



TELL YOUR MOTHER'S STORY

VOLUME TWO_ 2019

Editor_Dr Kogie Archary

NATIONAL ANTHEM OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Pictures tell a story! 25th Anniversary of our Democracy...South Africa



Nelson Mandela Oliver Tambo Winnie Mandela and Adelaide Tambo

(<https://www.google.co.za/search>)



Kgalema Motlanthe in front of a picture of Nelson Mandela

(<https://www.google.co.za/search>)



Thabo Mbeki, Nelson Mandela, Cyril Ramaphosa and Jacob Zuma

(<https://www.google.co.za/search>)



Desmond Tutu, Nelson and Winnie Mandela & Walter and Albertina Sisulu

(<https://www.google.co.za/search>)



Adelaide Tambo and Epainette Mbeki

(<https://www.google.co.za/search>)



Albertina Sisulu and Adelaide Tambo

(<https://www.google.co.za/search>)



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ISBN: 978 – 0 – 620 – 84652 – 3

NPO NUMBER: 131 224

ZY PRINTERS @ 031 579 1170

EDITORIAL

Dr. Kogie K. Archary

The recording of where we have come from, the experiences that have made us who we are and the continuum that we as a society find ourselves in at this point in time most definitely traces back to our individual and collective past. The past holds the key to our greatness! It is also a pivotal part of our sadness as a nation and it unequivocally also triangulates the tributary that sets us free as we embrace the future, in terms of the present and where we have come from in relation to our past.



Orality as a source of primary history, the recording of stories, the capturing of past truths as experienced in song, dance, music, culture, traditions, mores, values and art forms is the richest source of value to humankind as lessons are learnt and espoused in humanity that encourages ethical nationhood. **The late Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela** is an internationally recognized leader and struggle hero who exemplified what a nation should be. **He was resilient in his fight against Apartheid, an unjust system that sought to repress millions of people in the land of their birth.** Nelson Mandela whose untold sacrifices, unbridled love for our country South Africa and its people and unimaginable struggles, catapulted him into an iconic status, a figure to be reckoned with globally. He, together with many other comrades, both male and female, young and old, fought a courageous fight and their battles ensured that we, as ordinary South Africans, were able to see freedom in our lifetime. It is through the difficulties, the challenges and the experiences endured by Nelson Mandela and others, that we are able to add to the literary tapestry of a rich and vibrant South Africa. We are able to tell our stories and enjoy a kaleidoscope of tales unearthed from throughout the length and breadth of South Africa and across borders. **Thank you Tata Nelson Mandela for your magnanimous sacrifices and vision that allows us now to flicker as we in the country of our birth, South Africa celebrate the 25th Anniversary of our Democracy.**

"I walked next to him as he moved around the room from table to table. He greeted each of the polling officers one by one. They seemed transfixed by his presence."



<https://www.google.com/search?q=nelson+mandela+voting+in+1994>

This compilation of unique stories adds to the body of knowledge that sheds light on our past. Authors have been sourced from different communities across South Africa and abroad. Representative writers across race, gender, age, religious background etc. have positively impacted this writing. The telling of our mothers' stories is important as women continue to play important roles in the world, especially where political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental factors are concerned. Women are at the focal point in any relationship and indeed relationships grow, terminate or remain static as a result of the input from women. Women keep culture, tradition, family values and folklore alive in the telling and retelling of tales and stories. Women's stories need to be told, their struggles need to be embraced, their successes need to be cherished and their attempts at improving society and adding value to their families need to be emphasised at every point in time. **This second edition of "Women of the World...Telling our Mothers' Stories" as compiled, attempts to address the need to close the gap that exists in terms of Women's stories throughout the world as it is ordinary women that have catapulted their countries to greatness when one considers the role, value and function of women during the World Wars, during the Great Depression, through the Holocaust and the various other traumatising episodes that have shaped world history and the ensuing continuation of the human race.** This Coffee Table Publication belongs in every library, book shelf, coffee table and should take pride of place in your personal collection as it tells the story of women who came from different backgrounds, from diverse educational and cultural spheres and from divergent economic situations. Women growing up during South Africa's Apartheid regime, hold close to their heart a unique part of the country's historical experience as they witnessed this harsh oppression in its most brutal forms. Women may have chosen not to write about that aspect of their lives, or the writers may not have chosen to highlight that ideology of the struggle which was to be that of a South African woman of colour during Apartheid, especially a Black African female who was triply oppressed, so there still exists a need to further expose those nuances of the South African Women's stories. I hope you will enjoy reading this collection of stories as they are written with love and care to carefully portray aspects of life in South Africa over time. **The warmth and depth in the writing suggests a need to continue with follow-up editions as there are many- untold-stories that remains to be told and close the vacuum that exists in terms of women's stories.** A very Special Thank You to all of our Coffee Table Publication Writers for this compilation as we appreciate your commitment and duty to the national interest and for embracing the voluntary nature of this project. Well done! In conclusion, how apt that this second volume is released in July 2019, the birth month of Nelson Mandela, whilst celebrating the 25th Anniversary of our Democracy!

Dr. Kogie Archary

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ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

First and foremost, OHASA is a product of the post-1994 political transformation and a baby of the Department of Arts and Culture. The seed that brought about the birth of OHASA was planted in 1999. This was the first project of its kind to be undertaken by the government. The Programme was intended to yield information that would be added to the information already existing in the country's archival holdings. It was strongly felt that the dissemination and management of information and knowledge was crucial to the restoration and sustenance of the human dignity of many millions of people, which was ravaged by colonialism and apartheid. The rationale for the establishment and development of the National Oral History Programme (NOHP) was based on the following factors: **Firstly**, in South Africa, as a result of colonialism and apartheid there are gaps in the public records and public knowledge, which are caused by deliberate omission of African knowledge, technologies, stories and philosophies from the mainstream of South Africa's body of knowledge. **Secondly**, such omission concerns various aspects of African and other disadvantaged experiences in areas such as politics, economics, social development, health, culture, gender issues and religion. These aspects are inadequately represented and urgently need to be redressed. **Thirdly**, the retrieval and dissemination of oral history and oral tradition are vital to fill the gaps in the education system. **Furthermore**, it was felt that oral history would provide alternative narratives, fresh information and new insights into our understanding of the past. It would stimulate marginalised and distorted social practices which could enhance the well-being of the people. **Finally**, it was agreed that Oral history would benefit the communities in various ways. www.ohasa.org.za

Oral history is a sound recording of historical information, obtained through an interview that preserves a person's life history or eyewitness account of a past experience—The terms recording, interviewing, and preserving are important as you learn to create oral history. ♦ Oral history recordings help listeners better understand how individuals from various viewpoints and different stations in society encountered the full range of life in their day, from everyday routines to catastrophic events. Carefully preserved, the recordings carry the witness of the present into the future, where through creative programs and publications, they can inform, instruct, and inspire generations to come.

♦ Creating an oral history requires two people—one who questions and one who narrates responses to the questions. Two strengths distinguish oral history interviewing: 1) subjectivity, which allows interviewers to ask not only, What happened? but also, How did you feel about what happened?, and 2) the partnership of co-creation, which invites narrators to interpret and analyze their personal experiences through their own points of view and in their own words.

♦ Preserving the recorded interview fulfills the purpose of creating the oral history in the first place. Preservation begins with making recordings safe, advances to making them useful and accessible, and culminates with sharing them in creative ways.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The production of this publication would not have been completed without the assistance and contribution of many individuals. A heartfelt gratitude is extended to Colleagues - Prof. M. Wallis; Mr. J S. Singh & Ms. M. Abrahams for comments and proofing. The Department of Arts and Culture is acknowledged for continuous financial and other support. Finally, all writers are saluted for sharing their stories!

MOVING ALONG...Herewith, follows stories of ordinary women who have a bond with South Africa, a country so alive with possibilities, so vibrant in its offerings and so steeped in traditional and cultural tapestries yet at the cusp



of a new dawn with a magnificent future ahead in terms of growth, development and prosperity! Thanks to the women, the mothers, the daughters and sisters who kept the home fires burning, carried the children on their backs and took care of the elderly during the long dark nights and chilly summer days in the walk to freedom...may this read inspire more women to tell their stories, more sons to write their mothers' stories and more fathers to pay tribute to their daughters...

<https://www.google.co.za/search> : Waiting in queues to vote!

MY GRANDMA, VASANTHIE

Abigail Sienna Govender, (Born 15 Sept 2008)

My grandmother was born on the 29th of May 1966 to my maternal great- grandparents - Duncan and Rosy Govender, in Merebank. My grandma is officially known as Parvathy, but was lovingly called Vasanthie by her parents and this became her " calling name. " She was the fourth of nine children in her family. When my grandma was growing up, she lived a very hard life. My great- grandparents: that is, her parents, could not afford to buy clothing for each child and they did not have the luxuries of being spoilt with goodies such as chocolates or cakes, but my great- grandparents did their best that they could, for their nine children. They sent them to school and taught them to respect everyone.

When my grandma was six years old, she would accompany my great- grandma to a hawker's home in the neighbourhood. Grandma would sort out the good fruit and vegetables from the bad fruit and vegetables. Grandma would take the bad fruit and vegetables home, cut out the really bad parts and throw them out. She, together with her sisters and her brothers would eat the remainder of the good fruit. The vegetables that she had brought home was also sorted out even further by separating the good parts from the bad. The remainder of the good vegetables would be saved for a delicious curry that everyone enjoyed. At the age of seven, grandma would wash the hawker's clothing. Grandma told me that the neighbourhood kids would all tease her because she walked all around without shoes. This was because she did not own a pair of outdoor shoes. When my great- grandpa was involved in a serious accident, he could no longer work. My great- grandma had to work in a clothing factory to pay for all the accounts and to feed everyone at home. My grandma told me that life was so difficult for them all at home. My grandma continued working at the hawkers. My great- grandma asked my grandma to leave school in Grade Eight, to help support the family. Grandma never went back to the hawker's home after she started working. My grandma started working at the age of fifteen. My grandma's wage was twenty rand per week. Grandma never complained about her



A budding author and leader



On their wedding day, 30th March 1984 at the Shri Parasakti Temple in Merebank

wage but she did tell me that she used to be very tired because she had been working from such a young age.

At the age of eighteen, my grandma met my grandpa, Mr. Poobalan Naidu. He was called Rally by his parents and family members. At the age of nineteen, my grandma was married to my grandpa. They had a traditional Hindu wedding. They had three children: Romano, Valencia and Mikhail Naidu. A few years later, grandma and grandpa started going to church and they thereafter became Christians. Grandma taught me to always respect all religions. She told me that she would not forget

her " roots " and culture. My grandma continued to work in the factory, after she had her children.

She told me that it was so exhausting because according to the factory rules, you had to give in a certain number of "scores" each day before you left for home or else your work was not good enough. This so called "score" was so difficult to sew, even during her lunch breaks.

In 2006, grandma had a "vision" to open a Daycare. She approached her sister Pam Naidu and with the help of her sister, they both opened the Noah's Ark Daycare Centre in Merebank, on the 15th of January, in 2007. The Daycare has now been opened for the last twelve years. My grandma also went for Bible studies for two years at her Church, Canaan Ministries.



Vasanthie and her sister Pam



Thereafter, she taught Sunday school for eleven years to the teenagers. Whilst growing up with my grandparents, I have watched my grandma also take care of her two nephews who were involved in drugs and today they are both completely rehabilitated. One of her nephews is married with a child. My grandma is now fifty-three years old and she is a simple hard working lady. It is a real pleasure writing about my grandma. Despite her standard of education, she excels in everything that she does. Trials and tribulations did not weaken my grandma, as instead she became stronger. I honour this virtuous woman - my grandma.

Grandma Vasanthie acknowledging Abigail's willingness to learn from such a young age.

My granddaughter Abigail Sienna Govender, a beautiful baby girl, was born on the 15th of September in 2008. Abigail had curly hair when she was little. She was alert and always eager to learn. From the age of one year, Abigail would go through her books. She used to love drawing and writing. Whenever we would go shopping, Abigail always chose stationery. Abigail is a consistent student, presently at St. Mary's School. She is ten years old, in Grade five. Abigail enjoys challenges and has won the School Spelling Bee Competition in 2017, 2018 and in 2019. In 2018, Abigail presented a speech at the School assembly about Mr. Nelson Mandela. What caught my attention was that she had prepared her speech, bringing to everybody's attention that Mr. Mandela had brought apartheid to an end and that he was South Africa's greatest hero. She was just nine years old at that time. Nurturing Abigail from a baby, watching her excel in whatever she does, brings me great joy. I know that one day, Abigail will be a great leader.

MALESHANE JOHANNA RATSHEFOLA

Mmathapelo Mpanza

Our mother, Maleshane Johanna Ratshefola passed away on 1st April 2019 when she had already helped to raise some of her great grandchildren. She was blessed with a good life and reached a ripe age of about 80 years. There are a number of reasons that can be attributed to such a good life. Having been raised in a Christian home she was groomed to honour her parents and as the Bible teaches, such children will have a good life and live long: Honour your father and mother so that you may live long. Another reason is that my mother was of very sober habits. She neither smoked nor drank alcoholic beverages. But above all, my mother and her husband were very much in love and inseparable. My mom also known as Meisie, was born on 29 January 1940 as the eldest of 5 children of Ramaokane Matsietsa and Sekayakae Ntsimane in Randfontein, West of Johannesburg.



With husband, Rev. Ratshefola

The children moved to a village called Goedgevonden near Ventersdorp after both parents passed on. Mom went to school until today's Grade 7 due to a lack of finances. She had to find a job to help grandparents to support her younger siblings.

Our parents were married in 1960 in Goedgevonden before they together went to Natal in Enhlanhleni Lutheran Seminary where my dad, Molatlhegi Titus Ratshefola was to prepare for pastoral training. Mom learnt to speak IsiZulu because they had to stay longer at the seminary as Dad had to give instruction to new students who had low literacy levels. Some of my siblings were born in Natal and had exposure to the Zulu culture. Of the isolation my mother experienced by being far away from her people, the sad part is the death of my younger brother while we were in Natal. As a wife of a minister of religion Mom went along where Dad was posted to serve. The longest place we stayed was



Mrs. Ratshefola with church women

in Potchefstroom. This is where the talents and skills of my mother became conspicuous. She sewed clothes, cooked well, baked cakes for sale to neighbours and school children who used the church as a classroom. The other talent that she had was excellent memory. Mom could sing almost all the common hymns of our church from memory. Evening prayer sessions were moments also to marvel at her rare talent. After working as a domestic helper, Mom was employed by the Department of Agriculture in Potchefstroom until Dad's pastoral work took him to Mafikeng in the then Bophuthatswana Homeland. With extra responsibility in Dad's position of a Dean in the church, Mom did not take employment in Mafikeng. She automatically took over the leadership of the Prayer Women's League in the

Lutheran Church's Diocese of Western Transvaal-Bophuthatswana. My surviving sisters, Boitumelo Mashishi and Tsholofelo Maithufi and brothers Molebogeng, Itumeleng and Tlabaki can attest to the fact that we could not ask for a better mother. Although our parents were not by any stretch well off, they made sure that we all went to school and got a strong grounding of independence that we have today. The upbringing in a loving and God-fearing home is one of the big blessings that we shall forever be grateful for. I think it is fair at this point to mention our Aunt Tebogo Matsietsa who has lived with us and helped raise us as an older sister. When my grandparents passed away early in life, Aunt Tebogo somehow became the responsibility of my parents and continues to live in our home. In old age our mother became ill and surgery did not help especially in the restoration of her eyesight. The fact that the family relocated to Pachsdraai near Zeerust made it a challenge to get Mom to the best medical care in and around Gauteng. But the presence of my brother, sister and myself in Gauteng made it possible for her to be near her loved ones. While her long life and love will be missed, we appreciate all her efforts to raise us and guide us together with her grand and great grandchildren. We, her children, especially the daughters, had a good teacher in our mother when it came to keeping the family together and honouring our husbands.



Surrounded by her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren: Right - In the front row: Bonolo, followed by Gomolemo with the blue t-shirt, followed by Karabo and Tshegofatso. Behind this row: from left is Reabetswe, Keitumetse and Siyabonga. Standing from left is Mmathapelo, Thandeka, Maleshane (my late mother), Tiisetso and Kabelo.

LATCHMEE'S STORY

Daya Naidoo

"I would cry in pain when the thorns would poke my feet," Amma said. 'How could your Parents send you to work? You were a child!' I said. 'In those days it was different. Only my father was working at the Mill and we had little money.' Amma responded. (Amma is what we as Tamil-speaking Indians call our mother). And so Amma, in 1951 at the tender age of 12, was sent to the sugar cane fields that were part of the Natal Sugar Estates with her older sister Amurtham (Amoy) to work and supplement their family income. Employment for Amma, her sister and about 30 other children from the Mill Barracks in Mount Edgecombe near Durban was offered to their Parents via the Manager of the New Cottage Estate. His name was Peter Paul. The estate extended from where Phoenix currently is to Duffs Road near the KwaMashu Highway. Leaving home at 5.30am in the morning meant that it was still very cold, especially in winter and frost was also present on the fields when the children got there. The child labourers were picked up by tractor from New Cottage, barely awake, having had nothing to eat and taken to the fields. Their job was to plant the shoots for the next crop of sugar cane. The field work continued throughout the year during the different stages of the farming of the sugar cane. Child labour seemed to be a normal part of life for the families at that time. Children as young as eight toiled in the bitter cold, with very thin clothing and no shoes. The shoots themselves were stiff and hurt their fragile hands. Shortly after, it was time to scatter the fertilizer. The fertilizer was chemically based and the children had to scatter it with their bare hands. The cane shoots would cut into their little hands and then the fertilizer would cause them to sting and burn. Amma said she'd cry, but would continue nonetheless. Amma and the other children earned 2 pounds and 5 shillings per month. They were also given half rations on a Friday and full rations at the end of the month. Full rations consisted of 5kg bags of mealie rice, mealie meal, beans, sugar and smaller quantities of salt. All the money was given to their parents at the end of the month. I asked Amma what the money was used for and she said: "Food." They kept none of their earnings for themselves. Would I allow my 12-year-old child to go out and work? I cried listening to Amma relate her story. Somehow I couldn't bring myself to understand that situation from my grandfather's point of view. I can't imagine sending either of my children to toil in a sugar cane field under those conditions. But then I ask myself: "How can I compare then and now? Was the decision to send young children to work done out of necessity or ignorance? It certainly didn't mean that the parents of those children didn't love or care about them. The children in turn obeyed their parents, more so because there was nothing else they could do. Many of them I'm sure may have felt a sense of obligation to help their parents. Amma's bravery and strength began in her childhood and would continue into her adulthood. I would like to believe that I have inherited these important traits from her. Amma worked for about a year in the sugar cane fields and then stayed home for the next few months. She kept busy by singing in a band called the Merrie Melodies. The band consisted of the males playing instruments and Amma and other young ladies dancing. The men wore shirts and pants and the ladies wore sarees or skirts and blouses. They provided shows for the community at the Mount Edgecombe Hall. It was always to a packed house. I asked Amma if she was ever paid, she said she was not. She wasn't sure about the band members. The songs she sang were picked up from the occasional Tamil or Hindi movies that were shown at the Hall.



My Amma in her sari



As a youngster dancing on stage

She had natural talent and was not taught to dance or sing. Amma was also a magician's assistant. Little did she know that the magician, whose name was Tommy Govender, would become her daughter's father-in-law 30 years later. My third sister Lallie married Tommy's son George in 1980. Shortly thereafter she was offered employment as a nanny in central Durban. Amma says she was terrified to be in this strange place, in a house with people she didn't know. She spent a fretful night on the kitchen floor, too afraid to sleep in case anyone came into the room. In the morning, she begged to be sent home and so she was. Amma did not want to remember this incident.

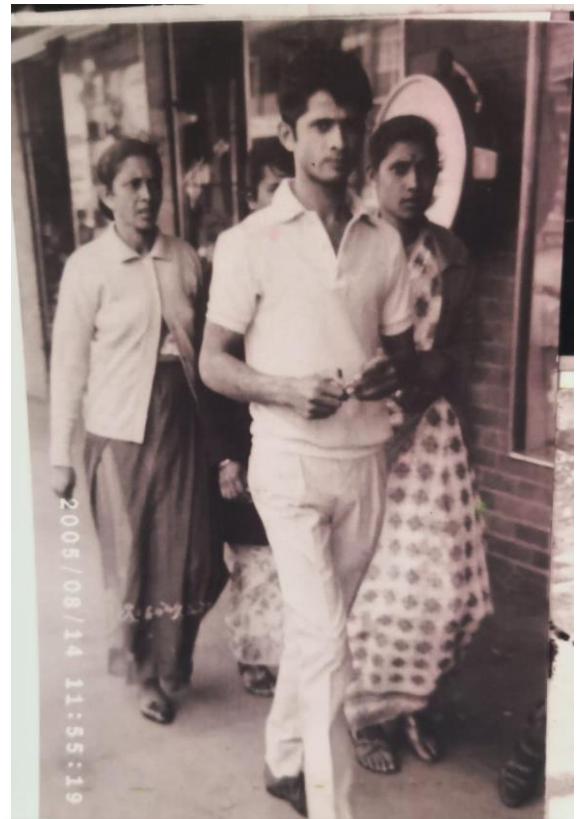


Amma (left) as the magician's assistant, Mr. Tommy Govender (centre) as the magician.

