

Obituary

Stephen Maseko

Stephen Maseko was killed in a car accident in Pretoria in the early hours of 6th March 1983. He was thirty-four years old.

Over 1,000 people attended his funeral in Mamelodi on 19th March. Workers from Brits, Mabopane, Garankuwa, Mamelodi and the entire Reef came to pay their last respects to a man who had helped build their organisation since 1978.

As part of his work in the National Automobile and Allied workers union (NAAWU), Stephen had special responsibility for Firestone and Autoplastic factories. Both these factories are well organised, having over 70 percent membership and well entrenched shop steward and negotiating rights. Their strength will be his legacy to the union.

The funeral organised to bury Stephen was also a tribute to his work. It was quite clearly an occasion where organised workers came to mourn a deceased comrade. In evidence were union banners and T-shirts, the singing of songs of worker struggle and messages of solidarity from other FOSATU and non-FOSATU affiliates. In speeches by the family, union spokesmen, friends and the officiating clergy, reference was made again and again to the workers' struggle and Stephen's role in it.

Stephen Maseko helped to build the disciplined mass organisation that came to bury him. His contribution in bringing unionism to Pretoria will not be forgotten.

(Martin Ndaba)