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**MEDIA STATEMENT
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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SIU MOURNS THE PASSING OF ITS FOUNDING HEAD

The Special Investigating Unit (SIU) deeply mourns the passing of former Judge Willem Heath, its founding head and a pivotal figure in the fight against corruption.

Former Judge Heath, often referred to as "the people's judge," was approached by former President Nelson Mandela and the then-Minister of Justice, Dullah Omar, to assist the Department of Justice and the Office of the State Law Advisor in drafting the Special Investigating Units and Special Tribunals Act. He subsequently became the inaugural head of the SIU.

The SIU's foundation can be traced back to 1995 when former Judge Heath led the Heath Commission of Inquiry. The Commission's groundbreaking work revealed a critical gap in law enforcement, highlighting the need for a permanent body to address fraud, corruption, and maladministration—a role the SIU continues to fulfil today.

Under former Judge Heath's leadership, the Heath Commission investigated incidents of fraud, corruption, and maladministration in the Eastern Cape, earning widespread recognition for its achievements. His leadership helped establish a strong stance against corruption and introduced proactive measures to safeguard state resources, solidifying the SIU's role as a guardian of the public purse.

Adv. Andy Mothibi, the current head of the SIU, expressed profound sorrow over former Judge Heath's passing and extended heartfelt condolences to his family, friends, and colleagues.

"Former Judge Heath's unwavering dedication to eradicating corruption and upholding the rule of law has left an indelible mark on our nation's judiciary and public life. As the SIU, we will carry forward Judge Heath's legacy and values and pledge to uphold the principles of fairness and accountability that the late judge championed throughout his career. His wisdom, fairness, and steadfast commitment to justice will be deeply missed by the members of the SIU, the legal fraternity, and the entire country."

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