At the age of 13 in 1952, Amma was again offered a job as a nanny. A Mauritian gentleman named J.F. Rowland asked my grandfather to bring Amma to the work place. She helped look after a newborn baby. Amma walked to work which was not far off from home and was paid 3 pounds a month. She worked there for a year, and during this time her sister continued to work in the fields. Incidentally Amma was allowed to attend school from Class 1 to Standard 2, but her elder sister (Amma was the second born), Amoy and younger sister Savathree were not sent to school. She says she still does not know why her parents sent her and not her two sisters. Amma knew how to write but never really had opportunities to practice. When I was 10 years old, I taught her to sign her name for the first time. I am emotional even now as I write this almost 40 years later, sad at how powerless my mother must have felt in not even being able to sign her name. I actually discovered that she couldn't sign by accident, because I needed a form signed for school and my father had left for work already. I asked Amma to sign and she said she couldn't....

After Mr Rowland and his family left, my grandfather's friend arranged another nanny position for Amma for another family. They were Edna and Dennis Sparrow and they had a lovely little baby called Glynnis. They were wonderful people, Amma says, very caring and loving. She was paid 3 pounds a month here as well. After about a year with them, they had to relocate to Kimberley due to Edna's ill health. They asked Amma to go with them, but she was too scared to leave her family and go so far away. She missed the family very much when they left. I managed to locate Dennis Sparrow in Kimberley about 5 years ago, thanks to social media. He remembered Amma and even said that he had come looking

for her in Mount Edgecombe a few years after they had left, but by then she had married and moved away. She got to speak to Dennis after almost 60 years. I promised Amma I'd take her to Kimberley to meet Dennis and to Cape Town to see Glynnis. I plan on fulfilling my promise in 2019 as Amma turns 80 this year. In 1955 Amma met my father.



Walking in Durban Muniamma (my maternal grandmother on the left) my maternal uncle Loganathan in front and Amma on the right. This would be in the late 1950's.

OUR MOTHER - IN - LOVE

Cecilia Maria Abrahams (nee Van Noie) 8.5.1938 - 24.12.2012

Marcelle Abrahams

*“Silver and Gold have I none said He but such as I have I freely give unto thee and what I have is
The Love of our Lord and Saviour”*



Cecilia Abrahams as she appears at the age of 25 on her ID card issued 1.2.1963

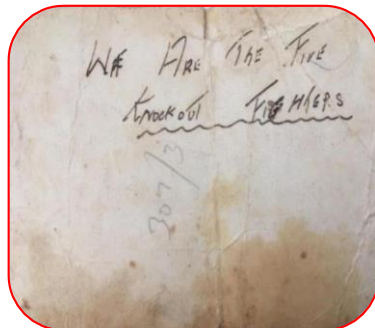
My mother-in-law is no longer with us but what an indelible mark she has left in my life. She broke all the stereotypes of what the typical mother-in-law should be like.

Cecilia Maria Abrahams (nee van Noie) was the fourth eldest child and eldest daughter born to William S Van Noie (Date of birth and death unknown) & Mary Wilhamina Van Noie (née Arendse) (8.10.1916 - 15.10.2004).

Not much is known about the history of the Van Noie's and Arendse's and this is my first foray of unearthing my children, husband and in laws' rich and diverse heritage that has been suppressed during the Colonial, Imperial and Apartheid years.ⁱⁱ

My Mother-in-Love, being a Van Noie, is most likely a creoleⁱⁱⁱ South African with strong Khoi San and French origins. What we do know for a fact is that she was classified as “Cape Coloured”^{iv} by the Apartheid regime. We also know that her father served in WW2^v.

There is also evidence that her mother had an association with Bokmakierie Primary school^{vi}. We are not sure what the association was but a portrait with her in it lends itself for further research.



Undated photo of William S Van Noie (bottom left hand corner with 4 of his fellow soldiers who called themselves the 5 knock out fighters).

Mary Wilhamina Van Noie (4th person and 3rd lady from the right) in a group photograph in front of the entrance of Bokmakierie Primary School, Athlone.

Miems and Pappa Van Noie, as her parents were affectionately known by their grandchildren, had an enduring love spanning many years until his death. A postcard sent to Pappa from Miems declaring her love and concern for him as a soldier is testimony to that.

Together they bore eleven children. They started their married life in Cape Town's District Six (Vrede Street) and relocated to Bokmakierie, Athlone, a township area on the Cape Flats, established in preparation for the infamous forced removals by the apartheid regime^{vii}. Whilst living in Bokmakierie they straddled a mixed economy. On the one hand they were engaging in subsistence and communal farming whilst on the other hand selling their labour and produce so that they could purchase goods at the market, most likely the Epping Market^{viii} which is about 5km away from Bokmakierie.



A postcard from Mary to William S Van Noie

Society at the time had many norms that would be frowned upon today. As the eldest daughter, my Mother - in - Love was expected to take on the role of mother to her siblings. She used to regale us with stories of how she had to piggy back her younger siblings to the clinic for much needed medical attention.

It was also expected of daughters to hold back on furthering their studies and keep the home fires burning while their male siblings pursued theirs. She only completed Standard 3 (i.e equivalent to Grade 5 today). As stated it was the norm and she did not resist. She accepted this with no bitterness and always maintained that in the main she had a good childhood and the hardships experienced was part of the life that they knew it to be.

Being the bright mind and proud woman that she was she maintained that she was educated by the University of Life and the Holy Bible and in so doing gained wisdom worth far more than academic qualifications.

She had a cheerful disposition and her outlook on life was always positive.

She had the blessing of caring for her mother until the age of 88. She was also considered the matriarch and go to person of the Van Noies when assistance or advice was needed.



Mary Van Noie with 5 of her older children (From left to right: Lionel, Edward, Basil & Cecil seated on her lap Cecilia was the only girl at the time). Photo taken by Van Kalker

It was in Bokmakierie that Cecilia Van Noie, now affectionately known as Mamma Abrahams by her grandchildren, met her husband and lifelong partner Eric Andrew Abrahams (13.11.1936 – 13.3.2006) whose grandfather, a Dutchman and fisherman by profession, settled in Mossel Bay in the late 1800's. Eric Abrahams is now affectionately known as Pappa Abrahams by his grandchildren. The creole (Khoi San and Dutch) history of the Abrahams lineage still needs to be researched and documented.

Mamma and Pappa Abrahams were married on 8 December 1956 at the age of 18 and 20 respectively at St Marks Anglican Church^{ix} in Athlone. They started their married life in Bokmakierie and later moved to 11 Welby Road, Greenhaven. Theirs was one of the first houses in the area.

They named their house *Percivale* in honour of their eldest son. They bore seven children (six sons and one daughter). Unfortunately, tragedy struck their family in 1967. Their eldest son Percival, at the age of 11, was fatally injured when a light delivery vehicle struck him while he was out on an errand about two weeks before Christmas (12 December 1967).

The exact details of the where is sketchy and the memories of those who can relate differ.

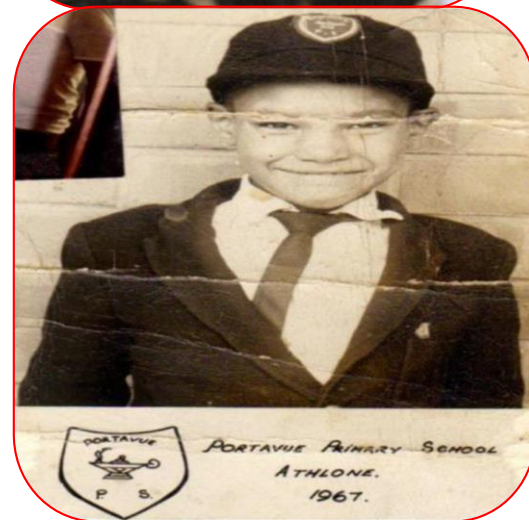
Her most cherished memory of Percy was when he late one evening persuaded her to join him in decorating the house with Christmas trimmings so that his brothers could be pleasantly surprised when they wake up the next morning. The next morning proved to be a very special morning indeed for mother and children. Sadly, three days later Percy died and she silently endured the maternal heartache.

Her second eldest son, Eric John, passed away on 20 May 2005 at the age of 46 of cancer.

I stated that she silently endured these heartaches because she was never one to wear her heart on her sleeve. She always had a cheerful disposition.



Cecilia and Eric in their younger days. Now affectionately known as Mamma and Pappa Abrahams.



The Late Percival Abrahams in his mother's arms and in school uniform

For me her cheerful disposition and gracious manner always brought to mind Felicia Hemans' poem

"*The homes of England*"^x The poem refers to

Stately homes.....

Merry homes.....

Blessed homes.....

Cottage homes.....

&

Free and fair homes.

Percivale was definitely not a stately home but for me it was always a *merry and blessed home*. A place that I could escape to when things around me fell apart. A home, where I left feeling loved, rejuvenated and equipped to tackle whatever came my way.

I often pondered upon this phenomenon and came to the conclusion that it was because of her. Her presence, her hand and her influence that kept the wheels of love turning in her family. She was the Mother-In-Love factor that created a home that was merry and filled with so much love. Love for God, her family, the work of her hands and with an abundance left over for others.

Life was very tough for the Abrahams family yet the kids were shielded throughout with the mandate to always honour and respect each other and never to bring dishonour to the family name. Material wealth was never a goal. She always maintained that love for the Lord our God and each other was more important than silver and gold. Her other well worn mantra was "Take delight in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart"^{xi}.

Yes, she was definitely a woman of love but there were other dimensions to her that served her well through life. Cecilia was also an industrious woman. She started her working life as a factory worker in the textile industry but never really enjoyed the sewing she was paid to do. Cooking and baking was her forte with very few things bringing her more pleasure than seeing the delight of people enjoying her fare.



David, Eric, Percival, Richard and Jonathan the youngest at the time taken at their home Percivale .



Eric and Cecilia with their only daughter Priscilla Lottering



Cecilia with her youngest child Randall

She left factory work to start cooking at a take away cafe set up in Sea Point and later central Cape Town. A few years after her son Percy died she decided to be a stay at home mom and focus on the wellbeing of her remaining kids. With six kids to look after she resolutely used her entrepreneurial skills to generate income from home.

Her entrepreneurial skills ranged from childcare, cooking and baking for functions, establishing a house tuck-shop selling snacks to the neighbourhood kids and creating presentation baskets with festive fare such as homemade Easter Eggs and Christmas treats.

When her youngest child Randall matriculated she found herself with more free time on her hands. She then embarked on various training courses with the Human Research Science Council (HRSC). This empowered her to be part of the HSRC's field worker team as a senior field researcher. She travelled the length and breadth of South Africa in the interest of work.

With this additional income she and her husband managed to educate their children.

At the end of their lives they were content that their love endured and that their children were successful and able to look after their own families with none of them ever having dishonoured their names or brought them shame. What more can a parent ask for?



The two older sons and daughter did in house training at their respective places of employment.

The eldest surviving son, Richard, and only daughter, Priscilla Lottering, inherited her entrepreneurial flair and culinary skills. Richard, who is in the hospitality industry, has formed his own catering and training company. He was so good that he was selected to be part of the hospitality team that catered for the American Presidential delegation that visited South Africa in 1998 with President Bill Clinton in attendance. Priscilla is holding her own in early childhood development and care and can cook up a storm of a banquet in a jiff.

The three youngest sons David, Jonathan and Randall all attended institutions of higher learning and are all accomplished individuals in their own right.

The success of her children is testimony to their education having started on their mothers' lap.

Not only are her children accomplished, productive and respected individuals but she is also survived by 16 grandchildren whose accomplishments are too many to mention.

I would be bold enough to state that all her children-in-law, Beulah (nee Johnson) late, Venisia (nee Johnson), Bonita (nee Samuels), Tommie Lottering and Shantelle (nee Minaar), share the same sentiments as myself (nee Brinkhuis) and would join me in declaring that.

We have benefited so much from her love, her wisdom and her generosity of spirit.

She has given us one of her most precious gifts.

The right to call her our Mother-in-Love because she loved us all dearly.

Out of the seed of love for her children we have evidence that, despite the fact that for most of her life her contributions as a stay at home mom, caregiver and micro entrepreneur are not included in the formal year on year GDP figures, her unaccounted contributions towards the wellbeing of our society are worth more than gold.

A generational legacy that inspires me to work towards finding alternative and more meaningful ways of measuring our GDP, acknowledging and monetizing the value of Moms at work and facilitating the integration of the informal economies into the mainstream economy. ^{xii}

For now, let's celebrate and cherish the Woman that she was and all the Women - in- Love amongst us.



Photos, anecdotes and input are credited to all the members of the Abrahams family. ^{xiii}

Thank you for keeping her legacy alive.

- ⁱ Cecilia Abrahams was a devout Christian who accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as her Saviour. I took the liberty of paraphrasing Acts 3:6 KJV of The Holy Bible to fit the story.
- ⁱⁱ South Africa since 1652 until 1994 has been subjected to Colonial, Imperial and Apartheid forces which unfairly favoured the European and white narrative and suppressed the indigenous people as well as their knowledge and systems.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Creole: A person of mixed European and Black descent
- ^{iv} Cape Coloured is a term given by the Apartheid regime, as enacted in the Population Registration Act, to people of mixed descent and residing in the Cape.
- ^v World War 2 (1 /2/1932 – 2/9/1945)
- ^{vi} Bokmakierie Primary School: Founded on 16/8/1937 with the motto Labour Conquers All
- ^{vii} District Six is a former inner-city residential area in Cape Town, South Africa. The Apartheid Government had plans to declare District Six a Whites Only Area under the Group Areas Act. In preparation for this they built townships all over the Cape Flats. Many voluntarily relocated and others resisted the move. Eventually on 11 February 1966 District Six was officially declared a whites only area under the Group Areas Act. Over 60 000 of its inhabitants were forcibly removed during the 1970s by the apartheid regime.
- ^{viii} Epping Market: According to some reports this market was established in 1941.
- ^{ix} St. Marks the Evangelist Anglican Church in Athlone was established in 1901.
- ^x Zundel, V,1991. Faith in her words -Six Centuries of Women's Poetry (1st edition) Oxford: Lion Publishing plc. There are various opinions on what the poet tried to convey in the poem. Some see it as a message against classism and in support of social justice. Others on the other hand see it as a message supporting the domesticated role of the mother in the home. For the purpose of this story I applied a blended meaning relevant to the 21st Century that I find myself in. I would encourage the reader to do their own research and applications.
- ^{xi} Psalm 37:4. New Living Translation of the Holy Bible
- ^{xii} The academic work of Professors Jeffrey Sachs, Joseph Stiglitz, Muhammad Yunus and many others lends itself for further research in this area.
- ^{xiii} The Abrahams Family: Richard and Venisia, David and Marcelle, Jonathan and Bonita, Priscilla and Tommie and Randall and Shantelle.

BATALI BAMI TIHLABANI TAMI

Ibhalwe ngu: Busile Cynthia Ndlovu

Lingemuva lakho alisiso silinganisomphilo selikusasa lakho. Kuyintfokoto kimi kutsi ngacala kufundza ngihlala epulazini. Ngaba nguthishela longakacecshwa umnyaka munye, esikolweni semabanga laphasi eMagubha, ngaba nguthishela loceceshiwe ngacala kufundzisa esikolweni semabanga laphasi iVukasambe iminyaka le-5, ngafundzisa ekolishi lekucecesha bothishela eMgwenya, iminyaka le-7. Ngagcina sengingumhloli weSiswati Ehlanzeni Distrikthi iminyaka le-16. Kulesikhatsi sanyalo ngingumfundzisi welulwimi lweSiswati eNyuvesi yaseMpumalanga ngicecesha bothishela beSiswati. Lingemuva lemndeni wami nembuso welubandlululo akumange kube sihibe ekutfufukiseni likusasa lami. Kutimisela nekutsatsa teluleko tebatali ngiko lokube sisekelo lesangivula emehlo emphumelelo.

Imphilosimo emshadweni webatali bami. Ngemnyaka wa-1953 enyangeni yaKholwane, make wami Phethwayini Malala wahlangana nemyeni weliphupho lakhe longu babe wami, Velaphi Benjamin Mhayise. Ngemnyaka wa-1955 babusiswa ngemtfwana wekucala wentfombatane Ntombikayise Mhayise, walanywa Iijaha, Zenzo Mhayise. Ngemnyaka we-1962, ti-15 enyangeni yeNgci, babusiswa ngentfombatane yesitsatfu lengimi, Busile Mhayise. Ngekusho kwamake, inchazelo yaleligama "Busile" lisho kutsi abefisa kutsi ngibe ngulophumelelako emphilweni ngibuye ngibe ngumholi. Abentela kutsi liphikisane nenshokutsi yeligama lakhe, "Phethwayini" lelimele kutsi "ingabe kutawentekani ngawe." Make abefisela bonkhe bantfwana bakhe imphumelelo, kungako abehlala atsi; "Ngifisa kutsi bantfwana bami bafundze babe ncono kunami emphilweni." Ngatalewa kagogo Ellie Manana make wamake, epulazini leMnumzane Wesley Kamkopokopo leli ngemakhilomitha lambalwa kusuka eBarberton. Umndeni netihlobo bakutfokotela kakhulu kukhula kwemndeni ngekuvela kwami. Ngemnyaka lolandzelako batali bami babopha lifindvo ngemshado lomhlophe, lobewuvame esikweni lase Nshonalanga ngaletu tikhatsi. Emshadweni wabo babusiswa ngetinkhomo kanye naletinye tipho. Njengayo yonkhe imishado, nabo baba netikhatsi letimnandzi kanye naletimatima. Make nakakhulelwe sekufike sikhatsi sekubeleka, abebuyela ekhaya kubo



Gogo wami



Khokho namake wami

kumake wakhe kute ayotfolela khona umntfwana lomusha. Bekahamba libanga lelidze ngetinyawo kusuka eNyuthaweni emakhilomitha la-8 kuya epulazini kanye nebantfwana bakhe bonkhe labebakhona. Kutsite nase nginemnyaka, make kanye nebantfwana bakitsi labakhulu kimi, Ntombikayise naZenzo satfutsela ekhaya kabobabe kaMkhulu Obed Mhayise, kute siyohlala nemndeni lomkhulu endzaweni yase Nyuthaweni (Nelshoogte). Ngalesikhatsi siseNyuthaweni, babe abehlala eBarberton eta kutosibona nakuphela inyanga. Simonhlalo sasimatima emphilweni yamake kepha wasisekela singebantfwana bakhe. Ngalesikhatsi babe angekho, mkhulu Obed nguye abesekela make kutotonkhe timo labekabukana nato njengamakoti, futsi mkhulu abesitsandza tsine batukulu bakhe. Lokubuhlungu kutsi make abengasebenti kodvwa nobe kunjalo abecinisekisa kutsi banaketfu labadzala kimi bayafundza. Umnaketfu Zenzo abebuye abe ngumelusi wetinkhomo tamkhulu. Ekugcineni batali bami batfutsela endzaweni yase Barberton. Emshadweni wabo babusiswa ngebantfwana laba-8 sebabonkhe, Ntombikayise, Zenzo, Busile, Zithelo, Ziyalo, Bukile, Zimisele kanye naZilungisele. Babili babo bandvulela eveni labogogomkhulu, Ziyalo naZilungisele. Umnaketfu Ziyalo washona aneminyaka le-19 kantsi Zilungisele washona anetinyanga letimbili kuphela.

Timo letiphatselene nekukhula kwami. Ngitsite nase ngineminyaka le-2, simongcondvo sacindzetela batali bami kutsi bangibuyisele kuyohlala emapulazini nagogo Manana. Lesimo sabangelwa kutsi make abetefwele umnaketfu lowelama mine longu Zithelo, lowatalwa ngemnyaka wa-1963. Gogo abe ngumsebeni wasepulazini Kamkopokopo. Lelipulazi belikhicita tilinywa letifana nabhatata, ummbila, kotini, letinye tibhidvo kanye nemfuyo. Ngalesikhatsi gogo ase msebentini, abengishiya etandleni tamake wakhe, khokho Fakubi Ndlovu, lobe kangasasebeni ngenca yeminyaka yekukhula. Bogogo nagogo Mavenge Mngometulu, lobekangudzadze wagogo, bebasebenta matima epulazini bangena ngesikhatsi sasekuseni ngeli-awa le-6 babuye bashayise ntsambama ngeli-awa le-17 nemaminithi la-30. Nanobe bekunjalo, abeshiya angilungiselele kudla lokuphekiwe lokufana nabhatata, inkhukhu lephekiwe neliphalishi lebe ngikutsandza kakhulu. Ngiyalibonga ligalelo labogogo emphilweni yami.

indlela langikhulisa ngayo gogo. Ngesikhatsi ngihlala kagogo, bekungimi umntwana wemtukulu kuphela. Ngaloko-ke, bengitivisa ngetinhlobo tekudla, lokumukelwako kanye naloko lokulinywa epulazini. Gogo abehlala ahlantekile nami kanjalo angingcina ngihlantekile ngasosonkhe sikhatsi. Abengiwashela timphahla nemfaniswano wami ngalokufanele. Abebuye atitsandza netihlobo takhe tonkhe abuye ativakashela ngetimphelasontfo letikhetsekile, kuye ngekweluhlelo lwakhe. Ngalesikhatsi gogo avakashile, bekangishiya nakhokho Fakubi Ndlovu ngalokwetayelekile. Khokho abengitsandza, angentela kudla kwesintfu lokuyintsandvokati yakhe lokwatiwa ngekutsi, "sikhukhumuka", loku kudla lokwentiwa ngekubhuca liphilishi, shukela lomncane kanye nemanti. Njengabo bonkhe bantfwana, nangabe ngente lokubi, khokho abengincinta nobe ngabe kukuphi emtimbeni. Ngangikhala kwesikhashana kubuye kundlule. Bengibatsandza bobabili bogogo wami ngibuye ngikutfokotela kuhlala nabo. Labanye bebatukulu bebavakashela gogo nangabe kuvalwe tikolo, nami ngangilandwa ngumnaketfu Zenzo kutsi ngiyovakashela batali bami eBarberton, elokishini lase Dindela. Gogo abe nebuntfu wangifundzisa nekuhlonipha bantfu bonkhe kanye nekudlala kahle nalabanye bantfwana ngaphandle kweludlame. Ungifundzise imisebeni yasekhaya, kugeza titja, kushanyela edladleni, kuthandaza njalo nasesilala kanye nalokunye. Ngaloko- ke bengidlala nebantfwana babomakhelwane ngekuthula ngaphandle kwekulandzelwa bantfu labadzala. Bengigcina imiyalo yagogo engcondvweni yami ngasosonkhe sikhatsi.

