

Nair was not there for self-enrichment

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SOUTH Africa needs more leaders like the late struggle veteran Billy Nair.

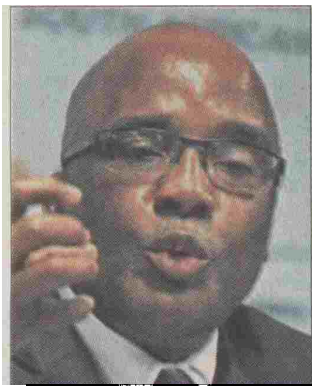
This is the view of national Health Minister, Aaron Motsoaledi who was delivering the inaugural Billy Nair memorial lecture at the Docklands Hotel in Durban on Saturday.

The lecture was organised by the Durban University of Technology's Convocation and Alumni Relations department.

Motsoaledi spoke fondly of his time with Nair as a young member of the ANC under Nair's leadership.

"I was fortunate enough to spend time learning from this great comrade, who experienced some of apartheid's harshest punishments. Comrade Billy was always down to earth and always put the organisation before himself. He was not there for self-enrichment," said Motsoaledi.

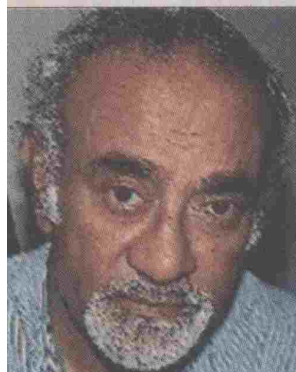
Nair served in a number of trade unions, most notably the Dairy Workers' Union. He was



AARON MOTSOALEDI

an active anti-apartheid activist, having been a member of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the United Democratic Front and the Natal Indian Congress until he was elected as a parliamentary member in the first democratic administration.

Nair's actions resulted in numerous arrests and disputes with the law. He was imprisoned on Robben Island alongside Nelson Mandela. Nair was also part of the Congress of the



BILLY NAIR

People in Kliptown where the Freedom Charter was adopted.

Presidential spokesman, Mac Maharaj, also delivered a few anecdotes of Nair's time on Robben Island.

"Billy and Madiba grew very close and were always debating. Madiba would call Billy 'Thamble' (Tamil for smaller brother) and Billy, in turn, would call Madiba 'Anna' (elder brother)," said Maharaj to the amusement of those present.

DUT's Convocation and Alumni Relations manager, David Sedumedi, said the institution was extremely proud to be associated with Nair.

"DUT is extremely proud to have been associated with an alumnus of the stature and calibre of the late Billy Nair.

"It is our view that he is one of the unsung heroes in the struggle for the emancipation of our country. The purpose of the lecture, in part, is to also assist the Billy Nair Trust with its noble efforts to have the legacy of this giant member of our community celebrated in a sustainable manner," said Sedumedi.

Nair acquired a diploma in accountancy at the former ML Sultan Technical College (now DUT) in 1948.

As part of his legacy, Nair and his wife, Elsie, also deceased, left a portion of their entire estate to start a bursary fund to help indigent scholars get into higher education. The fund is administered by the Billy Nair Trust.