

Saying farewell to a changemaker

A man of many talents and with a passion for engineering, Cyril Gamede will be fondly remembered by the construction industry as a champion for excellence.



Cyril Vuyani Gamede, Pr Eng
(12 June 1963 – 1 August 2021)

At the time of his passing in July 2021, Cyril was the CEO of the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB), an organ of state that is playing a major role in transforming the sector. This includes the present roll-out of the CIDB's Best Practice Project Assessment Scheme, or BUILD programme. BUILD establishes an equitable framework conducive to job creation, skills transfer and the advancement of engineering and allied built environment candidates. An allied thrust is subcontractor development.

Matriculating at Vukuzakhe High School in Umlazi, Durban, Cyril set his sights on a career in engineering and excelled during his tertiary years at the University of Cape Town. He completed his BSc in Mechanical Engineering in 1986 and was awarded the Sammy Marks Prize for the best engineering drawing student during his first year. He went on to complete his MSc (Mechanical/Industrial Engineering) in 1988, and subsequently registered as a Professional Engineer with the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) in 1991.

Early career

Cyril's early working career began with Lever Brothers in 1988, starting as an assistant maintenance engineer and ultimately packaging manager in 1996. The next major career highlight was as operations director for Umgeni Water (1996 to 2002) and operations director for African Explosives Limited (2002 to 2010).

Moving out of the corporate world, Cyril then gained invaluable experience in the consulting engineering sector. Key positions included his role as managing director of K2S Consulting (2010 to 2012), chief executive of Asceng (2012), and managing director of GMD Consulting (2017 to 2019).

Prior to joining GMD Consulting, Cyril was chief executive of Umgeni Water (2012 to 2017) and joined the CIDB as its CEO in 2020.

Giving back

A good listener and an empathetic leader, Cyril dedicated his life to mentoring and creating opportunities for men and women so they could grow to their full potential. This included volunteering to

tutor students while at university and, at one time, teaching mathematics to high school learners in the mid-1990s.

In addition to being a director and non-executive director of various companies, Cyril was also at one time President of the National Society of Black Engineers, President of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, and President of ECSA.

Cyril was also a Captain in the 19 Field Engineer Regiment and enjoyed flying light fixed-wing aircraft in his spare time.

This summary of Cyril's achievements and contributions to the built environment and general society underscores the loss. Cyril was passionate about his role as CEO of the CIDB because he knew it was so integral to shaping a unified recovery of the South African construction sector and the overall economy.

His legacy will be remembered. **35**

