



Dering Stainbank
(Photograph: Natal Witness)

Christopher Dering Stainbank 1922 – 1997

Prominent KwaZulu-Natal farmer and politician, Dering Stainbank died in Pietermaritzburg in January 1997.

Educated at Michaelhouse, which he left in 1939 to sign up with the Royal Natal Carbineers, Stainbank served in Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia and on through the

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Western Desert. Accidentally burned on the first day of the battle of El Alamein, he missed that encounter, but went on to fight in the Allied advance up through Italy.

After World War 2 he returned to the Eston district where he farmed sugar and became a prominent member of the community, serving on numerous committees.

In 1964 he was elected as a member of the Provincial Council for Ixopo, and 10 years later was made member of its Executive Council, representing Mooi River – the largest constituency in the province, stretching from Umzimkulu, through East Griqualand to Mooi River and outskirts of Pietermaritzburg, and taking in Underberg, Bulwer, Richmond and Eston.

As a MEC, Stainbank was placed in charge of provincial roads, the Natal Parks Board, the Natal Sharks Board, and made chairman of the St Lucia Scientific Advisory Body.

Among his many other roles, he was Chairman of the United Party in Natal, Chairman of its Midlands Regional Council, and later Chairman of its successor, the New Republic Party.

He was also a driving force behind the construction of the new Playhouse Theatre in Durban, and the formation of the Joint Executive Authority, from which the Natal-KwaZulu Indaba developed.

A keen polo player in this youth, Stainbank donated part of his farm to form the Stony Hill Polo Club, which remains active today and holds one of the leading tournaments on the provincial polo calendar.

He leaves his wife Maud (née Gordon), whom he married in 1947, three daughters and seven grandchildren.

(Reprinted from The Natal Witness)