



Dr Annemarie Breytenbach

*Senior Lecturer and Academic Manager,
Department of Management Sciences, Mbombela Campus.*

From an unfinished B Com degree to a completed Doctorate, from Short-term Insurance Broker to Academic Manager, and from Small Business owner to Senior Lecturer. This sentence pretty much explains Dr Breytenbach's career path during the past three decades.

When you recall the 90's, you tend to think that everything was already technology-driven with modern equipment and state of the art apparatus. "Not true," says Dr Breytenbach, whose career started in 1994 at the Mbombela Campus with a part-time appointment, lecturing Marketing and Human Resources Management. "Those years it was quite challenging for lecturers who had to prepare all their transparencies by hand and spend hours and nights reading and preparing for classes. One computer was shared between many part-time lecturers."

In 1997, she was appointed to a permanent lecturing position. "By that time, I had finished an Honours degree and had enrolled for a Master's in Marketing Management at the University of Pretoria. It was a structured Master's and I had to travel to Pretoria every five weeks for classes. It was tough because my children were still small and all expenses were for my own account." But, as the saying goes, all that starts well, ends well, and in 1999 she obtained her Master's.

In 2000, the Mbombela Campus moved from Bell Street in the city centre to its new premises overlooking the beautiful Lowveld hills. In the same year, Dr Breytenbach was appointed Academic Manager in the Faculty of Management Sciences.

In 2012 and from 2014 to 2015, she was appointed acting Campus Director with new challenges and responsibilities. Then, suddenly, she experienced an unforeseen setback. "During this time my daughter was diagnosed with breast cancer and later my son with testicular cancer. Without

any hesitation, I decided to step down from the Campus Director's position. Today, we are very thankful that both of them are in remission."

Dr Breytenbach will not easily exchange the Mbombela Campus for another. She describes it as a unique environment with positive staff and students. There is a calmness and an atmosphere of harmony. Even when we have unrest, which is not often, problems are solved quickly, without causing much disorder. This might be the result of being part of a smaller campus, where almost everybody knows and respects one another. Of course, we have a few added bonuses, such as the good Lowveld weather all year round, a stunning view of the city, and last, but not least, our proximity to the Kruger National Park."

Speaking about women in leadership, Dr Breytenbach says although there was a time when women were ignored for their leadership role, opinions have luckily changed and that women are now increasingly recognised for the important role they play. "I believe that the 'softer touch' that women has, is needed in the world today. Women can be very strong leaders and they have the ability to inspire and mentor while they are taking care of business. That caring, nurturing instinct is what gives them the edge."



"Sometimes I still have to pinch myself for being so blessed to have such a fulfilling career. The highlight for me is definitely making a difference in people's lives. Being in a leadership position is not always easy. It is extremely important to me to treat everyone I meet and everything I take on with respect, honesty and integrity. I could not have done this job, or still do it, without support. It starts with my God, my family, especially my husband, and, lastly, my colleagues on this campus. It is a team of wonderful, supportive and hardworking people. Life is a privilege."