

## ANTHONY HERBERT BLOOM

Anthony Bloom is a distinguished law graduate of the University of the Witwatersrand who, as a business leader, ahead of his time, envisaged a non-racial, democratic South Africa and committed himself to realising this ideal through his business dealings and practices. His public advocacy and private initiatives played an important role in creating early links between the business community and the liberation movements, and thus helped to facilitate the democratic transition in South Africa.

After matriculating at King Edward VII School in 1956 Tony Bloom received his Bachelor of Commerce degree in 1960 and his Bachelor of Laws degree (with distinction) in 1962. Attaining this academic distinction was something of a feat since Bloom was studying part time while working as an articled clerk. During his time at Wits, he also captained the University's athletics team. In addition to his University Blue for athletics, he has a Black Belt for karate.

Soon after being admitted as an attorney in 1963, Tony Bloom became a full partner at the law firm Hayman, Godfrey and Sanderson. In 1964, he obtained a Master of Laws degree at Harvard Law School. His thesis, entitled 'The Concept of Judicial Management in South African Company Law', was selected as one of high excellence for deposit in the Harvard Library. In 1969 Tony Bloom became the first South African to receive a Sloan Fellowship at the Stanford Graduate School of Business, where he had the distinction of being elected class president. Today he sits on the Dean's Advisory Council of the Harvard Law School.

Between 1964 and 1969 he had gone into business, and in 1966 was appointed legal counsel to the Premier Group, which had started as a family business and became one of South Africa's largest industrial groups. Bloom's exceptional talents gained him an appointment as a director of the Group in 1969. He became deputy chairman in 1975 and chief executive and chairman in 1979.

After moving to the United Kingdom in the 1980s, Bloom enhanced his business prowess and is currently chairman of Cine-UK and sits on numerous other boards. His wide-ranging public interest and philanthropic commitments include involvement with the British Red Cross, the National Theatre, the Rambert Dance Company, the Almeida Theatre and the Cancer Research Campaign.

Tony Bloom's special contribution to South African business was his early and unflinching calls for the removal of discrimination and the creation of democracy. In an era when most business leaders maintained, at best, a discreet silence about the evils of apartheid, Bloom spoke out clearly and unequivocally. He embedded in the Premier Group's corporate philosophy and operating procedures a commitment to the abolition of discrimination, to freedom of speech and association, and to the establishment of democracy. As early as the 1980s he publicly articulated the urgent need for negotiations with credible black leaders, including those in jail or exile. His call prefigured later moves by the business community to initiate contact with the African

National Congress in exile and he was a member of the first group of businessmen to travel to Lusaka to meet members of the ANC.

Anthony Sampson documents his stand in *Black & Gold — Tycoons, Revolutionaries and Apartheid* (1987). Sampson not only recognises Bloom's vision and courage, but records his unequivocal statement that 'Negotiations with the ANC are an historic inevitability. The question is not whether, rather when, such negotiations will take place.'

Bloom's visionary business leadership was also reflected in his persistent calls for workplace equity, for workers' rights and for trade union leaders to be free to adopt positions of political leadership. In all these respects he anticipated and thereby facilitated the creation of a more equitable society in South Africa.

Tony Bloom's contribution has been recognised by numerous awards and distinctions. He was chosen by the Junior Chamber of Commerce as one of four 'Outstanding Young South Africans' in 1978, and was named *Sunday Times* Businessman of the Year in 1980. He received a Management Excellence Award from the Wits Business School in 1984.

More recently, Bloom has been elected an Honorary Fellow of Magdalene College, Cambridge, where he was instrumental in creating the Mandela Magdalene Scholarships for disadvantaged South Africans. He is also a Fellow of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

Although he is based in London, Bloom has maintained a commitment not only to South Africa, where he retains family and investment interests, but more especially to Wits. From 1989 to 1992 he was a member of the London Committee of the University, a body established with the aim of promoting academic exchange and maintaining links with universities in the United Kingdom after South African universities ceased to be members of the Association of Commonwealth Universities. The Committee also played a public relations and fund-raising role in the United Kingdom.

He has been a major — though at his wish, unsung — benefactor of the newly founded Wits Law School Endowment Appeal. In conferring on Tony Bloom a Doctor of Laws degree *honoris causa* Wits honours an outstanding lawyer and visionary business leader who helped lay the foundation in this country for prosperity with social justice.

It is with great pride and pleasure that the University confers upon Anthony Herbert Bloom the degree of Doctor of Laws *honoris causa*.