Kucala kwami kufundza sikolo. Ngicala kungena sikolo ngineminyaka le-7 endzaweni yaKaMshwashi, esikolweni semabanga lacubile iFranzin lesingemakhilomitha la- 4 kusuka ekhaya kagogo. Besiphetfwe nguthishelanhloko uMnumzane Phakathi kanye nathishelakati Mcanyane, lobeka nguMxhosa lobesakhulile. Gogo wacela lenye yemantfombatane lenkhulu kunami, Jane Mthunywa kutsi anginakekele endleleni leya esikolweni kanye nasesikolweni njengobe ngangisemncane. Lokunye lokuyimbangela, kutsi bekunemahlebeti ngebashayeli betimoto labebabulala bantfu lebebabitwa ngekutsi "bomajubanhloko." Esikhatsini lesinyenti Jane abevele angiphose emhlane kute sisheshe sifike esikolweni. Kulesikolo ngifundze lamabanga lalandzelako; Sub- A, B kanye neLibanga 1.

Tibe khona tikhatsi letimatima emphilweni yami ngisakhula epulazini, bekumnyaka wekutsi ngichubekele eBangeni le-2. Ngase ngibanjwa kugula, ngenca yensweleko yemfolamphilo emapulazini, gogo wangiyisa ekhaya ladokotela wesintfu lobekangu Mnumzane Zulu. Ngahlala kulelo khaya nebantfu lengingabati ngimncane, tinyanga letimbili. Gogo kanye namake bebefika batongivusela babuye bangilesele nekudla, bekwamukelwa ngumndeni waka Zulu kwangatsi bayangibekela kantsi cha. Lokubuhlungu, kutsi loko kudla bengingakudli kepha bekudliwa nguleyo nyanga kanye nebantfwana bayo, lengingakubit ngekutsi kuchashatwa kwemalungelo etiguli emmangweni walabamnyama. Bengiphiwa kudla lobekulungiselwe tiguli, njengaloku bebakhona labanye labagulako ngaphandle kwami. Bona bebasiphetse kahle, ngaphandle kwalesigameko lengisibale ngetulu lesangimangalisa kakhulu. Phela bengingenalo lwati lwemphatfo nesimongcondvo sekuhlala emtini wadokotela wesintfu (inyanga).

Kutsite emva kwetinyanga letimbili ngaba ncono, gogo wangilandza ngabuyela epulazini. Nanobe bengisemncane kepha ngafundza ngekubeketela kute ngiphumelele emphilweni.

Imphilo yasepulazini ngesikhatsi selubandlululo. Kusebenta epulazini kwakungiyi imvumo yekuhlala epulazini, ikakhulukati kulabadzala labe bangasafundzi. Bantfwana labe basebenta epulazini ngilabo labayekela sikolo ngenca yekuhamba emabanga lamadze baya etikhungwini temfundvo. Nangabe kungekho losebenta epulazini, umninipulazi abemane acoshe umndeni wonkhe uyotitfolela indzawo yekuhlala encenye, tindlu betidzilitwa. Leminye yemigomo yasepulazini ngaletik tikhatsi kutsi umuntfu longahlali kulelo pulazi nobe umuntfu longatiwa abengavunyelwa kutsi engce nobe ancumule epulazini. Umuntfu lotfolakala aphule lowo mtsetfo umninipulazi abe bikela emaphoyisa aboshwe labanye kanjalo bebadutjulwa kungabi nelicala. Kungako nje, bekunetimphawu betikhombisa kutsi akwengciwa, "labengca ngalokungekho emtsetfweni abakavunyelwa." Lemitsetfo beyinganaki nobe usihlobo sebahlahi basepulazini nobe cha.

Sigameko selubandlulo emphilweni yagogo Mludi Ellie Manana nadzadze wakhe Mavenge Mngometulu. Ngenca yeliholo lelincane lasepulazini, gogo Manana nadzadze wakhe labekakhelene naye longugogo Mavenge Mngometulu. Batfola indzawo lefihlakele emkhatsini welihlatsi letihlahla temugamusi lapho bebapheka tjwala besintfu (sipayoni) khona. Bekulicala kutfolakala upheka loluhlobo lwetjwala ngesikhatsi sembuso welubandlulo. Bogogo bebaphisa kancono nangabe simo selitulu sigucubele, linemafu bebentela kutsi umhwamuko wentfutfu yetjwala ungabonwa ngemaphoyisa. Kutsite kulenye impheasantfo basaphishekile ehlatsini, kwafika emaphoyisa abuta lomunye webahlali kutsi tjwala besintfu buphekelwa kuyiphi indzawo. Ngenca yelualo lwekwesaba emaphoyisa angaleso sikhatsi, nangempela wawalayela lapho bogogo bebaphekela khona tjwala. Emaphoyisa abatfola benta umsebenti wabo wekupheka tjwala, ase abayala kutsi sebananjwe abasale bagibela ngemuva evenini yemaphoyisa lebeyibitwa ngekutsi yikhwela khwela. Bantfu labadzala bebatikhalela ngekwetfuka, bamemeta besaba kukhwela evenini yemaphoyise, kepha bagcina bagibele. Simo saba matima kugogo Mavenge Mngometulu, wavakala atsi, "kilikidzi phasi" waculeka ngenca yekufutsetelana nekwetfuka. Emaphoyisa amehlisa ase acela lomunye lotawugibela atsatse sikhundla sakhe. Lomunye wetihlobo longu gogo Klin Ndlovu lobekamncane kunabogogo watinikela wagibela atsatse indzawo yakhe. Bogogo Manana nagogo Klin balala esiteshini semaphoyisa eBarberton bakhululwa emva kwemalanga lamabili. Emva kwesigameko sekulala esitokisini semaphoyisa bogogo abamange bakuyekele kuphisa tjwala. Bakwenta loko ngobe bebatama kwenta umehluko nemphilo lencono yekunetisa tidzingo tabo njengebantfu baseNingizimu Afrika. Ummango wasepulazini bewubachasa ngekubatsengela tjwala. Bekuyindlela yekukhipha situnge kubasebenti basepulazini emva kwekusebenta kamatima ngaletu tikhatsi.

Imphilo ngetikhatsi telubandlululo ekhaya kubatali bami. Imvumo yekuhlala elokishini beyifana neyasepulazini, nakhona bekumele kube nalosebentela masipala wendzawo nekubhaliswa ephomendini yendlu lohlala kuyo. Ngenca yemitsetfo yelubandlululo ngaletu tikhatsi, kubatsatse sikhatsi lesidze batali bami kutsi batfole indlu lebhaliwe egameni lababe njengoba abesebenta khona eBarberton. Leso simo sibe yimbangela yekutsi batsatse iminyaka le-6 baticashi ekhaya lakaNgomane eStandini (New Village). Ngelusito lweMnumzane Majahabovu labengumphatsi lomkhulu welihhovisi lakamasipala, babe waphumelela kutfole indlu lengunombolo-114 elokishini laseDindela khona eBarberton. Kutemfundvo babe abegcine ebangeni 9, loko kwamphumelelisa kutsi abe ngulobhala welihhovisi lakamasipala ngaphasi kweMnumzane Majahabovu.

Bahlala kuleyondlu lemagumbi lamane bate baba nebantfwana laba-6. Indlu yangasese beyinelibhakede linye, indle beyitfutwa ebusuku kabili ngeliviki. Ngalelinye lilanga, libhakede lasekhaya beligcwele kakhulu, loko kwabacansula batfutsi bendle. Batsatse sincumo sekulibeka lisekele emnyango welidladla (likhishi). Utsite make nakatsi uvula umnyango ekuseni, lavele lacitsekela ngekutsi endlini kwaba busaphasapha. Umndeni wami wakhuculula lemfucuta, tigameko letinjalo tatingabikwa futsi tinganakwa ehhovisi lakamasipala. Betivamile kwenteka tigameko taloluhlobo emmangweni ngaletu tikhatsi.

Nangabe kunemngcwabo, umndeni loshanelwe bewunikwa emabhakede lamane kuphela latawusetjentiswa ngumndeni, tihlobo kanye nemmango wonkhana lotewuchasa umndeni losemantini. Lawo mabhakede abehlala kulowo mndeni nanobe asesimeni lesinjani, ate atfutwe ngesikhatsi lesimiselle kutfutwa kwendle lokwetayelekile. Ngaletu tikhatsi, tindzaba tetemphilo tatinganakwa emmangweni webantfu labamnyama. Ngenca yetimo tangaleso sikhatsi, babe wabona kutsi kuncono abuke ematfuba lancono emsebenti kute aphumelele ekunetiseni tidzingo temndeni wakhe, ikakhulukati kukhokhela tindleko temfundvo yebantfwana bakhe. Imfundvo yebantfwana bakhe bekuyintfo lebalulekile kubo namake nanobe timo betimatima. Babe wafaka sicelo sekuyosebentela inkapani yashukela iTransvaal Sugar Bureau (TSB) leseMalelane lebeyibitwa nge "Eastern Transvaal Sugar mill" eSifundzeni saseMpumalanga. Nangempela wacashwa kulowo msebenti, wase utfunyelwa Durban ngendizamshini kute ayoceshelwa kusebenta ngashukela. Wahamba angakasifaki sicelo sekwatisa lihhovisi lakaMasipala kutsi sewuyekela umsebenti. Nangempela wahamba washiya umndeni wakhe ngaphasi kwembhasobhi longu babe Hlatjwayo. Ngaletu tikhatsi telubandlululo, wawungavunyelwe kuhlala endlini yamasipala kantsi awusasebenteli masipala wendzawo. Leso sento sababe sabangela kutsi umndeni wasekhaya uhlale uvakashelwa ngemaphoyisa labekahamba ngemoto lengunombolo TAA 116 njalo ebusuku. Bebanganaso siciniseko sekutsi babe unyamalale ngekwetindzaba tepolitiki nobe sewusebenta encenye. Bantfwana bebatitfukusa ngaphasi kwembhede nobe ngaphasi kwelitafuleni ngenca yekwesaba ludlame lwemaphoyisa lamhlophe kanye newelibala lelimnyama. Inhloso yemaphoyisa bekukutfolisisa kutsi babe ukuliphi. Kutfolakala kwemuntfu longekho ephomendini kwakutsiwa utfolakale kunombolo lekungasiyo "wrong number",



Babe wami

bewutfwalwa uyovalelwa emaphoyiseni. Kute kufike bemndeni wakho nebufakazi bekutsi ukhona ephomendini yabo. Utawukhululwa ngaleso sikhatsi. Kutotonkhe timo tebumnandzi nebumatima bemphilo make abenatsi asivikela abuye asicondize netigwegwe nasiphuma endleleni.

Nanobe imphilo beyimatima, make abeciniseka kutsi bantfwana bakhe badla kudla lokwakha umtimba futsi lokwanele malanga onkhe. Abengahlali ngetandla nje, kepha abe kolosha tigcoko abuye atfunge netimphahla atitsengise kuphilisa umndeni wakhe, nanobe kunjalo kwakungeneli. Imphilo yachubeka kuba matima, make wagcina atfola umsebenti ehotela ePhoenix khona eBaberton. Abesebenta kuhlanta emagumbi elihhotela. Ngenyanga abehola emarandi la-R51, 00. Ngetitfukutfuku takhe, konkhe kwahamba kahle babe angekho, bantfwana bakitsi kanye nami nangivakashile, asimange silale ngendlala. Utsite babe nakabuya eDurban wacala kuyosebenta eTSB. Bekahamba libanga lelidze ngebhasi kuya nekubuya ekhaya lokwaba sihibe. Kutsite ngalesikhatsi lihhovisi lamasipala litfola ngalendzaba, umndeni wasekhaya wacoshwa endlini yamasipala nga-1972. Babe wakhonta ngaphasi kwenkhosi yakaShongwe lokwakungu Tinhlonhla wase utfutsela umndeni wakhe eDriekoppies. Inkhosi yayibuye ingumngane lomkhulu wababe kusukela basafundza esikolweni semabanga laphakeme eMjindini eBarberton. Bafikela ekhaya lelidzala lamkhulu Mbilane Malala lobesekahlala eBhonasi (eNewconsort Mine) longubabe wamake, bahlala iminyaka lemibili. Ekugcineni, babe waniketwa indzawo yakhe eDriekoppies A ngemnyaka wa-1974 kute kube ngunamuhla umndeni wakitsi usahlala khona.

Kufika kwami kwekucala eDriekoppies. Ngemnyaka wa-1975, ngatfutsela eDriekoppies kuyohlala nebatali bami, gogo wasala nemndeni wamalume wami Diani Agripa Mkwanazi. Ngitsite nangifika ngatfola dzadzewetfu lomncane Zimisele sekaneminyaka lemine. Emavikini lamabili ngifikile eDriekoppies, ngahlaselwa sifo setimbuzulwane, malaleveva (malaria) ngamukelwa esibhedlela iShongwe kufola kwelashwa lokufanele, nangempela ngaphila. Ekucaleni kwemnyaka ngabhaliswa esikolweni semabanga lacubile iDriekoppies. Bangane bami kubomakhelwane basekhaya bekungu Sisana Ntini, Hlengiwe Lubisi naLomasonto Lubisi kutsi bangane bami basesikolweni bekungu Zilethile Ngomane, Eunah Khoza, Idah Ngwenya naFuni C. Matsebula kubala labambalwa. Ngachubekela esikolweni semabanga lasetulu iShongwe lebeyilikhilomitha linye nehhaфу kusuka ekhaya. Besihamba ngetinyawo kuyofika esikolweni, kutsi lamanye emalanga sigibele ibhasi yebantfwana besikolo lesuka eSchoezendal ngemali lemasenti la-5 (5 cent). Ngibe ngulomunye webafundzi bekufundza matekuletjeni wekucala ngemnyaka wa-1982. Ngelusito lwathishelakati longasekho Nancy Shongwe, ngemnyaka wa-1983 ngasebenta njengathishela longakacecshwa eTikweni Letemfundvo umnyaka munye, esikolweni semabanga laphasi iMagubha. Kulapho ngatfola khona litfuba lekutilolonga njengathishela welibanga 1. Ngemnyaka lolandzelako ngachubekela kuyoceshelwa buthishela eKolishi eMgwenya ngatfola ticu temnyaka lemi-3 "Primary Teachers Diploma" (PTD), ngachaswa ngumfundzate wembuso welubandlululo etifundvweni tami. Kwaba lusito lolwetfula batali bami umntfwalo wetindleko temfundvo yasekolishi. Base bachubeka nekukhokhela imfundvo yalabanye bantfwana bakitsi ngaphandle kwami. Njengoba bebadvonsa matima ngetindleko tekukhokhela imfundvo yebantfwana babo labeba-7 kufake ekhatsi nami. Make wachubeka nekutfunga atsengise njengoba bekangasebenti. Bekatsengisela etindzaweni taseMjindini nemaphetselo kusimamisa simo semndeni wakhe. Make sewuneminyaka le-82 kepha usatitfungela tembatfo takhe ngobe asisekho sidzingo sekutsengisa kantsi futsi sewukhulile. Njengobe kuchaziwe ngetulu, batali bami bebabeka imfundvo yebantfwana babo phambili.

Sikhatsi lesimatima lesashiya umndeni wami ushacekile. Ngemnyaka wa-1984, bengingumfundzi wemnyaka wekucala ekolishi lekufundzela buthishela, eMgwenya. Umnaketfu wesihlanu lebesimtsandza kakhulu abuye akhutsele, Ziyalo wanyamalala wangatiwa. Indzaba yakhe yabikwa emaphoyiseni kwacala kutfungatfwa kwakhe. Ngaleso sikhatsi abefundza libanga le-9 esikolweni saseMatsulu iSifokotile, ahlala kamalume Diani Mkhwanazi sigcinatfumbu sakabo make. Kwefika babe kanye nasibali wakhe Elias Mthethwa batongilandza ekolishi. Abamange bangatise lutfo, kepha simo sangibikela ngakhala indlela yonkhe kusukela Kanyamazane sate sayofika Driekoppies. Satsi nasifika ekhaya, ngatitfola tindzaba letibuhlungu kutsi umnaketfu, Ziyalo utfolakele abulewe kabuhlungu. Umtimba wakhe watfolakala ehlatsini uboshelwe ngadalada lohlabako esihlahleni lesilengela emfuleni, watfolwa bafana labebalusa tinkhomo base babikela emaphoyisa asegedeni lemncele lowehlukanisa sifundza saseMpumalanga nelive laseSwaziland. Abengabukeki, abuye ancunye netitfo temtimba tangasese. Kwatfolakala kutsi umsolwa lobekangumheli walesigameko, ngumake LaNgomane lobekayinyanga, wasitwa ngemadvodza lamatsatfu kufaka ekhatsi inyanga yaseveni laseMozambique. Benta loko ngenkholelo yekutfola ticubu temuntfu ngetizatfu letatiwa ngibo. Lesi sigameko sakhubata imphilo yami kanye neyemndeni wakitsi imphilo wonkhana. Ngekwemtsetfo wasemakhaya, lelicala ladingidvwa ekhotho yendzawo yemango. Umholi webukhosi lobekayindvuna yendzawo watsi batali bami abacolisana njengetakhamuti namake LaNgomane ngesento sakhe. Ngemnyaka wa-1996 kwatsiwa babe ayobika loludzaba ekhotho lase Nelspruit ngesikhatsi selikomiti lekwetfulwa kwemaciniso nekubuyisana I" Truth and

reconciliation commission". Batali bami bantfu bekuthula nelutsandvo, bakhetsa kunikela konkhe kuNkulunkulu longuMdali wetintfo tonkhe. Abamange baphindze bachubeke ngalelocala, ngobe emanti angacitseka acitsekile.

Imphilo yami sengikhulile, ngitimele. Ngishade nemnumzane wami Gcinumuzi Gatjeni ngemnyaka wa- 1988, ngasengivele ngisebenta nginguthishela, sabusiswa ngemntfwana wekucala welijaha Gcinukuthula Gatjeni. Ngangichubeka netifundvo tami tangasese temfundvo lephakeme te-BA neNyuvesi i- UNISA. Umnumzane wami naye abenguthishela, kungako wangikhutsata kutsi ngiyo ceceshela buthishela ngembi kwekutsi sishade. Kuwo lowo mnyaka besihlala nebatali bakhe kanye nemnakabo Mvulane endlini lemagumbi lamane, Kanyamazane. Emshadweni wetfu imphilo ibe mnandzi yabuye yabamatima njengemishado yonkhe kepha sasicocisana sisombulule tinkinga. Ngabusiswa ngebafana labatsatfu, Gcina, Muzi kanye naSimphiwe. Gogo wami langikhulisile, abechubeka nekunginakekela kanye nemndeni wami. Bekutsi njalo nangitfole umntfwana abetsa siphos esitulo. Umntfwana wami wekugcina, Simphiwe uvele ngemnyaka wa-1997, gogo wami washona ngemnyaka wa-1998 asababuse bonkhe bantfwana bami.

Sigameko sembuso welubandlululo lesitsintsa imphilo yami. Sasingebafundzi belibanga le-12 siticeceshela luhlolo lwekuphela kwemnyaka ngetifundvo tantsambama esikolweni semabanga laphasi eMagubha khona eDriekoppies ngemnyaka wa-1982. Kutsi ngetikhati teli-awa lemfica ebusuku, kwefika emadvodza lamabili labekatimbonye buso eklasini besifundzela kulo, bebaphetse tibhamu. Basiniketa emadokhumenti enhlangano lebusako ye ANC lebeyivalwe umlomo ngaleso sikhatsi. Basicwayisa kutsi sifundze lamadokhumenti, siwasabalalise emmangweni wonkhana kepha singakhulumi lutfu ngabo. Batsite bangahamba, sasetfuke kakhulu sahluleka kuchubeka nekufundza. Sacela lomunye wetfu Mafika Lubisi, losaneticu tebudokotela (Dr), kutsi asiphekelele emakhaya etfu ngekwelhlukana. Dokotela Mafika Lubisi uyidlalile indzima yekungesekela etifundvweni tasebusuku kanye nasekukhuleni kwami. Mine bengina dzadze wetfu lomncane Zimisele lobekaphikele ngekukhala, ngenca yekwetfuka. Safika ekhaya siphephile, sacocela batali betfu ngalesigameko ekuseni ngelilanga lelilandzelako. Ngesikhatsi selubandlululo, bekulicala lelibovu kutfolakala unemadokhumenti e-ANC, ngaloko-ke natsi sawashisa ngekuphatima kweliso nasifika ekhaya. Sachubeka kunjalo saphokophela ekufezeni emaphupho etfu kutemfundvo, namuhla sikhuluma ngenkhuleleko yemuntfu lomnyama.

