNSA), where he completed the degree in 1998. While at university, he took it upon himself to teach many fellow students to swim, a skill he learned from early childhood when he visited his aunt who lived on a farm with a big dam.

Pix also loved accompanying classmates on their driving practice rides around Ga-Rankuwa township and in the Pretoria North areas to give them confidence, support, and a few driving tips. There was never a dull moment with Pix around, as he always cracked jokes, gave people and places hilarious nicknames, and shared non-malicious information and stories.

His career started on 1 November 1999 as State Veterinarian Animal Health with the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs, in Middleburg, Mpumalanga Province.

His duties involved import and export facilitation, and managing controlled and notifiable animal diseases, zoonosis included. He did a sterling job with Brucellosis control in the Province.

On 2 March 2003, he joined the Free State Provincial Government Department as Chief State Veterinarian for the Welkom State Veterinary area. He was responsible for promoting animal health and welfare in the Lejeleputswa District, as well as facilitating the export of animals and animal products to various international destinations. He was very instrumental in the control of the 2010 Rift Valley Fever outbreak. The doctor left the employ of the Free State Provincial Government Department on 14 February 2022 to pursue private practice.

Dr. Phandliwe met his untimely death on 23 January 2024 following a short illness. He is survived by his mother, three siblings, and three children. He will be sorely missed in the veterinary fraternity.

*Alison Lubisi*

