

SA hails economist's work

SCHÜSSLER: ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF INSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE LEAVES AN INDELIBLE MARK

➔ **Developed multiple barometers to gauge state of sectors of economy.**

Marizka Coetzer

Founder of Economists dot coza Mike Schüssler died yesterday at age 60 following a short fight against cancer, leaving behind his wife Greta and son Rudi.

Schüssler's career spanned more than 30 years from his early days at Transnet, Treasury, FBC Bank, EW and SAA.

"His research also resulted in the development of unique indicators for the South African economy, which is one of his great legacies for the South African economic sector," read a statement from Economists dot coza.

In earlier years, he developed provincial economic barometers and more recently the BETI, the BankservAfrica Economic Transaction Index, the BPPI, the Private Pensions Index and the BTPI, the BankservAfrica Take-Home Pay, which are released on a monthly basis and provides valuable, timely information on the state of the SA economy.

There were also, among others, the CTrack Transport and



NATIONAL TREASURE. Mike Schüssler dies at 60. Picture: Supplied

Freight Index and the Adcorp Staffing Index.

Schüssler was also the consulting economist for Brenthurst Wealth Management and also consulted to MasterCard, the trade union UASA and the South African Forestry Company Limited, which used his input for arbitration, remuneration, inflation and pricing.

"He left an indelible mark as an economist, and those of us who knew him and worked closely with him will feel his loss for years to come," said BankservAfrica's head of stakeholder engagements Shergeran Naidoo.

Economist and friend Piet

Croucamp said Schüssler was a limitless source of incredibly valuable information. "He would source from sites and places that were so obvious but so many would miss. He would quote Statistics SA. And you would wonder where he found the info and he found it where you missed it. It's what he did with the information," he said.

Croucamp said there was another side to Schüssler. "He was a loyal friend. I often called him a conservative economist and he would call me

a liberal, with a sense of endearment. His last message to me on Whatsapp was: 'I really need some hope now.'"

Croucamp said Schüssler's death was a huge personal loss. "It's a massive loss for SA in the sense of creative thinking and scenario painting by connecting historical dots and not looking into a crystal ball."

Economist Dawie Roodt said Schüssler was the economist of the people. "He was a big man, with a big voice," Roodt said.

Roodt said his friend Schüssler had an insight into the economy and people's psychology and used it to understand the markets better and explain the economy.

"He was one of the few economists who got his hands dirty with the data to get an in-depth insight into the economy," he said.

Economist Cobus Bester said he saw Schüssler after his first hospitalisation this year when they recorded a series of wine tastings. "I

dropped him at home afterwards and I thought he was doing well. He was very positive at that stage. I was shocked to hear he was hospitalised again," he said.

Bester said he had truly believed Schüssler would pull through. "He was an exceptional

economist with interesting and informed opinions. He was a very good people person," he said.

Bester said Schüssler understood the link between people and the economy and had an extraordinary way of explaining it.

Business writer at *The Citizen* Ina Opperman said South Africa has lost a huge encyclopaedia of institutional knowledge. "He was a journalist's dream for comments on anything, from the inflation rate to the complicated world of transport economics, and was always available to comment, no matter how busy he was.

"When praise was due, he gave it, as he did with the latest [State of the Nation Address], but he was also not scared to point out that there should be less talking and more doing," she said.

The Citizen news editor Amanda Watson said Schüssler's death came as a shock to the newsroom. "He was always available to me, even late in the evening at times most people were preparing to go to sleep. Mike could explain complex matters in a way which made them easy to understand and was always helpful to the younger journalists."

Schüssler was passionate about the local and international economy with a deep understanding of what needed to happen to save the SA economy. "Farewell, Mike, you fought a good fight. You will be missed," added Watson. -marizkac@citizen.co.za

It's a massive loss for SA in creative thinking