Sigameko lesitsintsa imiphumela yeluhlelo lwemfundvo lebeyibandlululo. Kusukela emabangeni laphasi kuyofika ekolishi, ngangiphiwe kutemfundvo letiphatselene nebuciko betekudvweba nekuhlobisa (Fine arts). Kuwo onkhe emaklasi lengifundze kuwo bontsanga lengifundze nabo bebabeka licembe bafolise tincwadzi tabo tetinkondlo kutsi ngibadvwebele ngibuye ngibahlobisele. Nasekolishi lekuceceshela buthishela besinikwa umsebenzi wemakhono ebuciko betekudvweba lomnyenti. Pho-ke emakhompuyutha sasingenawo. Bengibentela wonkhe umsebenzi lodzinga emakhono, kufake ekhati emakhadi etimemo lahlukene, ngibuye ngisebentise nesikhatsi sami sekuphumula. Nanobe kunjalo, umfundzisi weSifundvo semakhono akamange angikhutsate nobe angicugcutela ngekuchubekela etikhungwini temfundvo yemakhono ekudvweba kute ngiyotfutukisa likhono lami. Lokuhle, ngiko kutfolakala emamaki lasetulu emaphesenti la-85 emsebenzi lomuhle. Loku bekubangelwa luhlobo lwemfundvo yesikhatsi selubandlululo, ematfuba ekufundzela tifundvo tekudvweba bewalungele imfundvo yalabamhlophe kuphela. Kube bekungenjalo, ngabe ngaceceshelwa sifundvo Semakhono ekudvweba nobe ngisifundze ngasese. Angisoli lutfu, nanobe umbuso welubandlululo usihlukumete kangaka tsine labamnyama loko akumange kungente nginhlantse ngilahle litsemba, kepha ngacinisela ngaphokophela embili. Ngayo leyomfundvo, ngititfungele timphahla, ngakoloshisa emajezi bewabitwa ngekutsi "half jersey" etfu sinebangane bami Euna Khoza na-Idah Ngwenya sasibuye siwagcoke nasesikolweni. Lobuciko sabutfolakala esifundvweni Sebuciko basekhaya (House Craft) kusukela ebangeni 3 kuye ebangeni -12.

Kusikhulisa kwamake ngemitsetfo yekutiphatsa. Sandla samake besicinile kutemitsetfo yekukhulisa bantfwana ngendlela lecondzile. Akamange asitefise, ngikhumbula nangingena ebuntfombini abengitsetsisela ngisho kubingelela umuntfu wesilisa lomdzala lobekatangcisa ngelibhayisikili ngasesangweni lasekhaya. Lesento samake sangenta ngacabanga kutsi mhlawumbe akasuye akusuye make wami longitalako. Bekangulomuntfu longenasikhatsi sekuchaza intfo ngekwelizinga lekuvisisa kwemntfwana. Akazange sangifundzise ngetigaba tekukhula kwentfombatane kanye netinkinga taleto tigaba. Bekamane atsi, "ungacali ube nebangane bebabafana" kuphelele lapho. Sikhule sigcina leyomitsetfo lasinika yona sonkhe nebantfwana bakitsi, besingenako kubuta umuntfu lomdzala imininingwane nemibuto nangabe asiyala. Lolunye lwelwazi lwekutinakekela njengentfombatane, bengichushiswa ngudzadze wetfu lomkhulu, Ntombikayise kanye nebangani esikolweni. Yebo besikhona sifundvo se "Biology", kepha bekungumsebenzi wemntali kugcizelela. Angimbeki cala umntali wami, abengenalo lwazi lwekwenta njalo acabanga kutsi kungifundzisa kukhohlakala ngenca yendlela labakhulise ngayo nabo ngaleso sikhatsi. Loko kwangicgina ngenta tintfo ngesikhatsi lesifanele ngate ngaphumelela emphilweni.

Kushayisana kwenkholelo yagogo nekukhinyabeteka kwelikusasa lamake wami. Kutsite ngalesikhatsi make asebangeni le-4 esikolweni iMoodies, emakhaya aseMjindini ngemnyaka wa-1953 bekumele achubekele ebangeni 5 esikolweni semabanga lacubile eFranzin, KaMswashi. Ngenca yenkhutsalo, buntfu kanye nekukhalipha kwamake kutemfundvo, thishela A.S Makamo watinikela kutsi amkhokhele tindleko tetemfundvo kute afeze liphupho lelikusasa lakhe. Make wasitfokotela kakhulu sinyatselo sathishela Makamo wabikela gogo wami ngaletindzaba letimnandzi. Kepha-ke gogo akamange avume, ngobe bekakholelwa kutsi make sewukhule ngalokwanele kutsi asale atimela emphilweni ayekele sikolo. Make abefuna kufundzela buthishela, kepha liphupho lakhe lashabalala ngaleyondlela. Ngenca yalesigameko, make abecabangela imfundvo yebantfwana bakhe kusukela kulesimo landlule kuso emphilweni.

Emmangweni lengihlala kuwo ngike ngehlelwa sigameko lesiphikisana nekutiphatsa kanye nekutihlonipha kwalabadzala. Bekusemini yasekuseni, ngisele ngedvwa ekhaya eDriekoppies, ngalesikhatsi kufika lomunye webaphatsi belibandla lakitsi ngaleso sikhatsi, longubabe "Motsa" lobeka hlonishwa kakhulu, abe vakashele batali bami. Lobabe bekanebantfwana laba lingana nami ngebudzala beminyaka, abuye akhulile kunababe wami. Wafika ngenhlonipho, kepha nganele kumbikela kutsi labadzala abekho, wasitakala. Wase ucala kubeka emagama ekufuna budlelwane betelutsandvo nami abuye sekafuna nekulala nami ngaleso sikhatsi. Ngangiyitfombi legcinekile ngenca yemiyalo yebatali bami, ikakhulukati make, ngifundza libanga 9.

Nginele ngabona loko, ngavele ngabalekela ngaphandle kwendlu yekuphumela. Sento sami samphatsisa ngemahloni wase uyaphuma uyahamba. Ngenca yekutsi make abekhaliphile ngelulaka, nami ngangingati kutsi nangimatisa ngalesigameko utangikholwa nobe utawutsi ngingcolisa inceku yaNkulunkulu ngenkhohlakalo. Ngimatise ngalenzaba sengisemshadweni nginebantfwana bami labatsatfu. Make waphatseka kabi, wamangala kutsi kungani ngibindze nentfo lembi nakangaka leyacishe yangilahlela likusasa lami. Ngasho kutsi kungenca yekwesaba njengobe bekasicinisa kakhulu sandla ekukhuleni kwetfu. Kwamcansula watsi, "Abefuna kungonela umntfwana, kepha ngiyambonga Simakadze ngekukuvikela." Ngiyababonga impela batali bami kungifundzisa kutsatsa tincumo letifanele etimeni temphilo lengihlangabetene nato.

Tigameko tekukhuliswa kwebantfwana emmangweni. Letinye tetindzaba betifundzisa tibuye titfutukise timilo tebantfwana kanye netifundvo temphilo. Bekuvame kutsi nawuhamba libanga lelidze nemuntfu lomdzala, beka kulungiselela ngekutsi, "nangabe sihamba endleleni ungacali utsi womile, ngobe nawungasho njalo kutawuchamuka salukati ehlatini sikunatsise ingati." Sibantfwana sasikholwa kutsi bantfu labadzala bacinisile nangempela sasingabahluphi, nanobe ngabe womele emanti kangakanani, uyatithulela, utibambe kute kuyofikwa lapho kuyiwa khona. Bantfu labadzala bebasifundzisa kutiphatsa kahle, sikwati kutimela hhayi kubahlupha ngentfo lengekho kantsi sibukene nendlela lendze yekumba ngetinyawo.

Ngiyababonga batali bami. Akusiti kutsi nangabe ungakaphumeleli usole lomunye umuntfu kumbe umbuso welubandlululo, ngobe likusasa lemuntfu lilungiselelwa nguye umnikati. Kubantfwana bakitsi laba-6, siphumelele kutfutukisa imfundvo yetfu ngasese siyisusela emfundvweni lesisekelo lekhokhelwe batali betfu. Kanjalo nami ngisachubeka nekufundza ezingeni le-PhD kumkhakha wesifundvo setilwimi (linguistics). Kepha ngenca yekufundza ngasese nekusebenta, sivinini sekufundza sike satsikameteka iminyakana lembalwa, kepha angilahli litsemba. Enyuvesi lengisebenta kuyo, ngiye ngibagcugcutele bafundzi kutsi bente umehluko etimphilweni tabo nanobe timo tasemakhaya timatima kangakanani.

Ngibakhumbute kutsi kuba ngumfundzi kusho kutsi ungumuntfu lofundzako longagcini kufuna lwati, ufundza kubatali njengabothishela bekucala, ufundze kubantfu labaceceshiwe, wente lucwaningo bese utsatsa tincumo letakhako. Nginyabonga batali bami, ningikhulisile, nibe ngebachasi bami, ningikhokhele ngemphilo, nangifundzisa kutiphatsa, nangifundzisa kukhonta Simakadze, nangifundzisa ngemasiko ami lokuyimvelaphi nebuve bami ngaphumelela ngaba ngulomuntfu lenginguye lamuhla.

Ngibonga wonkhe lobe neligalelo lekungenta umuntfu kufaka ekhatsi nemmango jikelele.

Nginyabonga tihlabani tenhlitiyo yami lesenalala, dzadze Zilungisele Mhayise (1979), Mkhulu Obed Mhayise (1981), Umnaketfu Ziyalo Mhayise (1984), khokho Fakubi Ndlovu (1986), gogo Mludi Ellie Manana (1998), babe Mvelaphi Benjamin Mhayise (2000)

MY PARENTS MY HEROES

Busile Cynthia Ndlovu

My future destiny was not determined by my family background. I'm grateful to have started schooling at a farm. I have been a primary teacher at Vukasambe for 5 years, a lecturer at former Mgwenya College of Education for 7 years, a Siswati subject advisor at Ehlanzeni District for 16 years and am presently a lecturer on Siswati at the University of Mpumalanga. My achievements are not determined by my family background or the apartheid government.

Conditions relating to my parent's marriage. In July 1953 my mother Phethwayini Malala-Mhayise met her dream husband, Velaphi Benjamin Mhayise. My parents then held their white wedding which was popular only in the Western culture during those days. In 1955 they got their first adorable girl Ntombikayise and in 1958, their second born son Zenzo. On the 15th of August 1962 they were blessed with a delightful third born girl, Busile Mhayise. My mother was always saying; "I want my children's life to be better than mine." She once shared with me that she named me "Busile" because she wanted me to be an achiever and ruler as opposed to her name "Phethwayini" meaning what will finally happen to you. I was born at the home of my grandmother Ellie Manana, my mother's mom, at Kamkopokopo in Mr Wesley's' farm found a few kilometres away from Barberton. Both immediate family members and relatives were overwhelmed with his development.



My Grandmother

My parents were blessed with cattle and other gifts for the wedding ceremony. Just like in any other marriage, my parents experienced good and hard times. When I was one my mother and two other siblings, Ntombikayise and Zenzo, migrated to my grandfather Obed Mhayise, from my father's side to join my dad's extended family at Nelshoogte (eNyuthaweni). While at Nelshoogte, my father was working in Barberton and coming fortnightly to see us. In my father's absence, grandfather supported my mother fully in all circumstances she faced as a daughter in-law and she loved us and my other siblings, Ntombikayise and Zenzo. My mother was not working but she ensured that my younger brother and sister were attending school, even though my brother was also responsible for looking after my grandfather's cattle. Finally, my parents decided to migrate to Barberton and they were blessed with eight siblings, Ntombikayise, Zenzo, Busile, Zithelo, Ziyalo, Bukile, Zimisele and Zilungisele. Two of the siblings passed on, namely, Ziyalo and Zilungisele.

Some circumstances pertaining to my early years. When I was two years old, the situation compelled my parents to move me back to my grandmother Ellie Manana's place. This was because my mother was due to give birth to my younger brother, Zithelo who came after me in 1963. My grandmother was a farm worker in Mr. Wesley's farm known as Kamkopokopo. This farm specialised in growing crops like maize, sweet potatoes, and other vegetables as well as animal farming. While my grandmother was at work, she left me under the care of my great-grand mother, Fakubi Nkosi, who did not work anymore due to old age. They were working very hard in the farm, from 6h00 in the morning and knocking off at 17h00 in the afternoon. However, before leaving for work she used to prepare food like cooked sweet potatoes, chicken and porridge - food I loved so much.



My mother and my great-grand mother

Farm life during the apartheid era. The only way to get a permit to stay in the farm was to be a farm worker, especially adults who were not schooling. Some young children were also working in the farm, especially those who had dropped out of schools due to long distances that they had to travel to such institutions. If that was not the case the farm owner would chase away the whole family so that it has to find another place to stay. The houses were then demolished. The other farm rule was that people who were not staying in that farm were not allowed to pass on the farm. They were considered as intruders and therefore were arrested. There were signs that were indicating that, "trespassers are prohibited". It was not considered whether you are a relative to someone on the farm.

How my grandmother brought me up I enjoyed all kinds of food such as sweet potatoes, other fruits and vegetables from the farm because I was the only child staying with my grandmother by then. My grandmother was always clean

and hence she kept me clean at all times. She washed my school uniform accordingly. My grandmother loved her relatives and she used to visit them during weekends according to her plans. When she was away, I was left under the care of Gogo Nkosi as usual. My great-grand mother loved preparing me her best meal known as “sikhukhumuka”, which is a thick traditional food prepared by mixing porridge, a bit of sugar and water. Just like any other child, when I did something wrong, my great grandmother pinched me in any area of my body. That was fine with me and I enjoyed staying with both of my grandparents. Other grandchildren used to visit the homestead during school holidays, while I would be at my parents’ place in Barberton’s Dindela Location. My grandmother had a good sense of humour and good morals that she cascaded to me the need to honour all adults and other people and to play with other children amicably. She taught me to do house chores, wash the dishes, sweep the kitchen, etc. So I grew up playing with other kids from the neighbourhood without much monitoring from the elders but I kept my grandmother’s orders in mind.

At the age of 7, I began my education journey at Franzin (KaMshwashi), a “Multigraded school” which was 5 kilometres away from my grandmother’s house. The head of the school was Mr Phakathi and my class teacher was Madam Mcanyane, a Xhosa old lady. My school was far so my grandmother requested one of the elder girls by the name of Jane Mthunywa to take care of me on the way to school and at school in general since I was still young. The other reason being that there were some rumours of car drivers who were killing people on the road side and drove away known as “bomajubanhloko.” Most of the time Jane was simply putting me on her back so that we could reach school a bit earlier. At this school I did Sub- A, B and standard 1. There were difficult times that I experienced in my life while in the farm, because when I was expected to proceed to grade 2. I got sick and my grandmother took me to a traditional healer known as Mr Zulu. As young as I was I stayed with people I did not know for a period of two months. My grandmother and my parents brought some food for me. But unfortunately, it was only enjoyed by the traditional healer and his children: that is a culture of some traditional healers to exploit their patients in the black community. I was offered food that was specifically prepared for patients since I was not the only one. They never practised other things except that the above was the only trauma. I was not used to the cultural activities and the environment of traditional healing. After two months, I got better and my grandmother took me back to the farm. Though I was still young, hardship taught me to persevere in life.

Due to the apartheid policies at that time my parents could not obtain a house registered in their name even though my father was working. So they spent a period of six years as tenants at Ngomane residential place, New Village (eStandini). None the less, they finally got their own house number 114 at Dindela location in Barberton, through the assistance of Mr Majahabovu who was a Municipal manager of that time. My father had standard 9 and that qualified him to work as a Municipal administrator for Mr Majahabovu hence that favour. By that time, my parents had six children still living in the four roomed house. There was one bucket system toilet which was collected at night twice a week. One day the bucket was too full and seemingly the collectors were annoyed. They then left the bucket right at the kitchen door of our house. So when my mother opened the door in the morning, everything spilled directly into the kitchen. The family had to clean the mess as such cases were not reported to the Municipal office. This was one of the common incidents during those times. When there was a funeral, the bereaved family was offered only four buckets system to be used by the entire family members, relatives and supporting community members at large. Those buckets would be left at the bereaved family’s place until the next scheduled collection for the entire period. During those days, health matters were never taken into consideration for the black community. My father decided to look for better job opportunities so that he could be able to maintain the needs of his family, paying for his childrens’ education was a priority irrespective of the hardship. He applied for a post at the Transvaal Sugar Bureau sugar mill in Malelane (former Eastern Transvaal) in the Mpumalanga province. He was hired and sent to Durban for training without a formal resignation or permission from the Barberton municipality. He left his family in the custody of Mr Hlatjwayo who was responsible for monitoring. That was against the apartheid government to look for a job elsewhere while owning a municipal house in the location. The police vehicle registration number TAA 116 frequented our house especially at night. They just popped into the yard, kicking the doors, checking permits and unregistered members. If an unregistered person was found in a wrong number that person was taken to the police station until the next day when the family members came with proof that he or she resided at their place. The purpose of the police was to verify my father’s whereabouts. They were not sure if he was away for political reasons or working elsewhere. As children we used to hide under the dining room table or bed. However, my mother was there for us through thick and thin, as we were under her protection. While this was still not adequate, my mother ensured that her children had a decent meal on a daily basis. So she used to knit woolen hats sewing clothes for a living and unfortunately



My dear father

that was not enough. As life became tougher and tougher, she looked for a job for a job at the Phoenix hotel in Barberton as a cleaner. Her monthly wage was R51, 00 a month. Through her efforts, everything went well in my father's absence, and my siblings never slept without a meal. My father returned from Durban and started working at TSB. He used to travel by bus to and this indeed was a challenge. When the Barberton Municipal office discovered in full about that, my family was ousted from the Barberton municipal house. My father got his own place under Chief Tinhlonhla Shongwe and took his family there. On their arrival my mother's father Mbilane Malala offered them a residential place to stay until they get their own place. Finally, my father was allocated his own site at Driekoppies A in 1973 from that period up to date. In 1975 I relocated to Driekoppies to join my family and left my grandmother with my uncle and his family. When I arrived there my last born sister Zimisele was already two years old. Within a period of two weeks, I was attacked by malaria and was hospitalized at Shongwe hospital where I received suitable treatment. At the beginning of the year I was registered at Driekoppies Combined School to continue with my primary education. In my neighbourhood my friends were Sisana Ntini, Hlengiwe Lubisi and Nomasonto Lubisi and at school they were Eunah Khoza, Idah Ngwenya and Funi C. Matsebula to mention a few. I proceeded to Shongwe High School and was one of the first matriculant students in 1982. In 1983 I was recruited to the Department of Education through the assistance of the late remarkable Madam Nancy Shongwe to teach temporarily at Magubha primary. This was where I got my first experience as a grade 1 teacher. That was my first teaching experience to the Grade 1 learners. The following year I proceeded to Mgwenya College of Education for my Primary Teachers Diploma (PTD) through the government bursary that was offered that time. This was of a great assistance to my parents, were relieved in paying the tuition fees for me since they were struggling to acquire money for school fees for the education of all their eight siblings including myself. My mother was no more working and relied to her house craftsmanship (sewing) for a living. She used to sell in areas around Emjindini to boost the needs. Both my parents wanted to see us having a better life through education.

There was a sad moment that left our family in grief. In 1984, I was a first year student at the then Mgwenya College of education. One of my beloved brothers, Ziyalo went missing and the matter was reported to the police and the searching progressed. My father and his brother in law came by car to pick me up from the College. Then never shared anything with me, but I was dismayed and cried from Kanyamazane to Driekoppies. When we arrived home that was where I got the heart breaking news that my fifth born brother, Ziyalo has been brutally murdered. His body was later found hanged on a tree with a wired fence, by family members in a bush towards the Swaziland boarder fence. He looked terrible and his private parts were missing. The suspect was a woman who was a witch doctor known as LaNgomane who lived in the same area where we live. She was assisted by three men. One was a witch doctor from Mozambique. They did this for mutilation purposes. This is the most traumatic memory for my life time. The case was taken to the local traditional court. The local leader told my parents to forgive the woman. My parents were peace loving people so they surrendered everything to God. My life as an independent adult. In 1988 I got married and was already working as a teacher, gave birth to my first born child Gcinukuthula and as a distance student registered for a BA degree with UNISA. My husband Gcinumuzi Gatjeni was also a teacher and he is the one who inspired me to go for teaching, and we were staying with my in - laws and his elder brother Mvulane in a four roomed house at Kanyamazane stand 367. Life was good and challenging just like in any marriage but we were united and communicating amicably. I was blessed with three boys, Gcina, Muzi and Simphiwe. Each time when I gave birth to a child, my grandmother would bring a small chair as a gift. My last born was born in 1997 and my grandmother passed on in 1998 after having blessed all my children. There were incidents that took place in the apartheid era that affected me, grand mother and my parents. The first incident took place while we were conducting afternoon studies in preparation for matric final exams at Magubha Primary at Driekoppies in 1982. It was late at night when two men with their faces covered came into the classroom with guns and gave us some ANC documents (ANC was burned then). They instructed us to read, distribute those documents to community members but hide their identities. After they left, we were traumatised to the extent of failing to continue with our studies. We requested one of our cohort Mafika Lubisi who is now a Doctor, to accompany each one of us to our respective homes. I was with my younger sister Zimisele who continuously cried because of fear. We arrived home safely and shared the information with our parents the next morning. It was a crime to be found with ANC documents, so we burnt them upon getting home. The next apartheid incident took place while I was with my grandmother at the farm. My grandmother and her cousin Gogo Mavenge Mngometulu worked hard for additional cash since they were not earning a living wage at the farm. So they spotted a hidden place right at the centre of the gum tree plantation where they brewed the strong traditional beer (sipayoni). It was a crime to be found brewing such concoctions during the apartheid government. They preferred brewing on cloudy days because the smoke would not be visible to the police. During one weekend while they were busy in the plantation, the police arrived home and checked with one of the local people about where the traditional beer was brewed. Due to panicking, the person directed the harsh apartheid police to where my grandparents were. They found them directly busy with the brewing process, and instructed them to board

the police vehicle. The old ladies were screaming and crying at the back of the vehicle. Due to the situation, Gogo Mngometulu suddenly collapsed. The police took her out and requested someone to take her place. One of the relatives Gogo Klin who was younger than my grandmother offered. She then boarded the police vehicle and off they went to Barberton police station. They slept there and were released after two days. No matter the experience of sleeping in the police cells at their ages, my grandmother and her cousin never stop brewing. They did that to make a difference and make a better life for social justice as human beings of South Africa. The farm community continues supporting them by buying the dangerous beer. It was the only source of stress relief after hard work at the farm during those days. The next incident on cultural dispute destroyed my mother's future career. My mother was doing Std 4 at Moodies Primary at Emjindini village in 1953 and ready to progress to Std 5 at Franzin (KaMswashi) Multigraded school. Due to good performance and a good sense of humour, the teacher who was also a principal Mr A. A.S Makamo offered to take responsibility to find my mother's further studies. My mother was so excited and reported the good news to my grandmother. Unfortunately, my grandmother refused, stating that my mother is ready to take responsibility for her own life. My mother wanted to be a teacher and she was disappointed by my grandmother's decision. Due to the difficulties, my parents experienced in supporting their seven siblings for a better future through education. Thus, my mother put her children's education first before what she experienced in life. My mother as a principled mother. Pertaining to ethical issues, my mother was very strict. She was the kind a person who does not explain or unpack things to the level of the child's understanding. She would not explain to me about girl's challenges on stages of development. She would simply say, "You must never befriend boys". That was all. We adhered to her principles, not to question whatever an adult was saying to you. Some of the information on how to take care of myself as a girl, I learned from my elder sister Ntombikayise. I was preserved to focus and do things at the right time.

