

■ RUGBY

# Tributes flow for Bok legend Chester Williams

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mother. We are going to honour Chester's memory by pledging to carry on the awesome work that Chester started five years ago, the Chester Williams Foundation," Maria said.

Daughter Chloe said it felt surreal to be speaking at her father's funeral so soon in her life.

"You made the first 15 years of my life the best years. There will be no human that can ever replace you. To the world you were Chester Williams, but to me you are the world. I love

you, Daddy, never forget that," a tearful Chloe said.

Guests at the funeral included family friend Minister of Public Works Patricia de Lille, Minister of Sports, Arts and Culture Nathi Mthethwa, singer PJ Powers who sang a rendition of the 1995 World Cup anthem, *World in Union*, and some of the 1995 Springbok team, including former captain Francois Pienaar.

Western Cape Premier Alan Winde handed the South African flag to Williams' family in accordance with state funeral protocol.

"The Black Pearl" played for the Springboks 27 times between 1993 and 2000.

He also ran out more than 60 times for Western Province and represented the Golden Lions, winning the Currie Cup with them in 1999.

But it was undoubtedly the 1995 World Cup victory, just a year after the country attained democracy, that remained the highlight of Williams' career.

Once he hung up his rugby boots he was a highly successful coach, most recently coaching UWC to victory in

the Varsity Shield competition.

His friend, Steve Harris, said he had ambitions of coaching the Springboks.

"He did everything conceivable to learn for that job. Recently he was contemplating what subject he should pursue to do a PhD. Imagine, our coach, Dr Chester Williams," said Harris.

Friend and Romanian rugby player Dan Dinu said Williams was the embodiment of freedom and victory.

Dinu worked with Williams from 2012 to 2013 when the Paarl-born player coached the Romanian rugby team, Timisoara Saracens. The team

had not won the national championship in 40 years until Williams took over the coaching reins, achieving unprecedented back-to-back titles.

"He was our champion. He conquered the rugby field and our hearts. He was our coach and no matter what he touched it turned to gold on the rugby field," Dinu said.

Director of sport at UWC, Mandl Gagayi, said when he was looking for a rugby coach in 2015 he turned to the Western Province Rugby Union and was told there was only one man for the job.