
**THE TRAGIC DEATH OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE GONAIVES COURT OF APPEAL:
RNDDH SUGGESTS A NATIONAL FUNERAL FOR THE MAGISTRATE**

With great sadness, the National Human Rights Defense Network (RNDDH) learned the news of the tragic death of Hugues Saint-Pierre, the President of the Gonaives Court of Appeal. According to the information received at RNDDH, the magistrate was summoned to respond to the heated **La Scierie Massacre** case. He was waiting on board a vehicle that was to head towards Port-au-Prince in the Gonaives public transport station when the vehicle was side swiped by a **tap-tap**.

Under these circumstances, RNDDH deems the death of the famous magistrate very shocking; a stirring testimony of the difficult work conditions Haitian magistrates are forced to deal with.

Remembered as the Administrator of the Faculty of Law and Economic Sciences of Gonaives; a Protestant Pastor; the President of the Gonaives Court of Appeal; and a professor of Law; Hugues Saint-Pierre, during more than 30 years of service in the heart of the judicial system, forged a reputation of honesty, credibility, morality, and integrity, which surpasses Haitian borders. “***We are slaves to the law, not to politics***”, a phrase recently used by Saint-Pierre in response to journalists seeking his reaction to the multiple pressures his Court receives due to the **La Scierie** affair.

The death of Hugues Saint-Pierre is an immeasurable loss for the country. He was distinguished in his position in an increasingly discredited profession; a feat which demands admiration and respect. Even though Saint-Pierre was also the victim of

intimidation and several criminal acts (his house in Gonaives was burned twice), he remained, until his death, above reproach, impartial and fair to all authorities.

RNDDH believes that Saint-Pierre, for his invaluable contribution to Haitian judiciary system and all that he symbolizes, merits a National funeral.

RNDDH presents its deepest condolences to the parents, friends, students and colleagues of Hugues Saint-Pierre and to all others who are afflicted with mourning.

Port-au-Prince, April 26, 2007