There were some aspects of moral dispute that I experienced in the community and public in general. There were some old men of my father's age who were proposing love to us while were the same ages as their own children. I remember, one elder who was a church leader visited our home at Driekoppies. Unfortunately, my parents were away and I was the only person at home. So he took that advantage and started proposing love to me and wanted to sleep with me in my parent's absentia. I stood firm on my principle as a young girl who was still a virgin at Grade 9. I ran out of the living room. He felt embarrassed and left. Due to the fact that my mother was too strict, I did not know if she would believe me or I would be seen as someone who is painting a bad picture of a man of God. I only shared this experience with my mother now as an adult and a married woman. She was puzzled, as to why I never told them but I stated the reason of her strictness when we grew up. However, I thank my parents for who I am today. There are stories and beliefs told by adults and community members that made us as children to understand and learn to conform to various situations. Some of the stories were to develop children's morals and teaching lessons. Usually when we walk long distances with adults, they prepare us by saying that, "while on the way, you are not supposed to say "I am thirsty because an old lady will come and give you blood to drink". As children we believed and we never bothered adults about issues of being thirsty, you just keep it to yourself until we reached our destination. Adults were teaching us to be disciplined, strong and not to frustrate them while we were faced with a long travel on foot.

Lastly, at school I was gifted in arts (fine art) and needle work from the primary school, secondary and at the College. In all my classes my cohorts were booking me to draw their anthology books. At College, we were given many arts tasks. So I was expected by my classmates to draw cards, and other artistic activities that were required. The Art lecturer never even acknowledged me or else guided me about institutions for furthering my studies in Arts. She only allocated the 85 percent that I deserved for my good fine art work. This was due to the type of Education system in the apartheid era, such opportunity to develop my artistic skills were not available for my race. If I was guided I should have followed Fine Arts as one of my future hobbies or as a career. When it comes to needlework, I have been knitting my own jersey and sewing my own clothes even today. I gained the needle work and clothing skills from the needle work classes that I attended from Standard 3 up to standard 12. However, I'm not blaming everything on the Apartheid government because a person's future is prearranged by the individual. Out of my family of eight siblings, we all managed to progress with our private studies from the foundation laid by our parents. I'm presently progressing with my studies at PhD level in the field of linguistics. However, due to distance learning and work, my study progress is a bit behind schedule. As a lecturer for students I always advise them to make a difference in their future despite their background or past experiences. They should learn from their parents as primary educators, experienced people and take responsibility for their education. I am thankful to my parents who were my cheerleaders, financially, ethically, religiously, culturally and made me the person I am today together with my family members and the community at large.

A tribute to my late heroes, my younger sister Zilungisele Mhayise (1979), grand father Obed Mhayise (1981), brother Ziyalo Collen Mhayise (1984), great grand parent Fakubi Ndlovu (1986), grand mother Mludi Ellie Manana (1998) and my father Velaphi Benjamin Mhayise (2000).

MY MUM, NONA WALLIS

Malcolm Wallis

My Mum, Nona Wallis, who was born in 1922, first visited South Africa in 1960. She subsequently visited again several times including trips to neighbouring states such as Lesotho, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. This story is about the first of these visits. It is largely based on my own recollections and an account of her life she wrote in her 80s which she called 'Nona's Diary'. She was a citizen of the United Kingdom but spent much of her 95 years living in four different continents: Europe (the United Kingdom- the country of her birth), Australia (the South West), Africa (Kenya) and North America/ the Caribbean (the Bahamas). She went to a state school for the children of farmers in the Australian bush. Her formal school education ended at the age of 14. In a sense, travel was her education. I call her 'Mum' throughout this story as opposed to the South African 'Mom' which I always eschew.

To Africa

In 1954 Dad, Alan, took up a post as an official in Nairobi, Kenya, where he worked in the postal administration serving three colonial territories: Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika (later Tanzania after the incorporation of Zanzibar). We lived there as a family. Mum worked for Gailey and Roberts, a company which supplied agricultural equipment, trying to collect the debts of the white settler farmers who dominated the economy of the colony.

One of the provisions of Dad's service was six months' 'home leave' every three years which included paid return trips to UK for the entire family. For the second such leave in 1960 it was decided that early in 1961 Mum and Dad were to return to Kenya from the UK by sea which was frequently the chosen mode of travel in those days. They travelled in a ship named 'Athlone Castle' after a former Governor – General of what was then the Union of South Africa. My brother and I did not travel with them at this stage as we were at boarding

school in Kenya. My parents made an interesting and unorthodox decision. The boat trip would terminate in Cape Town after which we would travel to Kenya by car. Chris and I were to fly to South Africa where Mum and Dad would collect us in the brand new Austin A 55 which had also come with them by ship from the UK.

I think Mum and Dad had two reasons for visiting South Africa. One was a genuine



Dad (left) and Mum (second left) with fellow travellers

tourist reason. They had heard a lot about the country, particularly from a number of South African friends and acquaintances in Nairobi, and this was a great opportunity to see it. The other reason was what was happening in Kenya 1960/61 saw the beginning of the transfer of power to the majority population.

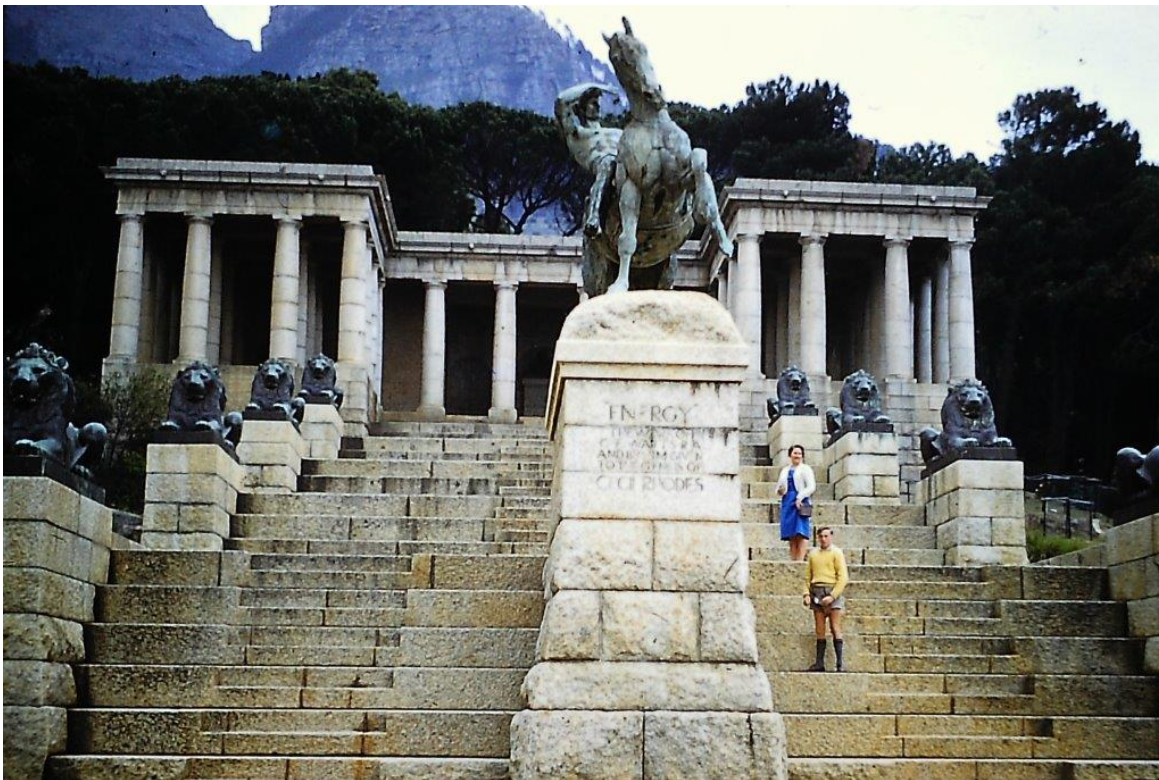
Mum mentions in her diary a famous speech made by the then UK Prime Minister in which he spoke of the 'winds of change' sweeping through Africa. It was clear that Kenya was soon going to become an independent country. Many whites in Kenya were looking 'down south' as an option as the long term prospects of remaining in Kenya seemed bleak. So it seemed like a good idea to take a look at the place. After doing so we concluded that it was not for us. The Sharpeville massacre had just occurred, South Africa's whites voted by a referendum that they wanted the country which had been a Union to become a Republic, and the country was on the verge of leaving the Commonwealth. The racism was very apparent as was, to a lesser extent, Afrikaner versus British antagonism, so the place was very tense.

The marathon safari of 1961 began with Mum and Dad driving from Cape Town to Johannesburg to collect us from the airport, stopping at Richmond in the Karoo and the Phoenix hotel in Bloemfontein where someone had to be sent for who could speak English.

We incredibly started out to Cape Town the next day with we two teenage boys sitting in the back. The drive was mostly through the Karoo, which has a landscape with an endless capacity to induce boredom. Mum's philosophy to the effect that travel is educational must have been sorely tested.

We stopped overnight in Richmond again, a 'dorp' which has nothing in common with the suburb south of the River Thames except its name. We then spent one week at the Mount Curtis Hotel in Seapoint, Cape Town. It was a delightful old fashioned hotel but sadly it no longer exists. Instead when I visited the area early in 2019 I found a rather dull looking block of flats at the same site, also known as Mount Curtis. Mum comments in her diary on how cold the water was in the Atlantic where we attempted to swim. She recalls in her diary that I went to the top of Table Mountain with Dad but she unselfishly stayed behind with Chris who was a bit frightened and troubled by an ear complaint, which might have worsened as a result of a sudden change in

altitude. There are three stories she does not relate but are part of her story. Dad wanted to go to the horse racing at, I think, Kenilworth, but we were turned away at the gate because Chris and I were too young to be admitted. Dad, who loved horse racing, exploded with an outburst of disappointment and anger I had



Mum and Chris at the Rhodes Memorial, Cape Town, 1961

never seen before, and Mum had a tough time to calm him down. Our disappointing plight at Kenilworth seemed really strange to us as we regularly went to the races at the Ngong course in Nairobi. It was just a great family outing, which did not corrupt me in the slightest.

Another story is that we decided to use the bus service one day. I had been educated to be a true English gentleman so did not hesitate to offer my seat when some ladies embarked onto a rather crowded bus.

The lady to whom I offered my seat declined to accept as she was 'coloured' and not allowed to sit in a 'white' seat. The other story concerns a discussion with the hotel owner who advised us courteously that we would be better off living in Durban than Cape Town because we were monolingual English people with zero Afrikaans, a typical South African way of rejecting outsiders, to put it politely. These three incidents were an illuminating introduction to South Africa.

After Cape Town we took the 'Garden Route' to the east. This was much more scenic than the earlier stages of our safari. Mum recorded that it included a stop in the Tzitzikama Forest (Storms River) which she found to be 'wonderful but expensive'. From there we went to the Blue Bend resort near East London where it rained the whole week we were there and my brother had to have medical treatment for a perforated ear drum. Payment entailed some expense but the doctor was not fazed: 'just leave your home address, we'll send the bill' - not a solution that would be possible in the modern age. By the way, the account was received and paid three months later and my brother resumed the ability to hear before we left East London. The next stage was Durban for which we had to pass through Transkei.

Mum notes there were dire warnings as the area was 'governed by a chief' - 'we were not allowed to stop', so it was non-stop through the area. We then travelled through places such as Margate and Ramsgate which fascinated Mum as these are the names of two resorts in south east England which are 'next to each other - just like in Kent'. In Durban we stayed at the Lucien Hotel (where the Wheel centre is now). We enjoyed the 'wonderful' beaches and 'we enjoyed our stay there'. One day we went to Salt Rock, a few km to the north to look at sites which were on offer as possible places to build houses and to live. I remember Mum and Dad saying it was too rocky. It is now one of the most expensive residential areas in the coastal area and is popular with well-heeled holiday makers. Mum and Dad were to revisit the area forty years later when they came to visit us in Westville, an upmarket suburb near the centre of Durban.

After that we motored north, stopping overnight at a place with a splendid name, Fort Mistake (in a motel - 'cheap and good'). There is some uncertainty about where the name comes from but it seems safe to say that it concerns a British military blunder which was an error in identifying where the enemy was located. After that we passed through Pretoria ('amazed at the magnificent buildings') and stayed overnight at Louis Trichardt (now Machado) before crossing into what is now Zimbabwe.

A week later, having seen the wonders of Victoria Falls ('we could see the spray twenty miles away'), we passed through Zambia and mainland Tanzania and finally reached Nairobi, our home. We had travelled roughly 6,000 km, none of it on freeways (which did not exist then) and quite a lot of it not even on tar roads. Mum was right. Travelling can be educational. We certainly learnt a lot about South Africa and its problems. I have to give her credit for encouraging me to learn more which I did, starting with an undergraduate project on liberalism in South Africa, which she typed for me (this was 1966) and she found 'interesting'. My subsequent life has perhaps reflected that some learning arose from this and other safaris. For me, at least, 1994 and all that changed the South African picture over 30 years on, so I came here with my family to live in a far better country.



Me – A View from Table Mountain, 1961

AN ETERNAL LOVE LETTER

Kavasha Kander

This is meant to be an eternal love letter to a phenomenal woman... Gunabuthee Reddy. The lady who put the Grand in Grandmother. Known to the whole family as Mum (at her request), there was no need to look any further than my grandmother when searching for a role model. My sudoku and solitaire playing, exercising and healthy eating focused Mum. The woman who moulded my mother into everything a daughter needed to help her to stand strong. A woman who was even adored by her son in law, I am blessed to spring from roots such as these. My first memory of Mum reminds me of her glorious long black hair that reached her hips. She asked my grandfather if he would mind if she cut it short. Ever the gentleman he agreed but never got to see her transformation. After some time, and with the blessing of her beloved family, she cut her hair into a modern short style and continued to be the glue that held us all together.



Mum and I exploring Paris

Mum loved her family and was so proud of all of us. We, in turn, were in awe of her spirit. Her driving career was cut short at the age of 80....only after crashing into a police car. To the end she maintained it was all their fault.

Mum really had the voice of a Karnatic inspired angel. She loved both religious vernacular, English Golden Oldies and a few more modern songs too. This got her into trouble as a young girl as her brother found her handwritten song copy and thought it was a love letter. She had a lot of explaining to do. This love of music was passed down to her three daughters, only son and through to the next generation too. She was a very well - travelled lady. Another great memory is of the both of us posing on the Eiffel Tower, the

photograph being taken by her loving son, Siven.

Although we travel far and wide, we'll always know where Home is. Where there is love of family, there is a home. Thank you, Mum, for teaching us this truth.

She loved her Froggies shoes. Almost every colour in very similar patterns. Nobody knows what happened to so many of her precious things and this light hearted story has a rather sad ending. In sharing the sadness, there is a hope that someone will read this and think twice if in a similar situation. Mum had Parkinson's Disease and age related dementia towards the end. Yes, she hid things and forgot about them, blamed people for taking her things (not everybody was completely innocent) ... but that was the disease and not her. Not everybody saw it that way. Not everyone treated her with the compassion deserving of the love that was so freely given in better days. It eases my mind and heart to know that to the end of her days, Mum was loved and cared for by the family that stood by her through the darkest of times. True love personified.



Mum looking pretty in pink

If, at the end of my days, I find myself half as courageous and loved as Mum was, it will be a life well lived. Eternally loved. We remember you. We pray for you to guide us. We miss you, Mum.

MY MOTHER'S STORY...MUM

Nirosh Naidoo

To each child and off-spring, their Mother is the Best, but I humbly submit that my Mum was the Ultimate. The Mother of all Mothers was she. The epitome of what it is to be a MOTHER...

When I think Strength I think of my Mother.

When I think Devotion I think of my Mother.

When I think Selfless I think of my Mother

When I think Wisdom I think of my Mother.

When I think Style I think of my Mother.

When I think Grace I think of my Mother.

My Mother embodied the perfect qualities of Motherhood throughout her life. She was not only Mum to her four children, but she was a Mother to the world. My mum was the best cook and her biryanis are legendary. We were always served healthy and balanced meals and she was very particular about not using too much oil in her tasty curries. She was indeed a domestic Goddess who worked side by side with my father in his business as well. She was the backbone of my Father's hardware business and he was the first to admit that with an immense sense of love and pride too! She was the wind beneath his wings and many an



My mother,
Gunabathee Reddy

accomplishment of his would be attributed to her around the dinner table. My Mother was the first woman driver I ever saw behind the wheel of a car. That was in 1971. Now an Indian woman driving in 1971 was a rare sight indeed! A trend setter she was and yet so humble in her many achievements over the course of her life. She on the other hand would always tell of the days of their courtship when my father took her to the cricket ground to watch him play. "Uncle was the opening batsman " was her famous line to many friends, family and youngsters who showed the slightest inclination to liking the game of cricket. She herself would be glued to the TV when matches were played. She understood the nuances of the game so well, that she would enthusiastically provide arm chair advice and commentary to the players and whoever happened to be watching the game with her. That in itself was a source of much amusement to the grandkids who labelled their Granny "cool and sharp". Tennis was her other favourite sport to watch and she had a real soft spot for Roger Federer who she always referred to as "a real gentleman".

Growing up she would not let us (her three daughters) do any housework or kitchen chores. We had to be in our rooms reading. That to my mind was the actions of a forward thinking feminist. My mother instilled within me my lifelong love of reading when she read an adult novel about the holocaust when I was 5 years old! That took immense selflessness. Imagine the sacrifice of reading aloud a book that graphically described the human atrocities that prevailed in a concentration camp. So enraptured was I that to this day I still remember the title of the book and the author! She would verbally censure the parts that were too gory and would tell me "you are too small to hear this part". I hung on to her every word. To this day I marvel at her selflessness and say a silent " thank you Mum" whenever I think of it. Unknowingly she bestowed on me such a wonderful gift. The gift of books and reading. Thank you Mum!

My Mum had a great sense of style! She took great pride in dressing and co-ordinated her clothes to perfection from scarf to shoes. And what a collection of scarves and shoes she had! She was well into her seventies when she was mistaken for a Jehovah's witness by a family friend. This story has to be told. Mum was paying her respects at the home of a recently deceased family member of a friend. According to our friend, there was this well dressed woman dressed in a typical English two piece with books under her arm that came knocking. The bereaved family assumed that she was a member of the Jehovah's witness congregation come to preach and sell books. Turned out that Mum had gone there to sing songs from the Thavaram (Tamil collection of sacred hymns) in honour of the deceased one.

She also apologised for not being in a sari explaining she had not had the time to go home and change into more traditional dress befitting the occasion.

My Mother was always immaculate. She took great pride in her make up and dress. In my opinion my Mum was a great ambassador for Clinique cosmetics which she swore by and used from her thirties right up until the very end of her life! Her skin glowed and was that of a 60- year old, even at the time of her passing at 85. My mum was an active member of the Bayview branch of the Arutpa Kazhagum of South Africa. She was a staunch Saivite and a devoted member of the Organisation who used to transport her friends and fellow devotees of the Kazhagum to and fro. This seva was rendered to her peers after my Dads demise right up until she gave up driving at the ripe age of 82! She was also honoured with a "Golden Shawl" in commemoration of her selfless service rendered to the Arutpa Kazhagum by that Organisation.

My Mother was politically aware and an active Member of the International Movement for Tamil Culture (IMTC), She was very vocal about the plight of the Tamils in Sri Lanka and made no bones of her feelings about the terrible atrocities that were committed in that country. She regularly donated to the



Welcome address to wedding guests and wedding party at the Arutpa Kazhagum, that was one of Mum's duties for weddings held there.



As Cleopatra on the Nile Cruise

cause and would eagerly await the IMTC newsletters that arrived by post. Such was her commitment to the

Tamils of Sri Lanka that she vowed "never to set foot in that country". I and my siblings are left humbled and proud of our Mum's values and principles which she displayed with verve and vigour. My Mother matriculated in Tamil well into her 60's and went on to teach Tamil in Willowpark Primary school when vernacular language was introduced into the school curriculum. She also was tutored in Karnatic singing and in playing the harmonium by that Doyen of Karnatic music Nadarajan Naicker. She participated in Tamil eisteddfords and won on many occasions singing against much younger participants. She was greatly admired for her singing prowess especially by my Dad who loved listening to her sing and would call on her all the time to sing. She was ever so indulgent and always obliged even when the situation was not so conducive. Such was her willingness to please. It has been an honour and privilege to pay tribute to my Mother here.

