

Barry Ronge has died

Barry Ronge, one of the country's most widely read columnists, and the former arts editor of the *Sunday Times*, passed away on 3 July, but requested that his death only be announced a week later.



Source: © The South African [The South African](#) Barry Ronge one of the country's most widely read columnists has passed away

He died at home in the arms of Albertus van Dyk, his life partner of 45 years. *The Buz Factor* publicist Bridget Van Oerle says: "Albertus is obviously very, very sad. It's a huge loss. They were together for 45 years. They had an incredible relationship."

Anant Singh pays tribute to Ronge

"It is with deep sadness that I learnt earlier of Ronge's passing a week ago," says South African filmmaker, Anant Singh.

Singh says that while there are many talented film critics in South Africa, Ronge was in a class of his own. "He is no doubt a legend and he set the bar for film critics in the country. Ronge was a passionate lover of films, in any language, from all over the world and believed in the power of film."

Singh says he first met Ronge in the 1980s when he reviewed films that he distributed in South Africa. "When I ventured into film production, Ronge understood the struggles I endured in those early days and supported my endeavours. Whilst not all of his reviews over the years were favourable, he was always honest in his critique. For me, I appreciated the fact

that even if he didn't like a film, he would write his reviews in a manner that was inoffensive."

Ronge attended the South African premiere of *Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom* which took place shortly before he retired in 2014. "I was touched when he called to congratulate me on how the film turned out. He was particularly complimentary about the authenticity of the film, including the sets we built on the backlot of Cape Town Film Studios," says Singh.

Well-known media personality

He became South Africa's most well-known and feared film critic on M-Net's (DStv 101) *Cinemagic with Barry Ronge*, and later SABC3's *Screenplay*, in which he would grade films with alliterating numbers like a "Titanic 10" or a "Failing Four".

Ronge was also a reporter for M-Net's (DStv 101) entertainment magazine shows like *Front Row* and did reviews for M-Net's *Revue Plus*. and was known for his movie reviews in the *Sunday Times*, and his Sunday morning show on Radio 702 from 1989 to 2014 where he provided insight into all aspects of SA culture.

His *Spit 'n Polish* was published in what was then the *Sunday Times* magazine. Following his retirement in 2014, he was awarded a Special Lifetime Achievement Award by *The Sunday Times* for his contribution to culture in the country. In 2015, the *Sunday Times*' SA literature prize was renamed the Barry Ronge Fiction Prize.

From 1994/95, he wrote a weekly column in the *Star Tonight!* Arts supplement, *Ronge's Writes*. In the late 80s he wrote *Barry's Bites* as a food critics for the then *Sunday Times Metro*. He was also was *Sandton Living* magazine's feared food critic under the pseudonym, Ms Rebecca Parker.

From 1980 to 1982, he wrote for the Women's Page of *The Star* newspaper - the first male journalist on the page - and was the editor of the *Star Tonight*.

Born in Hillbrow, Johannesburg, Ronge grew up on the West Rand and attended Florida Park High School. When he studied at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) he wrote film reviews for the student newspaper. His career started as a teacher at St John's College.

He was a lecturer in literature for a decade at Wits. He retired from public life in 2014.

When he retired, Ronge wrote in his final *Spit 'n Polish* column: "For the last 27 years I have been spitting and polishing... I'm not tired of it, or bored with it. It has been a good companion, and it has given me an opportunity to observe South Africans, in the cities and the suburbs, radiating true Rainbow Nation spirit."

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