



the premier

Office of the Premier
FREE STATE PROVINCE

FREE STATE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT MOURNS THE DEATH OF FORMER STUDENT WITH PROMISING PROSPECTS

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The Premier of the Free State, Sisi Ntombela has expressed shock and sadness following the unexpected death of Neville Kapoko Mathopa (25), a Free State Provincial Government (FSPG) bursar, who graduated with distinction in the People's Republic of China.

Mathopa, who resides in Motlatla in Thaba – Nchu, was a government bursary holder who studied Civil Engineering at Shandong Jianzhu University, in China. Mathopa, who was currently in South Africa since last year, had performed extremely well and obtained more than 30 distinctions, ultimately completing his studies with aplomb, in June 2019.

While details surrounding his death over the past weekend are still not yet clear, Premier Ntombela assures the Free State community that government is in constant communication with the family to ascertain the cause of this terrible loss of a promising life, and establish how the family can be assisted during this time.

“I am deeply saddened by Neville's unexpected death. Any loss of life is regrettable, even more so when it's a young person with a promising future like Neville. On behalf of the Free State Provincial Government, I join the people of Thaba-Nchu, Free State, and indeed the country at large, in conveying our deepest condolences to his family,” said Premier Ntombela.

Mathopa was a model student, who, in his spare time motivated learners and youth in Thaba-Nchu. A social media post, dated 26 January 2020, depicts senior

officials from the FSPG accompanied by proud lecturers from his institution of higher learning in China at his home in Thaba-Nchu, where they went to meet his extended family in celebration of the outstanding academic achievements.

Mathopa was one of the many students the FSPG has sent to China to further their studies. Currently, in China alone, the FSPG has over 100 students studying various strategic courses in over 15 Universities, namely:

- Beijing Institute of Technology;
- Shandong Jiangzhu University;
- Shenyang Medical College;
- China Medical University;
- Dalian Medical University;
- Dalian University of Science and Technology;
- Xian Jiaotong Medical University;
- North Western Polytechnic University;
- Wuhan University;
- Hubei University;
- Wuyi University;
- Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University;
- Nanjing Agriculture and Forestry University;
- Nanjing University of Science and Technology;
- Nanchang University;
- Nanchang Aeronautics University; and
- Shanghai University

“The family of Mathopa is undoubtedly going through a very difficult time and we ask that they be afforded space and time to mourn. We sincerely hope those students that remain studying abroad, sent by our government, can emulate his prolific achievements in honour of his memory,” said Premier Ntombela.

Issued by the Free State Provincial Government Communication Services

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