Though I know that no tribute will be fitting enough for such an iconic woman as she was, I would like to end my tribute with the words of Rupri Kaur who so beautifully depicts my Mother's worth in her poem:

Dr Kogie Archary - Thank you for allowing me the honour of writing about My Mother. In doing so I commit her memory to the ages and annals of all time.

*"what if
there isn't enough time
to give her what she deserves
do you think
if I begged the sky hard enough
my mother's soul would
return to me as my daughter
so I can give her
the comfort she gave me my whole life "*

MRS. NAOMI MODUPEH DINAH BECKLEY
Claudine Hingston

My mother Mrs. Naomi Modupeh Dinah Beckley (nee Macauley) was born in Freetown, Sierra Leone in West Africa on the 13th of November 1941. She was born to Mr. Emmanuel (a carpenter) and Mrs. Caroline Macauley (a trader) and was the first of five children. My mother's lineage is from the Krio ethnic group. (The Krios of Sierra Leone are descendants of freed slaves). The young Naomi went to Hope Day Primary School, then later on to Trinity Primary school. She turned out to be a very bright pupil and excelled academically. On finishing primary school, she attended the Methodist Girls High School and proceeded to do Sixth form at the Sierra Leone Grammar School. Coming from a very poor family, relative and family friends pitched in to assist her parents with her education. To make ends meet, my mother also helped by hawking goods after school. After school, with a tray of various wares on her head, she would walk the various streets of Freetown, hawking them. In order to finish selling all her wares, she walked incredibly long distances to make a sale. My mother was very family oriented and assisted her parents as well in caring for her younger siblings.



Mum in Sierra Leone at a
Thanks Giving at her high
school

On finishing secondary school, she wanted to go to university. There was no money, however, for this and she had to wait for a year, looking for ways to get financial support for her university education. She eventually managed to get a scholarship and financial support from a generous family friend. She applied and was accepted at Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone. At that time, Fourah Bay College was affiliated with the highly respected Durham University in England. Thus, my mum undertook the same curriculum and took examinations identical to those administered to Durham University students. During her study at university, my mother still made time to assist her parents by hawking goods. My mother finally finished university, graduated with her degree and opted to work as a civil servant for the government of Sierra Leone. In fact, my mother worked as a civil servant throughout her life, rose through the ranks and retired as the acting establishment secretary of the Government of Sierra Leone. During the time she worked, my mum had the opportunity to travel to thirty-seven countries around the world. Going back, my mum married my father (Mr Claudius Beckley) in January 1970, and they had two girls (Victoria and Claudine (me)). My mother was a great believer in family, so our family was an extended one, as my grandmothers, cousins, aunts and other relatives lived with us. Despite being a career woman, she made time for her family, always ensuring that we were all well cared for. She



My parents and I - when I
was baptised. I am that baby



With my daughters, Danita and Pretty
and my sister Victoria Beckley

was fiercely protective of her family. I even hesitated at times, to complain to her, as she would try to fight my battles for me. My mother however was a disciplinarian. Though kind hearted and usually gentle, she could be tough when necessary. I can remember a time when I was about twenty years old and she gave me money to buy her a nice fabric for a dress. I was rushing to go somewhere and so entered the first fabric shop on my way and bought a *not so nice* fabric.



Some of the learners and me at my mum's school. Taken in 2018 when I went to Sierra Leone

My mum was so cross. She made me take the fabric for myself and use my pocket money to buy her another one. At that point I was furious, but I learnt my lesson and never repeated my action. My mother ensured that I undertook domestic chores in the household and by the age of fourteen, I could shop and cook for our household. Some of the dishes cooked in our household are biiter-leaves, shakpa, crain- crain soup (served with fufu), jollof rice, cassava leaves, potato leaves and green soup (served with rice) etc. In addition to cooking, I also did other domestic tasks such as cleaning the house, laundry, ironing, fetching water and dish washing. These skills have served me well over the years, even up to present day. My mum had always longed to teach and preach and on retirement, she opened a school in the rural community of Allen Town, where she lived. She served as proprietress of the school until her death in 2009. I'm happy to state that the school is still running, thanks to us (her children)

and other family members. She also enrolled to be a lay preacher in the West African Methodist Church of Sierra

Leone and was ordained as a lay preacher. My mother was an ardent Christian. Growing up, it was a norm for us to pray as a family in the morning when we woke up and before we retired to bed at night. My mother continued that tradition until the day she passed on, and it is tradition that I also apply in my house.

One great thing about my mother is that she was a firm believer in the education of girls. She ensured that I went to school, went to university and encouraged me to pursue postgraduate studies, even after I got married and started having children. She was



Three generations: At our graduation ceremonies – Mum; Myself and Danita

sad when I eventually left Sierra Leone in 2004 to settle in the United Kingdom with my husband and children. She visited us frequently though and I also made time to visit home periodically. Unfortunately, she died, before I relocated with my family to South Africa in 2010. She died at the age of 67 on the 23rd of April, 2009. She never got the opportunity to see me enroll for a PhD in 2011 and graduate in 2015. I however owe my success in attaining that PhD largely to her, as she gave



My Family- daughter Pretty, son Egerton Junior, me, daughter Danita and husband Dr Egerton Hingston

me the foundation I needed. She was also instrumental in making me the woman I am today, and I try to pass on her principles to my children as well. I miss her so much.



Picture taken in 2019, in Sierra Leone, celebrating my mum's tenth year death anniversary

MY MOTHER, MY FRIEND, MY INSPIRATION

Hazel Latchman

Was there ever a time when you ended and I began? Friday, 25th November 1949 was a normal, ordinary day. The planets did not come to a standstill - the sun rose as normal – it was just simply a very normal ordinary day. Except in the typically North Indian Dilsook household. This day was the day when my loving and most dearest mom made her grand appearance. Born to Dhurmoo Dilsook and Karachi Dilsook (formerly Mungroo) in a wood and iron house at 92 Lingham Road, Clairwood, Durban, Kwazulu-Natal, my mother was the youngest of 8 children – 3 boys and 5 girls – Leelawathi Dilsook was a most adorable baby. Both, Dhurmoo and Karachi were born in South Africa. However, my grandfather's parents came from India. They were unmarried and had embarked on the ship to South Africa looking for a better life. When their ship docked on the “golden” shores of Port Natal they were refused permission to disembark as they were both unmarried. The males were lined up on one side and the females on the other side facing the males. They were then automatically paired off. My great grandfather was a staunch Hindu and my great grandmother – Sajida was a Muslim. They had eight children – seven daughters and an only son – Dhurmoo. Leelawathi was a loving, living doll to her older sisters as they took turns to tend to her needs. As she grew older, she came to know that being a female in an Indian joint family had its limitations and setbacks. Clothes were hand-me-downs or home sewn. When my mom was still very young, one of her aunts passed away. My grandfather brought his sister's children and her husband to live with them. The family elders were very strict. There was no nonsense of looking at, or talking to members of the opposite sex. They were constantly reminded that marriages were arranged. The children were in awe of their father. To sustain their family, my grandparents had a market garden. The run up to their house was lined with banana trees which they harvested and sold in the market. They also farmed twenty varieties of sugarcane, five varieties of guavas, yams, peas, strawberries, mealies, cabbage, cucumbers, carrots, methi (fenugreek) and dhanian (coriander). My mother showed great wit and intelligence - but being a female – she had to forego her studies which her brothers (Totharam, Premilal and Amrithlal) took for granted. So my dearest mom, who had so much to offer was forced to leave school after completing Standard 4 – which is Grade 6 today. She had to stay at home and learn to cook and clean. I can only imagine her frustration, but being the dutiful daughter, her options were limited. She had to help with the household chores and was at the beck and call of her older sisters. They had a separate kitchen which was fifty metres away from the ablution facilities. Their bathroom was at the opposite end of the toilet. The cherry bush in the neighbour's yard was frequently appropriated and if the mango and guava trees could speak they would tell such tales of my mother's climbing escapades. Every weekend the male members entertained the whole family. One person would play the sarangi, someone else would play the dholak, another person would play the manjira and then the older men would sing their traditional Hindi songs – songs passed down to them from their forefathers and the young men would “dress up” in sarees and dance. Growing up, lipstick was a taboo for the girls. My older uncle was of the opinion that it was an enticement and too bold. Years later, he would sheepishly admit how silly he really was. Especially when after marriage, my very modern aunt would share her lipstick with her sister's in law and they would all experiment with the different hues. Really!!! My mother shared a very good relationship with her sisters in law and they spent many glorious days together. When my mother reached that glorious age of 14 – and I have heard that she was a real stunner – it has been said that she looked like a Bollywood star – it dawned upon the menfolk that it was time that she was married off. They had the perfect suitor in mind – my uncle's work colleague. Eleven years older than her, the first time he laid eyes on her – he was besotted.



Dad and Mum's wedding day- her siser, brother and Mother in the background

He had come alone on a meet and greet but my very bold mother would have none of this nonsense and simply put her foot down and very firmly refused. The whole house was in turmoil. The ladies huddled together trying to talk some sense into my mother. The menfolk concluded that the young girls were given "too much freedom" and they had become emboldened. The suitor – departed with his tail tucked very firmly between his legs. Round 1 to mom. Over the next two years – the suitor would occasionally drop by to see my uncle. He was always very polite to everyone and eventually won them all over. It seemed that he was a paragon of virtue and my mom would be very foolish not to snap him up. The pressure continued and it went from "taking the horse to the water but unable to make it drink" to "this is my destiny". Sunday, December 25, 1966 was a hot and humid day – a day when my parents, Jagnath Jaiatharam and Leelawathi Dilsook finally took their vows. Round 2, 3, 4, 5 to dad. My father, bless his soul was very good to my mother. Her marriage, she realised was a blessing. Finally, she had wings. She was able to make her own decisions and choices.

They made a good team. She was fearless and strong and he was a good partner and provider. If there was one blimp on their horizon, it was that they seemed unable to start a family. My poor mother dreaded going to family functions. She dreaded her encounters with the "good intentioned", very direct old ladies who lacked compassion and tact and would boldly enquire what the problem was. So, you can imagine her relief, when 2 years later, I made my appearance into their lives. My parents were overjoyed. Life was good and all was well with the world. My sister, Lesley, decided that I could not have all the undivided love and attention and so she joined us fifteen months later and my brother, Jody arrived nine years after her. Nurturing and providing for a growing family is hard work. My mother decided that in order to give us the very best, she had to find employment. With her limited education this proved to be

difficult. My mother was a good seamstress and so she took up employment in the clothing industry. She was meticulous and took pride in her work. She worked herself up to a supervisor and then a sample machinist. My mother did not have fancy degrees – but she had a degree from the University of Life. She taught me many lessons. Perhaps the best lesson that she imparted to me is TO LOVE MYSELF unconditionally. If I love myself and I am happy then I have the ability to make others around me happy. She taught me about the importance of family. She used to always tell us to be there for one another. We must think of ourselves as links on a chain and we are only as strong as our weakest link. So try not to break the links. I remember my mother always telling us to love and cherish one another. She always told us that when one of your siblings or your parents pass away, it feels as though a part of you has died. Our house was always filled with music – English and Hindi. My mother used to always sing the songs that she grew up with, to us. My mother's favourite song was "The coat of many colours" by Dolly Parton. As I got older, mom and I went to Temple together and my love and passion for devotional songs increased. The most painful moment in my life was 20 December 2006 sitting at my mother's bedside while she lay in a coma - trying to say goodbye to this

vibrant 57-year old dynamic,

independent and courageous soul. I know

that she lives on through my siblings and I. I wish she could be here to enjoy her two grandchildren Jaden Andrew and Siddharth Latchman – to play with them, teach them and nurture them. She would have loved them. Although her time with her sons in law, Rufus Andrew and Vikash Latchman was very limited – she managed to make a huge impact on them. So on this 70th anniversary of her birth - I wish I could give her one more hug, one more kiss and tell her how much I love her and how very much she is missed – my best friend and my inspiration.

Love your parents and treasure them for they are your true blessings.



Lesley's wedding day



Lesley, Jody, Mum and I - My wedding

BEING THE OUTSIDER

Christina Landman

If I had to summarise my life in one word, it would be “conflict”. The reason for this constant conflict was because I, like most South African women, had been forced to shift between identities. I could never choose one preferred identity, because that caused even more conflict.

The first area of conflict in my life was racial conflict. I was born in 1956 in Pretoria, the stronghold of Afrikaner power, and lived through the rise and fall of *apartheid*. My parents were staunch Afrikaners, who sent me to an all-white Afrikaans school (mixed schools did not exist then), where learning an African language was not available. We were taught in Afrikaans, also studying English as a subject; however, I was not allowed to speak it at home since my parents hated the English for oppressing them for many decades before 1948 when the Afrikaners came to power. My father came from a very poor family; my grandparents were half-literate and my grandfather worked as a labourer in a factory that made toilet pipes. Through sheer self-determination, my father – studying for many years with a candle – finished school, enrolled for graduate and post-graduate studies after hours, and eventually became a professor at the University of Pretoria. We did not have a car or go to a restaurant before I was in my late teens. My three brothers received the names of the apostles in the Bible, but eventually it was me who became a pastor.



Ordained as a pastor 2008

My parents had good and healthy social morals. However, during *apartheid* they lived in a self-made and secluded world in which black and brown people only existed as servants and later as trouble-makers. The family belonged to the notorious Dutch Reformed Church which supported the *apartheid* regime. When I started studying theology directly after school, this was unheard of because the Dutch Reformed Church did not ordain women to the ministry and also did not accept them for enrolling for the degree in theology. I therefor went to the University of South Africa where theological training was indeed available for women – and started studying under the Liberation Theologians who were well-known for their resistance against *apartheid*. Here I studied under Simon Maimela, the first black professor to be appointed at Unisa outside of African languages; Professor David Bosch, the strong anti-*apartheid* theologian and critic of the Dutch Reformed Church; and Professor Adrio König, who also alerted me to women's theologies. My head was turned 180 degrees away from Afrikaner nationalism and white theology - to black liberation theology. In 1980, at the age of 24, I had acquired four degrees in Theology and Classical Languages (Greek, Hebrew and Latin) and was appointed at the University of South Africa to teach Church History. In 1990, at the age of 34, I became the first woman professor in Theology at a South African university. By that time, I had obtained six degrees, of which one was a doctorate in church history and polity. In 1994 came an open break with the Afrikaner establishment when I published a book *The piety of Afrikaans women* in which I indicated that the local Calvinism that fed *apartheid* was as sexist as it was racist.

Severe conflict ensued between me and the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) on their racial and gender policies which continued right through the 1980s and 1990s, the heydays of *apartheid*. It was only in 2006 that I presented myself for the ministry, and then in the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, the black and brown church that broke away from the DRC in 1994. It was 28 years after I had finished my six years of ministerial training, that I was ordained in Sakhelwe, the township of Dullstroom in Mpumalanga, this was on 18 May 2008. Here I also served as the Chair of the Presbytery of Lydenburg and was the caretaker minister in Emtongeni, the township of Mashadodorp. In both these townships the unemployment rate was 90% and the HIV rate 50%. Two years later I was elected to the leadership of the Northern Synod, and in 2016 to that of the General Synod. In this church only two women have made it up to the Executive of the General Synod. The other was Mary-Ann Plaatjies van Huffel (now also Professor) who finished her doctoral studies under me.



With Prof Mary-Ann Plaatjies van Huffel who are the only two women who were ever elected to the General Synod Executive of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa.

I am still the only white woman pastor in this church.

For the past decade or so, then, I tried to combine three careers, that of an academic Professor, a congregational pastor, and a member of the leadership of the church. I also serve as Editor-in-Chief of two academic journals, one of the Church History Society of Southern Africa, and the other of the Oral History Association of Southern Africa. More informally, I am the Editor of the URCSA NEWS, the official newspaper of the church in which



With academic colleagues 2019 at University of Free State

I serve. I have, in the meantime, been called from Mpumalanga Province to North West Province, where I am now the pastor in Karlienpark, the (previously) brown township of Rustenburg. I am also the Chair of the Presbytery of Saulspoort. As far as my racial identity is concerned, I found amazing acceptance in the black society, both on congregational and synodical level. The conflict arises with me having to move to and fro between being black and white, since in fact these communities are not integrated and force me, and many others, to shift between them within a conflicting racial identity that will last forever. It seems that in South Africa one will never be allowed to be human first, and racially identified second.



With members of my congregation: Zena Sikanu and Desmond Thys

The second area of conflict in my life, was (and is) gender conflict. Afrikaner society has no room for women like me who are – out of choice – unmarried and singling.

An activist for the equal rights of all people, I found women to be my biggest enemies. I find that women, in general, are forced to shift between their professional identity where they are equal, and their cultural identity where they have to be submissive to men if they want to find acceptance in their private lives. Being brought up within the Afrikaner “Volksmoeder” ideal which wanted to convince girls that the greatest ideal of womanhood is to selflessly dedicate your life to child rearing and privately supporting your husband's



nationalist ideals without having any public life of your own, I for many years found it difficult to become the career woman I wanted to be because I had no role models.

The third area of conflict in my life, was/is religious conflict. Since my ordination in 2008 I have become increasingly churchy – and less critical. This is indeed by choice, in order to be loyal to the church that I serve. I have behind me decades of conflict with the Dutch Reformed Church on their

Ecumenical relationships

racial and gender policies. Now I am in the leadership of the Uniting Reformed Church and my public voices is stylised towards the church's needs. After my retirement, I may become critical again, and of even more churches, especially those churches in which people are exploited through promises of health and wealth, and service to poor and suffering communities is lacking.

During a time when women were not supposed to study, I obtained seven degrees of which two are doctorates. During a time when women were not supposed to study theology, I became a professor and a church leader. This placed me into constant conflict with the culture into which I was born, with the men of this and other cultures, and in the social communities in which I move. Politically, culturally and socially I am conflicted, or rather, I am forced to shift identities constantly.

My son asked me the other day: “Mother, how did it happen that you loved studying so much when you could just let someone else look after you? Why did you not let a man take care after you while you struggled so much to keep your head above the water? Why do you worry and work so hard, even now when you have passed sixty - and can just relax and enjoy life?”



International relationships

Truly, I do not know. Maybe it is just the curse of the outsider.

MEGANTHRI, THE PEARL Kogie Archary Parthab



Megan is a Welsh diminutive-of the name Margaret- which is where the "pearl" definition comes from, Mrs. Achary. Engaging in every way possible, she is our Mother Maggie, our first love, so unconditional, our Mother Maggie, our Ma Gracing us with her wisdom, shaping us with her decisions along our journey in life, our Ma; a loving and strong Mother Always tenacious, always head strong, our Mother Maggie, so steadfast in her ways, our Mother, the articulate Maggie Never yielding to working slowly, always leading the pack, our Mother Maggie, so dynamic, a glorious & powerful Maggie! Talented and ever enthusiastic, always trying out new activities – she played the Veena and baked sweet meats, our Ma Her name **Megan** is a Greek baby **name**; she never cowers, never doubtful, our Mother the steadfast Mrs Maggie Achary Reaching inwards, serving her children Kogie, Prusho and Vani with love and devotion, she is our inspiration! Our Mother. In Greek the **meaning of Megan** is "Pearl", she remains the shining jewel that cared for Jaya, our father & Peggie, our brother!

A swish of fresh air, a deal maker, a community leader, an ardent traditional and cultural devotee, dear Maggie Ma, may you enjoy great health for many years..., a grandma to Kimenthri
Courageously fighting dominance, ensuring that her children could be the best they could, a forward thinking Mother, our precious youthful Ma, a grandma to Mikara
Headstrong, crashing into the waves, in 1975 - you lost a 9 -year old son Peggie in a drowning incident, how sad, we quietly cried, so very sad, Ma, but you soldiered on for us - your three children, a grandma to Deshaj
Articulating from one role to another, from one community venture to another, one leadership position to another, confident nurturing Maggie, A grandma to Haren
Rearing an inquiring mind, wanting to learn more, the News Paper your daily companion, a reading Mother, our Ma, yes and voluntary work occupied you tirelessly..., a grandma to Keshvir
Yesterday was sad, not to be repeated, today you stand tall! Enjoy all that you have now Ma...a Life full of Love, Maggie – Ma; a loving Ma to your youngest grandchild Kivashan.

May- God grant you strength to continue driving and enjoy new travelling sights Ma, maybe London?
And – may you enjoy watching sports and especially athletics on television and live at the Stadium!
Greet - Each day with strength and courage and love and compassion...as you enjoy dressing...
Grieving- For yesterday's sorrow, now over, you have stood the test of time, you have been a brave blessing!
Intentionally- in every way that matters, you kept the faith that held your children strong and powered
Enjoy- Your twilight years Ma, we love you, deeply love you, our Truth, our Power "An unsung heroine!"



Ancient Greek μαργαρίτης (margarites) "pearl" is generally acknowledged as the root of Margaret.

