

FOREWORD

It is an honour and privilege to write the foreword to this superb collection of essays written in celebration of Edwin Cameron's career, particularly as a judge from 1994 to 2019. Edwin is an outstanding intellect, as is apparent not only from his academic achievements at both the Universities of Stellenbosch and South Africa but also by the award to him of the Vinerian Scholarship during his studies at Oxford. His intellectual ability has been evident in his prodigious judicial and scholarly output over more than 25 years. Edwin is also firmly committed to the transformative vision of South Africa's Constitution. As many of the contributions to this book make clear, he has in his jurisprudence sought to envisage and foster a South Africa in which the dignity of all its people is respected, and in which equality is promoted and fair treatment the norm.

So it is right that we celebrate Edwin's contribution as a judge. But there are other reasons to celebrate Edwin. The first is his candid and brave acknowledgement of who he is, a white gay man living with HIV in South Africa, who came from a disadvantaged background in which he experienced heartbreaking loss early in his life and the prospect of premature death as a result of his infection with HIV in the late 1980s. Edwin has written compellingly about his life in his two autobiographical works, *Witness to AIDS* (2005) and *Justice: A personal account* (2014). These unflinching memoirs – the first outlining his battle with AIDS and the second about his early family life – are deeply personal accounts of the life of a public figure. They are especially remarkable given that, more than 30 years into our horrifying encounter with the HIV/AIDS epidemic, which has tragically affected generations of South Africans across all walks of life, Edwin remains one of the only South Africans in public life to have told the story of his HIV-status. The second reason to celebrate Edwin is his ability to be attentive and empowering towards many of those with whom he has worked during his career. My own early encounters with Edwin were as a young articled clerk when I briefed him in trade union cases in the 1980s. He was already a fabled lawyer, noted for his intellectual prowess and courage, as demonstrated in his excoriating scholarly attack on the jurisprudence of LC Steyn, the former Chief Justice. Yet he always took great interest in and care over the cases I sent him – although I do recall that it was almost impossible to get him to

mark his brief! It is little surprise to me that many of the authors in this important collection are people with whom Edwin has worked or for whom he has been a mentor over the course of his life.

In closing, I should like to congratulate Nurina Ally and Leo Boonzaier, the editors, for their work to produce this book. They have gathered an outstanding collection of essays written by some of the leading scholars of South African law which has resulted in a fitting tribute to Edwin's contribution to our constitutional project.

Kate O'Regan
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