

## Tribute to Sheldon Weeks

We met Sheldon for the first time at the SACHES conference held in Broederstroom in 1992. This was the beginning of a long collaboration and friendship. We remember him as an exceptional **travel companion** to subsequent SACHES conferences. He always brought along his preferred brand of coffee. We shared many stories and jokes. Across our language barriers it was totally okay for congested traffic to become constipated traffic! One occasion we remember vividly was our trip from Pretoria down to Makhanda when it was still called Grahamstown. We spent one night at Petro's aunt in Komani when it was still called Queenstown. The duvet in Sheldon's room had a bright floral pattern. The aunt couldn't help wondering how he would look when sleeping with his beard surrounded by flowers. When we arrived in Grahamstown, we hit a cold front and discovered that two of our Zambian colleagues, unprepared for the cold, had nowhere to stay. We offered them the only bedroom in the bungalow and gave them some of our warm clothes. The three of us then shared the lounge with its three bunk beds. No one snored. On our way back we had to overnight at Maselspoort in the Free State. Petro opened all the windows, followed by a mosquito invasion. According to Sheldon, it was the arnica oil that Petro used to massage our tired shoulders that was the big attraction.

We also remember Sheldon as a **bridge builder** between people from diverse ideological backgrounds, bringing together different educational groups and organisations to enrich one another with new ideas and tolerance. He was also a master of conflict resolution in some of the delicate situations in which we found ourselves. When we think of Sheldon, we see a compassionate, hospitable, down-to-earth human being who, together with Gudrun, hosted many guests in their home in Gaborone. We remember the concerts and get-togethers that they organised with Gudrun's students and others.

Sheldon and Gudrun, you will always be in our hearts.

### Petro van Niekerk and Anne-Marie Bergh

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# Tribute to Prof. Sheldon Weeks

It was with great sadness that we at SACHES heard about the passing of our colleague and dear friend, Sheldon Weeks in Brattleboro, Vermont, U.S.A. on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022 at the age of 90. After his doctoral graduation in education at Harvard University, he specialized in Comparative Education and spent most of his working life serving in universities in developing countries, Uganda (1969 – 72), Tanzania (1972 – 74), Papua New Guinea (1974 – 91). He was the founding Dean of Graduate Studies at the University of Botswana from 1991 and played a major role in the advancement of education for development in Southern Africa. Sheldon was a committed African scholar and leader. May the fond memories of Sheldon console us in these times of mourning. Our deepest sympathy to Sheldon’s family and friends. May his memories and deeds inspire those of us all over the world who engaged with him to seek peace, freedom, education and equality for all humankind.

I first got to know Sheldon in 1992 after his appointment as Profr of Education at the University of Botswana. He attended the second SACHES Annual Conference held at Broederstroom near Johannesburg in 1992. From that time he became one of the most active SACHES members, as a good writer, editor, conference organizer and communicator. He hosted the fourth annual conference of SACHES in Gaborone, Botswana in October 1994. He organized a cultural evening, visits to see different kinds of educational institutions in Botswana, including a Brigade, two Colleges of Education and some schools. He was a brilliant, hard-working organizer and the conference was a huge success. Together with Mmantsetsa Marope, he edited a book based on eight papers presented at the conference entitled “Education and National Development in Southern Africa” under the banner of the Botswana Educational Research Association (BERA) in which he was a leading participant. Sheldon had a devotion to young African scholars and he brought many young Botswana lecturers with him to SACHES conferences. Sheldon’s demonstrated academic leadership led to him being appointed as President of SACHES for two terms from 1999 to 2003.

When the SACHES journal ‘South African Review of Education’ was established, Sheldon became the Editor from 1997. He combined it with the Botswana journal ‘Education with Production’ started by the revered educator and initiator of education and production institutions like the Brigades, Patrick van Rensburg. Sheldon edited at least nine volumes of the SACHES journal between 1997 and 2005.

In their obituary, Sheldon’s family characterized Sheldon as a humanitarian, educator, researcher, author, peace activist, conscientious objector, Quaker, beloved father, grandfather, great-grandfather and husband. Indeed that is who he was. I shared many discussions with him and his wife, Gudrun, at our conference venues, and I hosted Sheldon and his family at my home when they had a holiday in Cape Town in the late 1990s. For me it was a great privilege to share with him our mutual passion for education and development in higher education.

Sheldon and I shared philosophies on education for development in Africa. We both questioned the Northern colonial template foisted on African universities in terms of epistemology, academic writing and publishing. We both advocated a true Africanization of academia in our countries to demystify the educational content, research and publication brought to Africa from the global North. Sheldon was an empowering figure in developing true African scholarship. We became very good friends. Before he left Botswana for America in his twilight years because of serious health issues, I visited him in Gaborone by car from Mahikeng, to spend a day with him and Gudrun at their home. I bought numerous publications and paintings from him during these final hours we were together before they left for the U.S.A. The memory of Sheldon will live on in Southern Africa and the current President of SACHES, Prof. Charl Wolhuter and I will write a paper on Sheldon’s contribution to our organization and the developing world for our next SACHES Annual Conference.

Aluta continua!

## Prof. Harold Herman

Founding SACHES President and Emeritus Professor of Comparative, International, Development Education at the University of the Western Cape



## Tribute to Sheldon Weeks

My first memory of Sheldon is of the tall Professor from Botswana at SACHES conferences. From 1998 we worked together in the Executive committee of SACHES after the Executive Committee duties were moved from South (Cape Town) to North. Most of us Northerners were in Gauteng Province, in Pretoria and Johannesburg, and only Sheldon, from further north, in Botswana. Sheldon, however, found a way of attending all meetings in Pretoria.

He was passionate about development of young academics and students. As a result, he made sure in a SACHES conference program there was always a session for students. He was also tolerant of journal submissions from inexperienced writers - articles which would have been dismissed off-hand in some journals. He served SACHES in many roles - notably as the President and as the Editor of the SARE Journal. He was also the editor of the SACHES Newsletter before handing that over to me. I realized when I took over that the shoes I was filling in were too big for me. I couldn't imagine how Sheldon had managed to find the time to make the compilation he always had for each issue, covering a wide area geographically and topically.

Sheldon was just a special person. He had no pretensions at all. He lived a simple life - when attending conferences, preferring to sleep in backpackers' accommodation rather than fancy hotels. He pressed on us to keep SACHES simple and accessible to anyone interested.

He loved his coffee. I remember the one time he & Gudrun slept over at my place in Pretoria, on their way to Botswana. I knew I had to offer him coffee, and didn't want to offer him instant coffee, but I didn't know well how to make percolated coffee. I ended up asking him to make the coffee. Sheldon was accommodating and gracious about the incident. He also showed me how to store ground coffee once opened.

I trust and believe that Sheldon is rested, and hopefully realizes how much he impacted everyone he interacted with. Farewell Sheldon.

### Thobeka Mda

Former President of SACHES