While it may not be the literal root of the name, it could certainly be argued that the Hebrew מגן (magen), meaning "shield", is related to Megan. How apt; Our mother's name is

Meganthri Maggie Achary

The "strong" definition probably comes from confusion with the ancient Greek word μέγας (megas) strong which is related to the modern prefix mega

A strong and capable Leader in the Verulam Community, our dear mother Mrs Maggie Achary

The Hebrew מגן (magen) could also tie into the "strong and capable" definition



MY GRANDMOTHER, MY AMMA **Kogie Archary Parthab**

When my grandmother passed on, I wrote a book of poems to deal with the grief and loss that I suffered. I recently stumbled upon this book and it took me back to 1984. I am the eldest grandchild of Mrs Dhanalutchmee Pillay. My maternal grandmother was born on the 14th of November 1921 and



My Grandmother, fourth from left, sitting in-between her mother and father

passed on on the 30 November 1984. Her father was a pine apple farmer and owned large tracks of land which was eventually sold off to the state in order that the Durban-Westville Campus



My mum, 17 in 1958, and her mother

– a campus for the education of Indians in South Africa - could be built on those premises. I studied at the Durban - Westville campus from 1984 to 1987, graduating with a four - year BPaed degree. Fast forward, 30 years later, from 2013 to 2017, I supervised post-graduate

Honours and a Masters student in various disciplines at the same campus. I owe my

success in part to my grandma, who told me in 1984 when I received acceptance (after passing matric), to study at the UD-W campus, that when I go to the university, “You will meet up with people who are like tikkies, pennies and 2 cent coins, but you must try to be like the Gold Kruger Coin”. I clearly understood the analogy and I carried the meaning of her message deep in my heart as I never sat in the cafeteria for almost my entire four years of study, as I believed that’s where all the fun stuff happened and I didn’t and couldn’t be a part of that. My friend, Pushparani Nair and I used to go into the cafeteria, buy what we needed and leave to find a place outside to sit and have our lunch. At the time, I spent very little or no time with other friends who were comfortable with normal young adult university life. My grandma influenced me in a positive way because of the manner in which she spoke to me, her words of wisdom and her quiet intelligence. She was the youngest child in her family. Two of her sisters passed on from Cancer. She married my grandfather, Mr Subramoney Pillay. His brother, Mr Pakiry Pillay was married to her elder sister, Kaveri Mudali. Pakiry and Kaveri started PAKCO, a food manufacturing company that eventually became renowned world wide for its pickles, canned products, sauces etc. This company started in 1949 in my grandma’s kitchen in Clairwood, Durban South. The story that I have heard is that when my grandfather and his brother needed capital to start the business, they approached my grandma’s father as he was a farmer and was in a position to assist them financially. With that money, my grandfather and



Me at 18 in 1983, holding my Granny – clad in her sari

his brother were able to build a huge factory that employed many hundreds of people and thus light up many homes from the late 1940s until present, even though the company was sold in 1980. My grandma was a tall lady, and my Aunt Logie, her 6th child inherited her height and

gracefulness from her. Amma had strikingly beautiful features and it is my Aunt Senba, 2nd born daughter who inherited her beauty. Amma supported my grandfather in everything that he ventured into. She was there to ensure that my grandfather enjoyed great tasting meals and these recipes she shared with her daughters-in-law Selvy and Lalitha who lived in the family home after they got married before they ventured on their own. She was an amazing cook who spoilt her children with loving care and the best food available. My mother, often regales me with tales of how, from 1955 (commencement of her working life) until 1964 (her marriage), her mother set the table punctually for my mother to enjoy lunch, as she worked at the Pakco factory. After my mother consumed lunch, my grandma would then set the table for my grandfather as he would have his lunch later.



Aunt Senba

My grandmother was an exceptional baker as she made tasty sweatmeats such as burfee, laddoo, gulab jamun etc. My mother shared with me that during a cake sale fundraiser when she was a student, her mother sent in sweatmeats, the teaching staff did not put it on sale, consumed it, and handed my grandmother the first prize as it was so tasty!

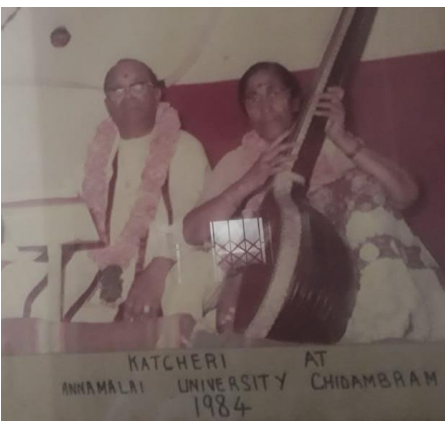
Once the indentured labourer's arrived in Natal, post 1860 until 1911 (when the last shipload docked in Durban), there were many adjustments to their lives in a foreign country compared to how life was in India. Indians in the Colony of Natal began to explore with their cuisine and many culinary delights originated such as lamb or sheep tripe, trotters and sheep head curries. The sheep head had to be cleaned and prepared with great skill and this practice was generally accepted by many families, however, my grandmother had never cut, cleaned nor prepared a sheep or lamb head. And consequently, neither my mother nor her four sisters do this either. And unlike, some in my cohort – I have never cleaned nor cooked sheep head. My grandmother was assisted by Indian female helpers who worked for the Pillay household for many years. Some of the ladies that I remember preparing the tea and light meals for us when we got home from school were Ponamma, Sumintha and Suegami. My grandmother lived in a big house, and thus the need to have many helpers to ensure that the place was always neat and clean.

My grandma also enjoyed being in the garden. This is obviously from her young days as her father was a farmer. I clearly remember my grandma instructing Langwan, the gardener, as to when the mealies would harvest. We enjoyed freshly cut and immediately boiled tender mealies. My grandmother could sew and owned a Singer machine. Despite my many eandevours to learn to sew, threading the needle using the bobbin always proved to be a challenge. Even though I couldn't sew, in my thirties I bought a sewing machine and when I founded a NPO, I called it The SARI

Foundation as we collected saris that Indian women were no longer using and this material was used to teach disadvantaged women how to sew. I suppose I got this idea as my granny gave saris to her daughters and I inherited some from my mother. In 1979, my grandparents, on a trip to India, purchased an Indian musical instrument called the Veena. It is a string instrument that has frets and is made up of a hollow calabash. The Hindu Goddess, Mother Saraswathi, it is believed played this instrument. From 1979, I took lessons from my tutor, Mr.S. Nanda who resided in



The Veena emits a sound when the frets are touched and the strings are strummed- Left: Mrdingam- single drum piece and Right: 2 piece Thubla



Playing the Thambura which is an Indian string instrument

Chatsworth. When I went to India in 1980, I picked up a few more lessons whilst on the trip. My grandfather was an acclaimed Karnatic singer and my grandmother accompanied him on his performances and international trips whenever he performed.

My grandma also travelled to many countries. My love for travel stems from the time that I spent with her and my grandfather in India. They took me to Madras and Bombay. We departed on the 9th January and returned 22nd February 1980. It remains an unforgetful trip as I often go down memory lane, thinking of those experiences and

being so grateful that at that time I didn't have to live in India. During that trip I enjoyed food such as canned Pink Salmon in a chutney form (extra tomatoes and chillies) that my grandma prepared at the home of Mr KS Seshadri, a family friend. It was most delicious. During the trip I learnt salient habits and gained a different insight into life as I was in the company of my learned grandparents for almost six weeks. When I wrote a note on the back of the postcard to my family that I was well but that India was "rather dirty" my grandmother chided me and said the postman would never deliver that postcard as it is a negative impression of his country. So, I had to discard that postcard and rewrite another one. She inspired me to have a world view, and my love for local and international travel began with that trip to India as I have visited India eight times since, and my three sons Deshaj (b.1997), Haren (b.1999) and Keshvir (b.2004) have joined my husband Sharm Dharamduth and I on six of those trips to India.



1980, Bombay now Mumbai

My grandparents had travelled to many parts of the world as a couple and have also taken their children on trips abroad as well. Witnessing my grandparents travelling has encouraged me to also travel and since 1990, I have have also visited many countries, an unforgettable trip was with my Aunt Vasagie, her 3rd born daughter to the USA in 1991. My most recent trip was with my sister Vani to India. My grandmother was a quiet, kind hearted soul just like my Aunt Angie, 5th born. I never heard Amma scream or raise her voice.



Aunt Logie with Amma & Dada on an international trip
– South America

She had a beautiful selection of especially silk saris. Her blouses were made in India as I can not remember her going to the local dressmaker or tailor to have them made. Because of her height, her footwear was always visible when she was clad in a sari. I remember my granny sitting in her spacious kitchen, cleaning fresh Indian vegetables such as green and red herbs, watercress, gadra beans, double beans, peas, ginger, garlic, green beans etc. There are times when I do exactly that, clean fresh vegetable, not because I remember my mother doing that – but because I have more vivid memories of my grandma sitting in her kitchen and cleaning vegetables! My grandfather visited the



Uncle Selva, Aunt Angie, Uncle Pullen
and Aunt Vasagie – newly married

Verulam market every Saturday morning and purchased fresh vegetables, with my younger brother in tow, carrying the basket. That was the routine without fail. The Verulam market was renowned for its fresh good quality produce.

My grandmother was a great support to my grandfather. She was his quiet strength.



Holding my grandfather -1988,
December –four months before my
grandfather passed on

At the end of tough days, she was there to listen as she never ventured out of the house to work. However, all of her five daughters and two sons were in employment at some stage or other in their adult lives. She was a grandmother ahead of her time...she came to the realisation that my mother may never own a home, after having moved to numerous places between 1966 and 1981. With her wisdom, in 1982, and moral support from my uncles Selva, 4th born and Pullen, last born, my grandfather ensured that my mother had her own home and to this day my mother lives there. It has been beautifully renovated and refurnished with the latest trimmings by my brother, Prushotam.

I remember, around 1983, when I was in matric, my grandmother said something to my mother in the Tamil vernacular, "*worsami Kogie nee parthegiro*" which I understood to mean, after being loosely translated into English as "sometime, Kogie may look after you". Obviously, they were talking about the future...

My Amma, was gracious with everything. Even in choosing the time of her death... I had just completed exams for my first year of study at UDW – November 1984...and a few days later, on 30th November, my grandmother took her last breath, exactly, two weeks, before my youngest cousin, Pullen's daughter was born on 14th December 1984. Amma and my grandfather were meant to have gone on their annual trip to India that December, but sadly with her untimely and unexpected demise, my grandfather rescheduled and he took my mother to India in January of

1984. All of the family and friends in India that knew my grandmother from around 1965, were saddened at her passing. But they showered that love and care to my mother and eventually all members of the extended Pillay family who visited India over the decades. I often think of my granny whom I loved dearly! Whenever I travel, and I exchange foreign coins such as pounds, pennies, tikkies and rupees... my mind drifts back to 1984 and the analogy that my Amma coined. And I wonder...

FOND MEMORIES OF MAVUMALO - MY GRANNY (1916 -1998)

Prince Jongisilo Pokwana ka Menziwa

So by August of 1998 my grandmother was bedridden. She was 82 and she was diabetic. She was exhausted. My grandfather had left us a mere two years earlier and by the time of his passing they had been married for over sixty years, my grandfather was 92. Her children were born between 1939 and 1955, so by that August even my youngest uncle (uTatomncinci) was 43. Of course some of the grandchildren were much younger, for example my younger sisters Aphiwe and Yonela were only five and four respectively. Most of my memories of her are warm and full of smile, even during those days of ill-health. I remember when my father bought a tractor and I had to take delivery of it - the truck arrived at our dusty village of kwaZangashe, just outside of Dutywa, and we only found a spot to offload the tractor a few kilometers away. I had to drive the tractor back home. It was a big



machine – at least by all village standards, a blue Landini 4x4 machine. By this time, we were used to cars at home but we had never owned a tractor before, so it was our introduction to the loud noise, the diesel smell, the old spots in the yard and all the trash that follows with a not-so-well looked-after tractor in the village. I drove into the yard - my grandmother was on the mattress in my mother's customary round hut. My mother stepped out and instructed me to reverse the tractor so that it stood opposite the door for my grandmother to see it. I did as I was told. She wept gently, tears of joy. I was fully aware of what was happening in her mind. My grandmother had been through so much earlier in her marriage and she was ecstatic that all that perseverance prevailed.

She wasn't able to come out and touch it and she never did until she passed on a few weeks later. "*Hambani isikolo, kungenjalo nakuqeshwa zintanga zenu*", loosely translated, "focus on getting education otherwise you will end up being employed by your peers". This was my grandmother. Each time we attempted to dodge school she would be quick to remind us. After-all this trick had worked with her own children. My father and his brothers were all professionals.

My grandfather, Nkosi Gwebindlala, married my grandmother in the late 1930s, during a very volatile period in my own family, when some members of the royal family wanted my grandfather dead. The biggest trouble with ruling families is the toxic leadership squabbles and contestations which often lead to family members killing one another. My grandmother was born in a nearby village, kuNxamagele, and she knew my family and even my great-grandfather Nkosi Qayiso, Aaah Holomisa, who was attacked by family members back in 1929 and died of those injuries in 1932.

It must have been very difficult to marry into such a family but she did. This must have shaped her personality of resilience, wisdom and love for education. My grandmother would allow my grandfather to work and work in Transvaal for two to three years at a time so as to collect enough money for many years without having to go back to work.

A hard worker, a leader, an advocate of black consciousness and self - determination, a teacher of both culture and western education. She had been to school and was well literate. Even with all these qualities, she was to a degree an introvert, clearly bearing all the scars from the past horrible experiences. On the day of her funeral, I followed the long queue of people viewing her body in her coffin and I stood still, bringing the line to a grinding halt and admired her one more time. She was wearing her red blouse from the Wesleyan Methodist Church and she held her cool as usually. The only difference is that I could no longer pick on her as she would no longer respond. She was silent, peaceful as if to say: I have done my bit, let me rest now Mazukwana!

LETTER TO ISWAZI THAT SHAPED ME, MY GOGO MASHABALALA Ayanda Melansi

You are, Mshengu, Donga kuka Mavuso, Sidwaba silu Thuli, Ngxabalala, Chagwe, Noyaba, Mabhedla, Thapo, Thingisi, Shevi, Bhuqa, Sayiwana, Bhokwe, Samanisi, Mehlwempi, Nkosikayikho, Phikindaba, Magudulela, Sagqubha, Ndleko, Moniwa, Swazi elihle.

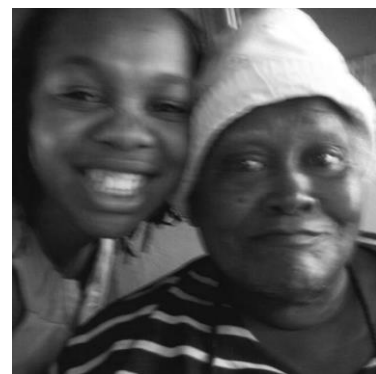
On the 15th of July 2014 you took your last breath, leaving behind women and men who adored you, whom you taught how to love unconditionally, and shaped to see beyond gender, race and culture. None of us were prepared for your departure. Memories of your beautiful soul and ever sharp tongue will forever be with us. Five years later I still can't go and chill in your room. It feels just like yesterday when we would all gather in there and sit on your bed, ask you all sorts of questions and make you laugh heartily. Each and every day your lessons keep ringing in my head, helping me make sense of difficult situations and take better decisions. I thank you for being such an awesome mother and Gogo to us all. Everytime I hear a Luther Vandross song I just think of you when you'd say, "Ey, sasilithanda sino Meshack leli culo" (MY HUSBAND MESHACK AND I LOVED THAT SONG). You loved your music and it filtered down to your children and grandkids. When I gave birth to my second child, I had no idea how to now split my love to cater for two kids. However, I quickly snapped out of it as I thought of the love you gave to all of us as your grandkids, your children and the community in Lamontville, and tried to channel my love accordingly. You taught me how to love without expecting to be loved back. You taught me to love without judging, because nobody is perfect. Your warmth and undying love had a way of cushioning us from the harsh realities of life, making us not feel the grinding poverty we were living under. It was only when we were much older that we realised how bad our situation was at home. I often wonder how you did it? How you managed to teach us so much love yet you were not getting any. How did you deposit so much love in us yet your own savings in the bank of love was empty? It can only be the mark of intombi yekhethelo, a true woman of substance. Many might think it is not that important, but I wish I can thank you in person for teaching me how to brew Umqombothi (Sorghum beer); how to make Amadombolo (Steamed bread); how to love those that don't love you back and how to never give up, no matter the weather. Mommy, I THANK YOU. You have no idea what you did for me when you loved me even though I was a different granddaughter compared to others. You understood that I didn't like playing with dolls, instead I chose soccer. You understood that I didn't want to wear your typical girly colours. Today I am able to express myself without any fear that the next person will judge me. You'd surely be proud to see the type of woman I am today.

As quiet and soft-spoken as you were, your fierceness, strength and resilience was LOUD. The one other thing I remember about you is how you were honest about church and Izivathozakhona (regalia). Seeing how the establishment is today, I am reminded of your wise words: "Uma inhliziyo yami isahluthuka ngeke ngilifake ibhantshi lesonto, ngoba leya ngubo idinga umuntu omsulwa (If I could still lose my cool, it only meant I was not fit to don that attire because it belongs only to those whose hearts are pure)". How you refused to have nails with chipped nail polish, even though you couldn't even bath yourself for years. Being in that wheelchair for years, stripped off a certain portion of your soul because MaShabalala you preferred to do things yourself and not rely on others. During the last six months of your life you tried really hard to prep us for your departure, but we were not ready. Selfishly, we felt your pain and wished it away but not you. Because of our bond, when you took your last bow, everyone at home was scared of how I will take your death. I will confess though that five years later, I am still worried about the breakdown I never had when you passed on. It can only be thanks to the courage that you implanted in me. You are dearly missed by everyone, Mrs Effie MaShabalala Khumalo. Swazi elihle ♥

Ayanda Melansi is a Radio Producer, SABC, Durban



My smiling Gogo



Gogo and I – happier days

THE RISE AND RISE OF THE MATRIARCH

Mnoza Ka Melane

My Mother hails from the Karoo in Motima a forgotten rural place surrounded by Cookhouse, Jansenville, Adelaide and Somerset East. All these areas were early colonial settlements located a good distance from the western banks of the Great Fish River. As a child in the 40s being moved and family relocating, a nomadic lifestyle became a norm as her parents were constantly in search of a better life. Their inability to maintain meticulous records of their early life left me scrambling to find information and my mother's refusal to talk about her childhood is not helping. Whatever traumatic experiences she had to endure never deterred her from becoming the strongest person I have ever known. She started working during the great flood around September 1968 in Port Elizabeth as a domestic worker for a dentist called Dr Ableman on 2nd Ave Newton Park. When that temporal job ended she had to look for other work. Married, penniless and bullied by her in-laws she spent days walking around and knocking on doors asking for work. Her search ended after an overwhelming fatigue had set in at 17:00 in the afternoon one hot summer's day in 1970 when she was offered another low paying job. Her new employment was at *Members Only White Establishment* called "The P.E club" as presser and bedroom cleaner but constantly gravitated towards the kitchen as it offers edible left overs she was to carry home to her children. Any pregnancy at that time was grounds for immediate dismissal and concealing it was of utmost importance. The story goes that one day in February of the same year while resting on a bench on hill called Donkin Hill overlooking the city she went into labour and was rushed to hospital. A day or so after delivering a bouncing baby boy (my elder brother) she had to report for duty. With no money she had to ask neighbours to look after the infant baby while she struggled back to work and dealing with post natal ailments. I was born around the time in 1975 where she worked at the town clerk department at the library section of the Port Elizabeth municipality. An early riser something she rubbed off on to me she took on more than one job at a time to make ends meet, at a bread company at night and Richardson hotel on her off days making samoosas, meatballs and sausage rolls to sell in main street offices and to bank tellers. It was against this backdrop that she raised me. An era when the apartheid apparatus was on overdrive and my township of Kwazakhele was looking like a Bosnian war zone. Our streets were militarised, movements restricted and activist incarcerated under Terrorism Act No 83 of 1967 - many died being detained under this act. The atmosphere was explosive and anger palpable with the community getting ready for war. Like a lioness hovering over her cubs, to me she was a Superwoman without a cape. Keeping us safe but allowing our inquisitive minds to fully comprehend the reality of our environment. She hid her daily struggles from us even though her separation from my father deeply affected her, she soldiered on. She kept from us the devastating treatment she received from her in-laws after my father passed. They insisted that my father be buried in Xesi (Middledrift) and when she talked about how costly that would be they promised to cover all those costs which they never did. After the burial and unforeseen expenses of transporting mourners by bus 250 kilometres away she was left counting the astronomical cost of such an exercise. Debt-ridden and managing the expectations of how best to mourn my father it was at this time her true strength shone through.



My Mother at home



My mother and I

My Mother's most generous gift was and still is her time and self to family. There were moments that left me in awe as she moved from an iron lady to the kindest woman this side of the equator. I was awoken by her loud scream one morning, a sound of ululation accompanied by her favourite Methodist hymn "Unabantu bakho Thixo" (You are with your people, God, at every moment.). Feeling upset that my Saturday morning sleep was rudely interrupted I ventured outside while half asleep, found my mother waving a dishcloth in the air dancing with pure undiluted joy. I saw at a distance my elder cousin Mxolisi approaching walking slowly as though he was savouring the moment. Mxolisi was coming back from prison after 5yrs. He was a petty thief and never a ruthless criminal who always fascinated me when he relayed his adventures evading capture and his prison stories. But on this day as mother hugged him tightly she wept "Yuhhhhh umntana ka Bhuti" (Ohhhh my brother's child). Just like a prodigal son she welcomed him back without any judgement; she raided our wardrobes to clothe him. My mother's ability to love unconditionally has taught me to put family first. Somewhere in the recesses of her heart resides an indomitable spirit, an almost supernatural ability to love unhindered. It is impossible that I could have been the man I am today if it was not for her. In a society that appreciates beauty only till a certain age; I compliment my mother more often. She is beautiful in her own way. So, I celebrate her beauty and remind her how beautiful she is on a regular basis. I salute you, woman of power, my mother Mamkhuma Mambathane, Xesibe, Matshaya – phila ngonaphakade kumkanikazi (Long live the queen). Mnoza ka Melane is a radio personality and drama producer for Mhlobo Wenene fm. He is married to Vuyokazi Melane and a father to a precious daughter Liyanelisa Melane. The family lives in Westering Port Lizabeth.

