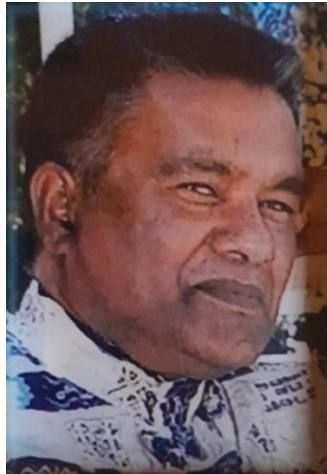


**Professor Louis Solomon Jeevanantham: Sportsman, Educator and Sports  
Development Educator, 1950 – 2021  
(Claudia Jeevanantham)**

An exceptional teacher, especially one who becomes a role model, can profoundly impact a student's life. Louis Jeevanantham was such a teacher. He was a mentor and source of inspiration to his students.



Louis Solomon Jeevanantham was born in Durban in 1950. At the tender age of 11 years, he left Durban for Johannesburg. It was decided by his parents that it was best for him to continue his schooling in Johannesburg. He attended First Primary School and went on to complete matric at Lenasia High School, where he was the Head Boy and Victor Ludorum three years in a row.

He attained his Higher Education Diploma in 1971 from Transvaal College of Education. Upon qualifying Louis taught at various schools in Lenasia. His first teaching post was at Progress Primary School, thereafter Highveld Primary, where he taught the Remedial Class. Since it was common to be transferred at the discretion of the Department, he was posted to Lenasia High School. Here Louis taught English, which would become his absolute passion. Louis subsequently had two more transfers, namely to Trinity and Topaz Secondary Schools respectively. He then moved to St Barnabas College in Bosmont.

Louis was driven by his love for sport and academia and so firmly believed in the holistic development of the child. His dedication, passion for teaching and ability to connect with his students resulted in him shaping not just academic and sporting skills but also character and a love of learning. As an English teacher his love of literature proved infectious. He expertly guided his students through the complexities of Shakespeare and the nuances of modern prose. In the words of one

of his ex-students, Enzo Scarillia, “Mr Jeevs taught us to engage with the texts and not just memorize it. I learnt from him that *Dulce et Decorum Est* by Wilfred Owen was an ironic take on patriotism and war - a healthy cynicism that I still carry with me today.”



Louis Jeevanantham (right)

Louis the sports enthusiast inevitably took charge of football and athletics at the schools at which he taught. He gave freely of his time. He served as both manager and coach at provincial level in athletics and football codes for South African Primary Schools' Sports Association (SAPSSA) and the South African Secondary Schools' Sports Association (SASSSA) under the banner of the South African Council on Sport (SACOS). He travelled to numerous provinces in his capacity as coach. He was also part of a delegation that represented SACOS Primary Schools at the “unity talks” held in Upington; SAPSSA being one of the last SACOS federations to consider unifying with establishment sport.

Louis was a founding member of the legendary Bluebells United Football Club, which joined the Southern Transvaal Football Union in 1969. Louis' talent as a skilful midfielder and prolific goal scorer hit the headlines. Playing in a tournament in Mackenzieville, Louis was scouted at the age of 19 by veteran soccer administrator Moses Ali of Maritzburg City FC in the Federation Professional League. He, however, returned to his team after his stint with Maritzburg City. In 1972, Bluebells United FC was accepted in the Federation Professional League, and Louis continued to play for Bluebells. As a midfielder, he is remembered for his skill and football intelligence.

In 1977, he successfully attained a Preliminary Coaching Badge from the English Football Association. Later, as a technical coach in South Africa, he worked alongside Ted Dumitru, former Bafana Bafana football manager, on research studies, technical development and designing football training and coaching content. Louis believed that a coaching programme had to be devised, developed and aligned with the South African experience and football profile.

He realised the important role played by Football Academies in player development for competing in the modern game. He founded the Midas Academy and believed that this was the pathway for talented youngsters in deprived communities to develop to their fullest potential.

Louis had a deep passion for football coaching and education. He was a firm believer as a teacher that learning is lifelong. He was thus relentless in the pursuit of his goals regarding his studies. His postgraduate studies culminated in him obtaining a PhD in Philosophy of Education and finally his Professorship in 1994. In his study at home there was a placard on the wall stating, "When you stop learning, it is time to stop teaching." In 2000, he co-ordinated and wrote a proposal, "Tirisano - Action Plan", which was submitted to Prof Kader Asmal, the Minister of Education. He sat in an advisory capacity in 1997 to the South East Consortium for International Education (SECID) in Georgia (USA) in its bid for the Tertiary Education Linkages Project (TELP) to USAID.

Louis had numerous papers published in local and international peer reviewed Education Journals as well as chapters in books. Finally, in the words of one of Louis' ex-students, "Mr Jeevs was a Renaissance Man. He was a keen academic. He was a professional athlete. He read poetry and literature. And through observation he taught me what it is to be a father and husband. For all of this I am eternally grateful."