

CITATION – STAVROS NICOLAOU

Stavros Nicolaou was born in Johannesburg on 24 June 1965. He matriculated from Highlands North Boys High in 1982 whereas a prefect also was part of the school's 6-person Image Society, responsible for promoting the school's image and reputation. He received colours in athletics, rugby, and administration. He obtained a Bachelor of Pharmacy from Wits in 1986. In his final year of study, he was awarded the Monty Rubenstein award for excellence in his research project.

His successful career in the pharmaceutical industry started at Adcock Ingram Pharmaceutical. He was rapidly promoted to product manager before being appointed as a group product manager at Astra Pharmaceuticals, SA (1992) where he launched what was to become South Africa's 2nd largest pharmaceutical product at the time. This was followed by an appointment as director of marketing and sales for Garec Pharmaceuticals (1994), where he became general manager in 1995 and CEO in 1996. At the time, he was also the CEO of HMS Network Services that included Link Pharmacies and GP Net, then the leading pharmacy and GP networks in South Africa. Subsequently, he took on the role of CEO of Aspen Pharmacare's International division and thereafter was appointed Aspen's Group Senior Executive responsible for Strategic Trade. Aspen is the largest manufacturer in Africa and the southern hemisphere and the world's leaders in anaesthetics outside of the United States of America. Aspen is also a world leader in injectable antithrombotic and generic Antiretroviral (ARVs).

While at Aspen, he was instrumental in developing and introducing the first, generic ARV in Africa by persuading global pharmaceutical companies to give Aspen a license to produce these agents. This extraordinary concession occurred at a time of unprecedented HIV/AIDS denialism in South Africa and resulted in the acceleration of ARV availability in South Africa that saved thousands of lives. Subsequently, he led the negotiation of technology transfer for two key MDR-TB products, at the time when MDR and XDR-TB began to manifest in South Africa. Aligned to this he ensured that South Africa became the first country to achieve USFDA approval for generic ARVs outside of the United States. He also led negotiations, with former United States Bill Clinton and his Foundation in concluding a global ARV procurement alliance. These initiatives improved access to treatment for ARV's and MDR-TB in Africa. He continues to be involved in the global positioning and supply of ARV's through multi-lateral organisations, such as WHO, UNAIDS, and others. In addition, he has also been instrumental in the introduction of other clone products into African markets. This has led to affordable medicines being available to treat common conditions such as hypertension, acid reflux, and high cholesterol levels.

He is one of South Africa's lead advocates for local pharmaceutical manufacture - a key lever to growing our economy. To this end, he served on the NEDLAC Task Group, responsible for advising on the changes in legislation that led to the amendment of Preferential Procurement Regulations, which introduced designation, as a key lever to local procurement. He continues to remain active as Executive Member of the Manufacturing Circle, a Board Member of Proudly SA and chairs the Marketing Committee of the Board.

He is widely recognised in South Africa's business circles for taking on leadership roles particularly when these result in promoting South Africa and the well-being of its people. Amongst these, he is the current Chair of the South Africa Pharmaceutical Producers Association, has previously served on the World Bank/IFC Technical Advisory Board on the strengthening of African Health Systems and is a member of the India Brazil South Africa CEO's Forum. Furthermore, he served on the Executive Committees of the National Association of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and was its Vice Chair for several years. He has also been engaged in academic advising and public service which include being: on the North-West University Business School Advisory Board; previously appointed as non-executive director of Transnet; a director of the Gauteng Growth and Development Agency where he chairs the Trade and Investment Committee; previous Chair of the board of SA Express Airways; serving on the Special Economic Zones Advisory Board to the Minister of Trade and Industry; appointed by the President of South Africa to both the BRICS Business Council and the Board of Brand SA, where he Chairs the Human Capital and Remuneration Committee; appointed by the Minister of Trade and Industry to the Board of Proudly SA and as a non-executive director of Business Unity SA, our apex business organisation.

In Brand SA, he has led initiatives aimed at enhancing social cohesion and integration. These include a lead role in Premier Makhura's Social Cohesion Games, an annual event used to campaign against xenophobia and racism and improve community outreach and development. He is also a strong advocate of healthy lifestyle choices and anti-alcohol and substance abuse programs. In the pursuit of building societal bridges and accelerating the SA social cohesion project, he chairs the Hellenic, Italian and Portuguese Alliance, in the interest of enhancing a better understanding across all sectors of our society. He is also the founder and Chair of the Public Health Enhancement Fund. This collaboration between 23 leading private health companies and the Ministry of Health in South Africa funds medical students from rural and disadvantaged communities through 6 medical schools around SA, funds postgraduate students engaged in HIV/TB research and funds the Health Leadership Academy, which is aimed at improving public health administration. Finally, he has been involved with the J9 Foundation, which aims to educate the public on MND and has facilitated setting up a clinic at Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital to care for patients with this condition.

He is a previous winner of the SA Institute of Marketing Management (IMM) Health Care Marketer of the year and recently was inducted as Fellow of the Pharmaceutical Society of SA, the highest honour bestowed by this society. He has also been awarded the Order of the Lion of St Mark, by the Greek Orthodox Pope and Patriarch, the highest foreign award of the Greek Orthodox Church.

For his extensive achievements and contribution to society across many different fields it is, therefore, befitting that the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg bestow on Mr Stavros Nicolaou a Doctor of Science in Medicine honoris causa.