

# CAMERON MUIR DUGMORE

*Member, ANC Regional Working Committee, Western Cape*

**C**ameron Dugmore was born on 16 September 1963 in Pietermaritzburg, the second of the five children of Ron and Gillian Dugmore. His father was a teacher and later principal at various schools, including Maritzburg College in Pietermaritzburg, Union High in Graaff-Reinet and York High in George. His mother was trained as a speech and drama teacher and is presently an English teacher.

Dugmore was brought up in a home where democratic and non-racial values were important. His mother, at that stage active in the Progressive Federal Party, was responsible for creating a political awareness in her children. He started school at the Union Preparatory School in Graaff-Reinet and completed his primary school education at Outeniqua Primary in George. He matriculated from York High in 1981.

Dugmore then registered at the University of Cape Town for a BA degree in law, a decision partly influenced by his opposition to doing national service in the South African Defence Force. This later led him to join the End Conscription Campaign (ECC).

Involvement with ECC and in student politics and campaigns meant that Dugmore took six years to complete his BA LLB. He then registered for an LLM, opting for course work in criminal justice and criminology, with a mini-thesis on the Lingeletu Council courts, instead of a full thesis. He completed the course work in 1990 and is in the process of completing his thesis.

While at university Dugmore played first league squash and, in his capacity as education officer for the South African Tertiary Institutions Sports Congress (Satic), actively campaigned for non-racialism in sport. He also became involved in the establishment of non-racial clubs in the South African Council of Sport (Sacos) league and served on the United Democratic Front (UDF) sports desk.

He tried to persuade Sacos to accept that unity in non-racial sport could be used as a political strategy, but Sacos held to the belief that unity in sport was not possible before liberation and refused to send a delegate to the UDF launch. However, Dugmore subsequently became secretary of the Western Cape branch of the National Sports Congress (NSC), which supported a strategy of sports unity. He held this post until 1992.

Dugmore's first formal involvement in poli-

tics was during the 1981 election when he campaigned for the Progressive Federal Party (PFP) against then State President PW Botha. He became known as a tough questioner at Botha's political meetings in George.

During his first year at the University of Cape Town he was oriented towards the PFP and did not participate in the activities of the National Union of South African Students (Nusas). During his second year he campaigned for the PFP against the proposal for a tricameral constitution, a campaign also supported by Nusas. In 1984 Dugmore was elected president of the Law Student Council and in this capacity headed the Nusas law directive, which involved research on influx control, amongst other things.

Dugmore was then asked to stand for the Students Representative Council (SRC) and in 1985 and 1986 was elected internal vice-president, a post which resulted in further involvement with Nusas. During his final LLB year, Dugmore was elected SRC president (1988-89). He was also active in the Education Action Group, in which he worked closely with the Congress of South African Students (Cosas) and the Azanian Students' Organisation (Azaso) as a Western Cape committee member of the Education Charter Campaign.

**D**ugmore maintains that Nusas gave him a thorough political training, especially through debates on class and ethnicity. This caused him to become critical of the liberal approach of the PFP, of political tactics which he felt were not activist-orientated, and of the party's reluctance to take a stand against conscription. It was through involvement with Nusas and other student organisations that Dugmore was drawn into extra-parliamentary politics.

Because of his initial decision to attend university in order to avoid conscription, he also became involved with the ECC and support for conscientious objectors. During 1988 Dugmore joined the underground structures of the African National Congress (ANC) on campus, doing mainly political work.

Although he was never detained, he was often harassed and was arrested and charged several times for attending illegal gatherings and marches. During 1985 he was given a suspended sentence for malicious damage to property after

painting slogans on walls in George. When he was assaulted by a group of right-wingers after a march on Pollsmoor prison, also in 1985, he and his colleagues were arrested for disturbing the peace. His family in George were often subjected to threatening calls and their vehicles were vandalised.

During the 1986 state of emergency the house in which he was staying was raided by the security police and Dugmore went into hiding. He disguised himself, used a false student identity card and kept on the move for about four months.

After he obtained his LLB in 1989, Dugmore worked for LEAP, a non-governmental organisation involved in paralegal education, for eight months. For the last four months of 1989 he worked for the UDF on a full-time basis. He helped organise its annual general meeting at the end of 1989 and it was at this meeting that he was elected to the UDF executive. When the UDF disbanded in the middle of 1991, following the 1990 unbanning of the ANC, Dugmore joined the Foundation for Contemporary Research where he co-ordinated a course on local government and development aimed at civic organisations.

Dugmore resigned at the beginning of 1993

to work full-time for the ANC as head of its Organising Department. He was elected as additional member to the ANC's Western Cape Regional Executive Committee in September 1991 and in 1992 became part of the regional Working Committee.

**T**he Organising Department is responsible for building and servicing ANC branches, organising internal elections and preparing for the general election. Campaigns, marshalls, political education, sector work (civics and unions) and the peace desk are also part of Dugmore's responsibilities as head of the department.

The major emphasis in voter education for the general election is on the training of branch executive members and volunteers. The ANC's Western Cape election campaign will be mass-driven, concentrating on involving people in local issues, as was done during UDF campaigns. ANC members who have campaigned for other parties in previous elections are sharing their expertise, and street-sheet and house-card systems are being implemented.

Dugmore is single and lives in Rondebosch East.