



**national treasury**

Department:  
National Treasury  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**SPEECH BY MINISTER TREVOR A. MANUEL:  
MEMORIAL SERVICE OF DON AND ALFREDO PASQUALLIE  
AT HIS PEOPLE CHURCH, GOODWOOD  
01 FEBRUARY 2008**

**TREVOR MANUEL, MP, MINISTER OF FINANCE**

Director of Ceremonies

Mr and Mrs Nick and Anne Pasquallie

Gerna, Viola and their Children

The Brothers and Sister of the late Don and Alfredo

Family members of the other victims of the tragic accident

Comrades and Friends

I stand before you as a representative of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress, on behalf of the National Government and on my own behalf to extend our sincerest condolences to all of you. There is nothing in life that could prepare us for a tragedy of this magnitude – in fact there is little ever that equips us to deal with the loss of even a single loved one – a tragedy of this scale is beyond our imagination. But we are together, bound by this grief and we recognise that the passing of these fine people has touched so many of us.

In the loss of Don and Alfredo, the entire South African society, and especially those who continue to struggle every day to create a better life for all, has lost two committed and dedicated educators. It would appear that neither Don nor Alfredo chose to be teachers – the profession chose them, called them and bound them. They were born of teachers, raised to be teachers and lived to be educators – not as a job, or even as a passion, but truly as a life.

As educators, the roles of Alfredo and Don changed somewhat in the past decade. Alfredo remained the classic educator - who lived his life in the classroom before a chalkboard – living out his life and dreams in that environment. Don moved on to the organisation of his peers and was in the privileged position of having an older brother against whom he could measure the success of his efforts as an organiser, mobiliser and negotiator.

Their two roles, understood together are borne of the single belief that no educator can respond to their calling unless they operate in a climate that supports learning and teaching. Taken one step back, no effective learning and teaching can take place in a society that is broken. So, almost the first task of an educator is to understand that transforming society is an integral part of the environment for teaching. This is why I am here as a representative of the ANC – a movement united in the belief that much more needs to be done to secure the fruits of struggle. That is the one side of the equation.

The other side is about the educator who in the classroom must be motivated, trained and supported – and, in order to attain that, there is the ongoing struggle for better remuneration for the educator corps. Don and Alfredo brought these two sides together completely.

Don because of his leadership position in SADTU and COSATU was, of course, more prominent; and it was with him that I engaged, and yes, even tussled, more frequently. With Don, there were no half-measures – none of this ‘is the cup half-full or half empty’ stuff. Don wasn’t stood up on ceremony. Anybody who suggests that they could not work out what his position was could not be telling the truth. His strength was his refreshing honesty.

It was an honesty that I have had the privilege of observing – at first hand as a comrade, bound together by the same issues. But it was also a fierce honesty that I encountered indirectly, when I was with others – in particular Ministers Pandor and Fraser-Moleketi. We encountered the strength of Don’s conviction when we were on opposite sides of industrial relations negotiations – he representing the educators he served so fully and we representing the employers. Then I understood that no matter how inflamed the passions, what bound us together was always much larger than what temporarily separated us. For what bound us together was a belief system which is permanent and what separated us were the issues for negotiation, which by their very nature, are temporary. I understood through Don the meaning of comradeship – he never lost respect and warmth, regardless of how tough the issues on the table. I understood through all of the tough times that Don was asking for himself no more than he was asking for his constituency.

I understood then how privileged SADTU was to have Don at the helm, in full service and sparing none of himself. The singleness of purpose and the honesty with which he carried himself is quite irreplaceable.

It is the extent of this loss that we must all pause to take account of. In so doing, we should all come to the same conclusion, namely, that we must all deepen our personal commitment to the struggle for stronger organisation and better education outcomes. So, in honour of Alfredo and Don, we are all called upon to advance the cause of education. We must ensure that our schools function everywhere – that educators are in class, motivated and teaching; that learners are in class, supported and learning and that our schools are well managed and well governed.

As we do this, we must start from the premise that this is not an idle promise to a fallen comrade, or some undefined wish for betterment. We must do this because we all share a debt to a life of unflinching service which was as focused as it has been unselfish.

May their dear souls rest in peace.

Thank you