

## **F. W. DE KLERK**

*Former South African President and Foe of Apartheid*

Frederik Willem de Klerk was born in Johannesburg on 18 March 1936, the son of Senator Jan de Klerk, a senior cabinet minister. His school years were spent mainly in Krugersdorp, where he matriculated at Monument High School.

He attended the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education and graduated in 1958 with BA and LLB degrees (cum laude). During his university years he was actively involved in student affairs.

Mr. de Klerk later joined a firm of attorneys in Vereeniging that he helped to develop into one of the leading law firms outside of South Africa's major metropolitan areas. At the same time he played a prominent role in numerous community activities. In 1972, he was offered the chair of administrative law at Potchefstroom University, but had to decline because of his decision to enter active politics. In November 1972, he was elected as the member of Parliament for Vereeniging.

In 1978, shortly after his forty-second birthday, and after only five and-a-half years as a back-bencher, he was appointed to the cabinet. During the following 11 years, he was responsible for the following portfolios consecutively:

- Posts and Telecommunications and Social Welfare and Pensions
- Sport and Recreation
- Mining and Environmental Planning
- Mineral and Energy Affairs
- Internal Affairs
- The Public Service
- National Education (The portfolio that he held when he was elected as state president.)

On 1 July 1985, Mr. de Klerk became chairman of the Minister's Council in the House of Assembly. He became leader of the House of Assembly of December 1, 1986.

De Klerk was elected to the key post of leader of the National Party in the Transvaal on 6 March 1982. On 2 February 1989, the caucus of the National Party chose him as the national leader of the party.

On 15 August 1982, after the resignation of President P.W. Botha, Mr. de Klerk became acting state president, and after the general election of 6 September, was inaugurated as state president on 20 September 1989.

Mr. de Klerk served as state president until President Nelson Mandela's inauguration on 10 May 1994. During this period, he initiated and presided over the inclusive negotiations that led to the dismantling of "apartheid" and the adoption of South Africa's first fully democratic constitution in December 1993.

After leading the National Party to the second place in South Africa's first fully representative general election of 27 April 1994, Mr. de Klerk was inaugurated as one of South Africa's two executive deputy presidents. He served in this capacity until the end of June 1996, when his party, under his leadership, decided to withdraw from the Government of National Unity. He was leader of the Official Opposition until his retirement from active party politics on 9 September 1997.

Mr. de Klerk has received numerous national and international honors and honorary doctorates. In 1981, he was awarded the South African Decoration for Meritorious Service. In 1992, he received the Prix du Courage Internationale (The Prize for Political Courage) and was co-recipient of the UNESCO Houphouet-Boigny Prize. He was also awarded the Prince of Asturias Prize in Spain during the same year. In July 1993, together with Mr. Nelson Mandela, Mr. de Klerk received the Philadelphia Peace Prize, and on 10 December the same year, was the co-recipient, also with Nelson Mandela, of the Nobel Peace Prize.

In 1999, Mr. de Klerk published his autobiography, *The Last Trek--A New Beginning* and established the F. W. de Klerk Foundation, which is dedicated to the promotion of peace in multi-communal societies. He makes numerous speeches around the world and actively participates as an elder statesman in international conferences on the promotion of harmonious relations in multicomunal societies, the future of Africa and South Africa, and the challenges facing the world during the new millennium.

He is the honorary chairman of the Prague Society for International Co-operation in the Czech Republic; a member of the Assembly of the Parliament of Cultures in Istanbul; and plays a substantial role in Forum 2000, a think-tank initiated by former President Vaclav Havel and Nobel laureate Eli Wiesel. In addition, he serves on the advisory boards of the Peres Centre for Peace in Israel and the Global Panel in Germany.

Mr. de Klerk established the Global Leadership Foundation in March 2004, a foundation that is registered in Switzerland, with operational headquarters in London. Its objective is to play a constructive role in the promotion of peace, democracy, and development. The organization will help national leaders who face complex economic and political challenges by providing confidential advice, especially but not exclusively in the developing world and emerging markets. A number of internationally respected former leaders and experts have joined Mr. de Klerk in this new initiative.

Mr. de Klerk lives on a farm outside Paarl about 60 kms from Cape Town, where he and his wife Elita will soon be producing their own wine. He enjoys reading, the outdoor life, and golf.