

Visitors
stream
to pay
homage

By PATRICK LAURENCE
Deputy Political Editor

KIMBERLEY. — A stoical Mrs Veronica Sobukwe, widow of the former leader of the banned Pan-Africanist Congress leader, Mr Robert Sobukwe, yesterday offered comfort and strength to the steady stream of visitors to her home.

But she refused to comment on her husband's death, beyond a firm statement that his life was its own justification.

"I have no comment. You know how I feel. Just write his life from beginning to end, if you don't know it, just ask someone who does," she said.

Mrs Sobukwe, a nursing sister, was at home in Galeshewe, the township just outside Kimberley, with one of her twin sons and a sister from Pretoria.

As the people of Galeshewe heard that "Prof", as Mr Sobukwe was affectionately known, was dead, they came to pay homage in a quiet African way.

A black traffic policeman in uniform, came in gently, gravely introducing himself to all in the lounge.

"He was a brave man," he said of Mr Sobukwe. "He was always smiling, right to the end."

The telephone rang all day, bringing messages of sympathy from all over South Africa and further afield, particularly from Britain and the United States.

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Barnard to help Sobukwe family

Political Staff

PROFESSOR Chris Barnard is to pay R4000 to bring Mr Robert Sobukwe's three children from the United States to South Africa to attend his funeral in Graaff Reinet on Saturday.

Three of Mr Sobukwe's four children last saw their father in December before leaving to continue their studies in the United States where they have been under the care of Mr Andrew Young, US Ambassador to the United Nations, for the past two years.

Mr Sobukwe, a banned former founder-leader of the Pan-Africanist Congress, died of lung cancer soon after midnight yesterday. His wife Veronica was at his bedside in the Kimberley Hospital when he died.

On hearing of his death, Prof Barnard, the Cape Town heart surgeon who became a personal friend of Sobukwe while he was being treated in his ward at Groote Schuur Hospital, made his offer to Mrs Sobukwe.

Prof Barnard last night refused to comment on his offer. But people close to him said he had appealed to the Minister of Justice, Mr J T Kruger, to lift the banning order imposed on the black leader since his release from Robben Island prison in 1969.

The heart surgeon gave a medical report to Mr Kruger to support his representations, but had not received a reply from the Minister before Mr Sobuk-

we's death.

Mr Kruger was not available for comment last night.

Mr Sobukwe's three children in the United States, Mliswa, 23, Diniisawe, 21, and Dalinyebo, 19, will join their mother in Kimberley and leave for the Sobukwe birthplace in Graaff Reinet on Thursday.

Tributes poured in yesterday for the 54-year-old political leader, who has been in jail or under restriction orders since the Sharpeville disturbances of 1960.

Mrs Sally Motlana, vice-president of the SA Council of Churches and wife of Soweto's detained Committee of 10 leader, Dr Nthato Motlana, said: "We are all the poorer for having lost him at this time of our struggle."

The KwaZulu leader, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, described Mr Sobukwe as a "political giant whose leadership and sacrifice will stand out in the history of the liberation struggle in South Africa."

Dr Manas Buthelezi, a leading black churchman, said the death of Mr Sobukwe came as an even greater shock because he had died while under a banning order which prevented him making a meaningful contribution to the country.

The Prime Minister's office said Mr Vorster was not available for comment, but the leader of the Parliamentary Opposition, Mr Colin Eglin, said South Africa would be the poorer



MR ROBERT SOBUKWE
... died of cancer

for Mr Sobukwe's death.

"Robert Sobukwe was undoubtedly a man of considerable leadership qualities," Mr Eglin said.

Mrs Helen Suzman, the PFP MP for Houghton, who made frequent appeals for Mr Sobukwe's freedom and visited him while he was a prisoner on Robben Island, said: "He was remarkably unembittered and even after his release, when banned and restricted, he maintained a moderate approach to our racial problems."

At the UN a memorial service was being planned. A spokesman for the Secretary-General, Dr Kurt Waldheim, offered formal "regrets".

There was no immediate reaction from Mr Young. Senator Dick Clark, chairman of the Senate's Africa panel, was preparing a statement on Mr Sobukwe's death.

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