

## **BRAND PRETORIUS RETIRES AFTER 38 YEARS IN SA MOTOR INDUSTRY**

Brand Pretorius, one of the best known and best informed persons in the South African motor industry retires as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the McCarthy Motor Group on 1 March after a career in the local industry stretching back 38 years.

However, he is not going to sit back and rest. He will remain very active in the South African business world through a number of non-executive directorships of, amongst others, the ABSA Group, Reunert Limited, RGT Smart Market Intelligence, the National Business Initiative, University of Stellenbosch Business School and the READ Educational Trust.

Sybrand (Brand) Pretorius was born 63 years ago in Steynsrus in the Free State. He qualified with a Master of Commerce degree from the University of the Free State before starting his career in the motor industry in 1973 when he joined Toyota South Africa.

Following a number of management positions in research, planning and sales and marketing he was appointed managing director of Toyota SA Marketing in 1988. Under his guidance Toyota SA became the market leader in vehicle sales and customer satisfaction.

Pretorius joined South Africa's largest motor retail group, McCarthy Motor Holdings, as its chief executive in March 1995. Four years later he was promoted to the position of CEO of McCarthy Limited, the holding company of McCarthy Motor Holdings.

It is widely acknowledged that Pretorius played a pivotal role in saving McCarthy from bankruptcy. Due to massive bad debt write-offs in its Prefcor division the group was declared technically insolvent in December 1999. Under his leadership the company was successfully recapitalised, restructured and restored to financial health. It was acquired by Bidvest in January 2004.

Pretorius has been renowned as a knowledgeable speaker on matters relating to leadership, business and particularly the motor industry. Over the years he has won many accolades, including Automobil Man of the Year (1995), while a survey conducted in May 1999 by the influential publication Professional Management Review (PMR) by a representative panel consisting of chief executives, fleet managers and motoring journalists identified him as the most admired leader in the South African motor industry. This award was bestowed on him again in June 2000.

The publishers of the SA Automotive Yearbook presented him with a Lifetime Achiever's Award in 2003 for outstanding service to the local motor industry. This was followed by induction into the SA motor industry's Hall of Fame in 2006.

The annual Trust Barometer opinion survey, conducted among company directors by research company Ask Afrika in 2009, saw Pretorius recognised as the most trusted leader in the SA motor industry.

Brand Pretorius leaves McCarthy with a legacy of 116 wholly-owned dealerships and a staff complement of more than 6 500 people.

He has also been a person committed to corporate social investment initiatives and here he has made a major impact with McCarthy's annual Rally to READ to promote literacy among learners in rural schools.

Pretorius has been deeply involved in the organised SA motor industry for much of his career and this has elicited several wonderful tributes to a person sometimes nicknamed "Mister Motor Industry."

The director of the National Association of Automobile Manufacturers of South Africa (NAAMSA), Nico Vermeulen, had this to say: "NAAMSA wishes to pay tribute to Brand Pretorius for his outstanding and immense contribution to the broader SA motor industry since the early 1970's. He consistently placed a premium on the interests of customers, customer relations and employees.

"The SA automotive industry remains indebted to Brand for his high standards, professionalism and visionary leadership skills in promoting the interests of all sectors of this dynamic, multi-faceted and very complex industry. His relationships with industry and other stakeholders were based on mutual respect and trust."

The CEO of the Retail Motor Industry organisation (RMI), Jeff Osborne, had this to say: "Brand became president of the RMI in 2001, at a particularly challenging time in the history of this long-established organisation that had been radically restructured from the previous MIF / SAMIEA organisations. Through Brand's leadership, vision and extraordinary ability to inspire people the RMI steadily grew and strengthened into a very relevant and viable structure.

"I was personally inspired by him. Often, when facing tough business and political challenges Brand managed to keep me motivated and positive. I am proud to say that I once reported to him and always regarded Brand as a colleague and friend.

"I have no doubt that he will continue to enrich and benefit individuals and businesses in his future endeavours."

The chairman of the National Automobile Dealers Association (NADA), Derik Scorer, commented: "There is no doubt that Brand Pretorius is the one individual who has left his indelible and positive touch on the motor industry in South Africa. As a leader in the OEM fold he had genuine respect and empathy for dealers and as a dealer himself he brought respect, dignity and status to the retail industry.

“On a personal level I remain constantly inspired by the fact that dignified, ethical and principled conduct always wins the day – qualities held high by a gentleman such as Brand.”

The doyen of the SA motor industry is certainly leaving a proud legacy, with many of his personal and business principles crisply detailed in the following quotes from him:

- Leadership is not about power, position or authority. It is about influence that must be earned.
- There is no short cut to sustainable success. It requires doing the right things right, all the time.
- If you don't make dust then you eat dust! In the fast-moving world in which we live every opportunity is perishable. Speed and innovation are critical success factors.
- Respect all people. It forms the basis of quality relationship without which one can never succeed.
- It is a tough world we live in. A sometimes life is also not fair – but just get on with it!
- [Customers vote with their feet. They have never been more demanding and better informed. The reality is that they want it all!](#)

Issued by Wilken Communication Management

Tel: 012-4604448

Fax: 012-4604514

#### **DISCLAIMER**

**The information in this e-mail, as well as any attachments, is confidential and intended solely for the addressees. If you are not the intended recipient, any disclosure, copying, distribution or any action taken or omitted in reliance on it, is prohibited.**