

March News Releases

World-Renowned Peacemaker F.W. de Klerk Will Speak Mar. 30 at U of M As Part of Inaugural Techsposium Conference

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F.W. de Klerk, Nobel Peace Prize recipient and former president of South Africa, will visit the University of Memphis on March 30 as the keynote speaker for an international conference that will focus on improving healthcare and education through the use of information technology.

De Klerk will speak at 11:30 a.m. at the Holiday Inn at the University of Memphis on the role of healthcare and education in promoting worldwide peace. His appearance is presented jointly by the University and the Memphis in May International Festival, which is spotlighting the Republic of South Africa as this year's honored country. St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and the Hooks Institute for Social Change also have been instrumental in developing the conference program.

The speech and lunch are open to the public, but seating is limited, and the advance purchase of tickets is required. Reservations may be made by phone at 1-800-235-1984 or online at www.memphis.edu/techsposium. The cost of the lunch is \$30 per person.

The two-day conference at the FedEx Institute of Technology at the U of M will examine the use of information technology to improve education and health both locally and throughout the world. Speakers will include leading educators, medical researchers, healthcare providers, technology specialists, and civic and political leaders. Details about the conference are available online at: www.memphis.edu/techsposium.

De Klerk was elected president of South Africa in 1989. Shortly after he took office, he shocked his countrymen and the world with three decisive acts. He declared an end to apartheid between the races in that country, he removed the national ban on the African National Conference, and he ordered nationalist leader Nelson Mandela released from prison unconditionally.

De Klerk also initiated negotiations that eventually resulted in a new constitution and a new democratic government. Between 1990 and 1993, de Klerk and Mandela, who would later succeed de Klerk as South Africa's president, worked together to end apartheid completely and establish the new government. For their efforts, they were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993. 2004 marks the 10th anniversary of democracy in South Africa.

Although de Klerk stepped down from public office in the late 1990s, he has continued his role as peacemaker and conciliator. He established the F.W. de Klerk Foundation to help resolve conflicts in multicultural societies around the world. In April of this year, he will be awarded Morehouse College's "Gandhi, King, Ikeda Community Builders Prize" for his efforts to promote nonviolence as a way to resolve differences. He will also be inducted into the International Hall of Honor in the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel at Morehouse, an honor given to those who "have made significant contributions to the civil and human rights nonviolence movement internationally."

For more details about de Klerk's appearance, call Dr. York Bradshaw, chairman of the Department of Sociology at the University of Memphis, 901-678-2611.

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