“A MOTHER DOES NOT ALWAYS KNOW”

Samu Ngwenya

It is often said that “a mother always knows,” because she had carried her child for nine months. So, when for instance, you are sick, and you are far from your mother, she would call and check up on you, because of that motherly instinct, because ‘a mother always knows’. But for me, that has never been the case. I was born in Pretoria, but I grew up in Cape Town. What I hear are different versions of the story - that my parents met at a university in Cape Town, my mother was from KwaZulu Natal, and my father, from Soshanguve, Pretoria. In 1987. My mother was concealing her pregnancy from her family, thus she went to give birth to me in Pretoria, my father's family. Along the way, they had a conflict, my mother then took me to her friend in Gugulethu, Cape Town, left me there and never looked back. That is where I grew up, in Cape Town, with my mother's friend, both my father and my mother absent. I am not quite sure how my mother met and knew her friend, who eventually became my mama. I never really asked. They went on with their lives. I grew up knowing my Cape Town family as my biological family. They loved me immensely. I was the last born. I was spoilt. I did not go to the best schools, yes, but I was loved immensely. When I started high school in 2000, my Cape Town parents broke the news to me about my real identity and my biological parents. Honestly, their (my biological parents) absence was not felt, but rather I was curious to know who they were and what actually happened. Within that same time, my biological father made contact, he came to Cape Town and I met him for the first time. He looked exactly like me, tall, very dark in complexion and soft-spoken. I was a female version of my father. I quickly



Samukezi Ngwenya

embraced him and accepted when he requested me to go and visit his family. I would make trips to Pretoria every school holidays. In 2003 I was with him, and he told me he knew where my mother was and that we can go and see her. We went, and when we got there, we were met with so much hostility. It was clear that she wanted nothing to do with him and with me. He left me there. I stayed for a few days. It was the worst days of my life. I wanted so bad to be with him. It was during the school holidays, and I was spending the holidays with my father. A few days later I left, in December 2004 and went back to Pretoria and told my father that I was not happy there. I stayed in Pretoria for the whole of 2005, upgrading my Matric so I could gain entry at the University of Pretoria to study LLB. I passed well yes, but decided to go back to Cape Town. The following year (2006) I was back with my CT family, enrolled for LLB (which I eventually dropped), and found work at a local restaurant. It worked. I was happy.

The happiness was rather short lived, darkness started to creep in. My Cape Town father passed away first, I think it was in 2007 or late 2008.

Then my biological father followed in 2009. It was in 2011 that my CT mother passed away too. It was a huge blow. It was hectic. I really could not make sense of her death (sometimes I still struggle to). She was my world, and I had never imagined that I would have to live this life without her.

Because I knew where my biological mother was, I went to her. I still cannot tell you even today why I went looking for her. I guess I thought she would fill the void and actually be a mother to me, you know. I thought maybe she could take time to get to know me, better understand me and maybe love me? At first, she seemed like she wanted me around until she made it clear that she wanted nothing to do with me. We had a huge fight, which at some point got physical. That was the fight that revealed to me that indeed she wanted nothing to do with me. She said to me “I wish I had aborted you,” and that I looked like my father and so my face was just disgusting her. After that fight, she left the province, leaving me behind once again. The year she left, a friend luckily agreed to let me squat in her room. It was my second year at University of Venda. We were five, sharing a double a room. It was bad, but it really was better than being homeless. I got active in student politics and somehow that helped me in so many ways. The fight made me realise that I should just stop running after her and try to find ways of taking care of myself. We never really spoke after that, she moved on with her life, the best way she knows how.

I picked up the pieces of my life and moved on too. I had to learn and accept that the woman who gave birth to me hates my guts. I had to mourn a mother who is still alive. She is somewhere out there, alive and well, and not even bothered about my whereabouts or my well-being, but you know what, it has stopped hurting. I am at peace with it all. I am at peace knowing the only real mother who *knows* - is my late mother from Cape Town. My biological mother does not *know*, she never knew and she will never *know*.

What I am really trying to share is that just because someone carried you for nine months, and eventually gives birth to you, it really does not mean that person will mother you, it really does not mean they will love you, and it certainly does not mean they will know you. My mother, the woman who gave birth to me lived and still lives her life not knowing who am I, not knowing whether I am alive, or even maybe have eaten. She never knew, and she did not want to know. She had her reason and I will never blame her and hate her for the choices she made for her life. But my Cape Town mother knew. She knew how I needed to be loved. She knew that I loved heat that is why since when I was a baby she always made sure I had a heater on when bathing, and always dressed me so warm. She knew that I was the most sensitive of them all, she was always kind with me, even when I was naughty she reprimanded me kindly. She knew that I will grow up, work hard and live a life that she could be proud of. She believed in me. She knew that I can be anything I want to be, and she was right. She did not give birth to me, but she was my mother, the best mother any daughter could ever ask for.

BEYOND HETEROSEXUALITY: A JOURNEY OF SELF-DISCOVERY

Malerato Elsie Mrubula

Society has taught us that love is only between a man and a woman. I mean I grew up knowing that I have a father and a mother, it was visible. That was my reality, nothing else existed, just the 'norm' of love between a man and a woman. My understanding was that when I grow up, I will find a man, get married and have children, just like my parents did—and yes, my life happened like that, like it was some kind of a script. Even though I followed the heterosexual script, something at the back of my mind did not make sense. In high school, I had a particular interest in girls, I would often fantasize about kissing them, but I quickly dismissed it all because I have never seen anything like that happening. All that was visible was boys dating girls, and I too was a girl that was dating boys. I grew up in a township called Ga-Kgapane around Bolebedu in Limpopo, so you would imagine that girls kissing other girls were not a thing. Even now, in 2019, it is still a "thing" that is frowned upon. In my teens, I had a very close female friend. We attended the same high school. She meant so much to me, and I think this is where I realised I was actually sexually attracted to her but I had no



Malerato Elsie Mrubula.

understanding of what was going on and what the feelings I had for her meant. I was confused. I quickly dismissed it and followed the heterosexual script and dated boys.

Fast forward to my young adult years, I met and married a man who is the father of my son. At the time when I was preparing for my wedding, I had a girlfriend. We hid our relationship, and everyone thought we were just friends, in actual fact we were lovers. I remember when I told her that I was getting married, she begged me, in tears to not marry. But what was I to do, when my parents, my family, and society expected me to be a wife? When they expected me to have a husband and children. I dismissed my love for my girlfriend and went ahead with what was expected of me, and got married.

The first three years in the marriage things were good. I kept up with the act very well. I loved my husband, we even had a child in the second year of marriage. I was a good wife. He was happy, my parents and my siblings were happy but I, on the hand was trying so hard to ignore my attraction towards women. I tried until I could not anymore. My marriage started to fall apart. I started having relationships with women behind his back until I got to a point where I could not lie and sneak behind his back anymore. He was not aware of what I was going through, and according to him, everything was fine. Eventually he found out, and eventually, I had to stop living a lie. My parents were furious and they disowned me. My siblings stopped talking to me. I was the talk of the town, people citing how I have brought shame to my family and what is this 'demonic' thing that I am doing. At that point, I really did not care about what people thought of me, I was in love, and I was willing to risk it all. We officially separated until we finalized the divorce. Even though we had married in community of property, I walked out of the marriage with zero demands, all I wanted was freedom to be and marry my current partner. I got to realise material things mean nothing, what really mattered was my happiness.

As it is, I am currently planning to marry the love of my life, the woman of my dreams, who paid lobola. What I am trying to share is that, socialisation is somewhat dangerous, the way we have been conditioned and indoctrinated into heteronormativity can be hurtful. Had I not lived my life through my family's and society's expectations I would have avoided so many mistakes, but I guess every step we take leads us to the journey we want. I am here, I am living my life as a woman who is in love with another woman. And my name is Malerato Elsie Mrubula.

MY MORNING STAR – MY MOTHER Asanda Mazizi Pokwana

Bright & sparkling

Like the dancing jovial morning star

Scintillating the day break

a brand new & perfect summer day

your coffee-cream color beautiful skin

like the soil-colored waters

splashing down our beautiful red soil gorges

after a good summer rain

bringing in a new lease of life

to all living organisms

I take my hat off to you mama

While you are still alive

I salute you

because when days are dark

You emerge to brighten my heart

Like a random unexpected beacon

When the theatre of life weakens my knees

You become my walking stick –

Curved with resilience,

laced with love and embroidered in gold

Sometimes in your eyes -

I detest the sight of those tears

As they emerge hesitantly

And rolling down those forever smiling
chicks –

A face full of love yet of pain

To me you are a beam of hope

At times a ray of light –

in the distant end of the tunnel

with you my life is always handsomely rewarded

I know too well.

day in, day out

your mind fills up with thoughts of me

always hoping and praying

that life turns out for the better in me

your thoughts and prayers

of a better me

of a caring me

of a loving me

of a compassionate me

You are a stone

When thrown across the waters

in a river swimming well

You create waves

You reverberate

Like the unflinching iron rod

bend and released hastily

But how do I return all this affection

How do I show appropriate gratitude

How do I preserve you for eternity

My bright morning star

Beautiful daughter of Mgadi

Younger sister of Nomatarhu

You tumbled down the steep slopes of eGonqeni

Abandoning your maiden family

To become a mother to all six of us

a wife to my father

Crying and kicking

At the realization of the impending lifelong task

Of parenthood

Of family nurturing

Of impending trials and tribulations

How do I deal with this reality

To fathom the inevitable reality

That one day the day will break

And you will be no more

How would I cope

To know that my pillar would have fallen

Will I be ready

I doubt it!



Asanda Mazizi Pokwana and
her Mother

*Translated from isiXhosa by
Jongisilo Pokwana ka Menziwa

MY MOTHER CONQUERED CANCER

Gugu Msomi

It was 1996 - the second term of standard 9! I was a happy teenage girl after my parents, Mr. MB Baloyi and Mrs. Elsie Baloyi remarried following a devastating divorce. For me it was a rare blessing as it was a million in one scenario to occur. Little did I know that their new so called renewed marriage will be tested. My mum is a very wise but quiet person by nature. In my entire life until that point in time I had never seen my mother sick or complaining of body pains. Just before we wrote our second term exams I noticed that my mother was not well. My mother was 52 years then and I thought that she had menopause already and seeing her on her periods again made me become confused. My mum is fair in complexion - that I know, but I began noticing that she was becoming more fair and I thought maybe she was using some sort of skin cream, little did I know that she was becoming pale each day as she loses a lot of blood. She continued bleeding everyday, every month until my older sister became concerned and wanted her to go for a doctor's consultation since it was very strange for us that my mother could reach the menopause stage and then start her menstrual cycle again. As a result of my mum's hard work as well as being the main working parent - my father had been pensioned by that time and she didn't want to lose any days of work. My mother continued with her work duties as well as her wife duties as normal whilst her bleeding was also continuing every day nonstop.

The only cure my mother had, was PRAYER. She had been praying and she always told us that Jesus is her healer and won't let her down. One day while I was at home during the June school holidays my mother returned home via her work ambulance - she was working as an auxiliary nurse at the nearby KwaMashu Zamazulu Old Age Home. My mother was looking very weak, very sick and seriously ill. Because it was already afternoon we didn't go to a local government clinic because we knew we will only be seen by the doctor the following day. The morning was first seen by us around 4am. My elder sister went to the local clinic to stand in the queue for my mother and I followed with my mother. We got there and we had to wait for our turn to see the doctor. As soon as she was examined she was referred to King Edward Hospital for admission. I, for one, didn't have any information about cancer. Never had any education at school or church about this disease been imparted to me. Anyway my mother was admitted. The process of testing started. We waited for the result so we could know what was wrong with her. We kept on praying for her as a family and our church, KwaMashu Christian Centre, also prayed for her. My mum became weaker and weaker in front of our eyes and finally after weeks of different tests my sister was called by the doctor for a talk.

My sister was told not very good news; she was told that the tests confirm that my mother has womb cancer - that is why she is bleeding so heavily bleeding - nonstop. Not only was she told that news but she was told to go home and prepare us for the worst as the doctor told her it was only going to take a miracle from GOD for my mum to live as it was too late. The cancer spread to her entire womb and she was in the last stage. Not only was my sister faced with explaining cancer to us, but she was also faced with becoming a bearer of bad news. I remember my sister sitting us down, trying to explain in tears what was making our mother sick. My dad was a very tough man, may his soul rest in peace, but with my three brothers and I, it was with tears rolling down our cheeks, that we were thinking, that we were spending the last days with our mother. Prayer kept us alive and hopeful. On the other side the doctors couldn't decide whether to do chemo therapy or the electronic burning therapy because of my mother's age. They ended up deciding that because of her age chemo was not good for her. My mum had to go for her treatment therapy everyday at Addington hospital and come back to King Edward. It was a very stressful and tiring process for her, as a person who was literally dying. I saw her going through the stages of medication reaction, dark skin, skin peeling, hair loss, you name it.

My mum kept on being strong in faith, she would tell us that she speaks to Jesus everyday and Jesus has promised her that she will indeed live and see her grandchildren - mind you that time I was only 15 years and my **brother** Bahle was 9 years. Just imagine how little we were to lose our pillar of strength. Who was going to look after us? My dad was an old pensioner already and the two of us were solely dependent on mum. My mum kept on pushing in faith, she literally was telling death in its face and cancer that she will live, that on it's own gave us as her children hope and strength to fight this cancer with her, prayers started being prayed for her at church, as well as family and friends. I have never prayed like that in my life, seeing my mother praying so much for her own life gave me no option but to increase my level of prayer and faith. When we visited my mother in hospital she didn't shed any tears, instead she told us about her therapy, the friends she has made and prayed with. A few months after my mother had started the process we were told that she was not responding to treatment and we must prepare for the reality which was death. On the other hand, my mother told us that to our faces that she is not dying, she would not talk about her dying wishes, will or any goodbyes. She would tell you that when she got out of the hospitals she would go on God's evangelizing mission where she will visit local clinics and tell people about a God who heals all diseases, God of a second chance and a good report while the doctors we arguing whether to operate and remove her womb or continue with treatment as my mother's state of health was deteriorating by the day. My mother continued with her treatment and she was transferred to Addington. Again she continued with the process for months until the doctors noticed that she is responding to medication and radiation therapy. They continued until she finished her day to day radiation therapy, she was transferred back to King Edwards Hospital where she was now going only for three days in a week. We started noticing a change in her skin, she started looking stronger and normal again. I thank my late father who was taking care of us while my mother spent months in hospital, my older **siblings**, Phila and Nhlakanipho, especially my sister Mercy, our local church, family and friends who not only provided emotional support but also other kinds of support. My school marks were affected as well. After six months in hospital my mother was fit to go home. She was told that her case was one in a million. Most people who were in stage four at her age did not survive cancer. The doctors did point out that there was a higher power that was present in her case. My mother came back home alive. She was an outpatient where she has to go for check ups every week. You know what every week then turned to once every month to once every year until my mother was cleared as cancer free, and there was not even a trace of cancer in her womb or in any part of her body. My mother is now 75 years of age and very healthy. It's been 23 years after she conquered cancer and yes she did keep her promise, she went to a local clinic every Thursday and Friday preaching about faith, giving hope to sick people who think they're dying, giving out her testimony of how God healed her and how faith kept her alive. My mother conquered cancer, the doctors played a great role in taking decisions and treating her. I am grateful to the team of expert doctors. I wish I can find out about the whole team that made it possible for my mother to go through and finish her treatment, they gave her life again. I am forever grateful to God for giving my mother such a brave faith. I am forever grateful to members of my family, our church family, relatives and friends who not only prayed for us but gave us hope. My mother conquered cancer, her faith kept her alive and today she is enjoying life freely. She has managed to see her children getting married, achieving greatly in life and she is enjoying her grandchildren. No wonder my grandparents gave her a nic kname [machine gun] indeed like a gun her faith bombed all the cancer cells that was in her body and indeed my mother really won the cancer battle and she conquered cancer.



Mum and I

BOOK REVIEW: *Stay With Me* by AYOBAMI ADEBAYO Boitsheko Thwane



Boitsheko Thwane

Today I learnt a lot about motherhood. All the questions that I had about where I feature in the spectrum of motherhood were also answered. I learnt that a mother is more than the woman who carries you in her womb and gives birth to you. I learnt that motherhood meant more than breastfeeding and changing diapers and being a disciplinarian. I learnt that motherhood is a bond. A sisterhood, a covenant of love and companionship, motherhood is a gift. I also stumbled across a great book- *Stay With Me* by Ayobami Adebayo. I walked into an Exclusive Books Store to find some hidden treasures and ended up spending the rest of my day there. True to the tone of the day the book turned out to be about motherhood. So with this piece, happy mother's day to you strong beautiful, defiant women who consistently triumph in their walks of life despite what the world throws at them. *Stay With Me* is a story about a woman whose journey of womanhood is riddled with strife and deceit. Yejide is born to a mother who is the second of four wives. However, Yejide never gets a chance to know her mother as she dies right after giving birth to her. So she is raised by her father and his 3 wives. Her father's wives stop at nothing to make her feel like an outcast who will never amount to anything. Yejide hence grows with a promise to herself to prove them wrong and never be in a polygamous relationship like her mother. She meets the love of her life in university and they get married some months later. She finds a friend and close accomplice in her mother in law who comes to represent the first present semblance of a true mother in her life. For the first time in her life, she has a woman whom she can affectionately refer to as *Moomi*. A title her step mothers had tirelessly tried to invoke out of her to no avail. *Moomi* supports her and welcomes her into her family with an expectant heart. When Yejide realises the amount of time which has passed in her marriage yet she has borne no kids, the brunt of the pressure from her extended families starts to take its toll on her. Her mother in law starts suggesting she sees, healers, priests and priestesses who have been known to curb such barrenness. Yejide desperately tries everything at her disposal until she ultimately visits a mountain priest recommended by one of her customers who is expecting a child. This happens after her in-laws acquire a second wife for her husband without her knowledge. The priest carries out a ritual and faithful Yejide, in her desperation, hangs on to the belief of the miracle of an immaculate conception that is currently taking place in her body. Against her better judgement and despite not having been intimate with her husband, her faith manifests in the form of morning sicknesses and the gradual protrusion of her belly. This, however, turns out to be a feat of her imagination as countless scans prove her manifestation to be a phantom pregnancy which continues to plague her mind and body for over a year. Her helpless husband, feeling sorry for his wife, in an act of desperation tries all he can to get his wife pregnant.

She falls pregnant by her brother in law, through a conniving ploy by her husband, and carries to full term. They never anticipate, amidst their celebrations, that their joy would be short-lived. After praying and trying and hoping for 4 years their miracle baby dies mysteriously at around 5 months. She discovers during the burial ceremony of her child that she is pregnant again. She does not seem to be as enthusiastic about this child as she is starting to believe pain will not live without her. She resolves to take even better care of her second child as she blames herself for the mysterious death of her first. She believes that; **"A mother must be vigilant. She must be able and willing to wake up ten times during the night to feed her baby. After her intermittent vigil, she must see everything clearly the next morning so she can notice any changes in her baby. A mother is not permitted to have blurry vision. She must notice if her baby's wail is too loud or too low. She must know if the baby's temperature has risen or fallen. A mother must not miss any signs."** These are just some of the expectations society puts on mothers, on women. Despite having to soldier through insults about your barrenness and how you are disgracing your husband by not bearing him any kids, mothers are also expected to have all the answers a superwoman like power and knowing. Mothers do not only nurse their children but their husbands as well, they are entrusted with the chore of nursing male egos, deciphering what will build their families and marriages even when the same kind of care is not reciprocated. No amount of vigilance, however, can save Yejide's second child he dies as well. In all this, she is the prime suspect in talks of the couple's infertility and subsequent death of any children they bare. Her mother in law is convinced she has bad genes as they discover her third child is also ill and could possibly die. Throughout all of this, no one ever suspects that her husband could be the one with the problem. The burden of bearing a child is placed primarily on Yejide. I like how Yejide responds to the possibility of her child's death. The defiance with which she approaches social expectations facing her is liberating. Although she comes across as insolent and detached to her child, for the first time we see her standing up for herself and making decisions for herself and not to please others. She breaks free from her husband's deceit and her mother in law's manipulation. She abandons her family as she does not want to experience the death of yet another child of hers. During her breakaway period, she learns that she holds a strength greater than she has ever imagined. That the children she lost are her strength even in their absence. They are her symbol of growth even in a society that believes that a woman without children is inadequate. Her ability to love and nurture does not disappear with the children she lost. She learns to be a better mother than she has ever had or even been, to her surviving child. This story teaches the various dynamics of motherhood and the strifes of womanhood. How sometimes you have sisters who can help you lighten your burden and at times advise you from their advantage of experience. How most of the time a lot of unsolicited judgement and burdens are placed on women. This story celebrates the triumph of women from different generations and different world views. It foreshadows a society where women are loved and cherished beyond their ability or inability to be mothers.

MOTHERS ARE AN INEXTRICABLE PART OF OUR HERITAGE (KZN Department of Arts and Culture)

Radikobo Ntsimane

At the Launch on 22 July 2018 in Glen Ashley Library, Durban.

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. I really feel honoured to speak before you on this important theme. There is no society that does not have mothers as part of its make-up. While it is a common sight, we seldom see mothers for who they are. Their value in society is obscured and disguised by a multiplicity of things whose value is over rated. We see them in workers' uniforms digging the roads or cleaning the parks, in tailored suits and briefcases going to their offices and board rooms, we see them behind counters and check-out points at grocery stores, we see them in aprons serving at the restaurants tables. That sight is non-threatening because we can deal with them according to the role they take every morning and the uniform they wear. When they disorientate society is when they are in a queue and the babies they are carrying need to be fed. It is when they have to change the nappies. That is when they are treated as having some unacceptable public behavior. And when they have to take leave because the child is unwell, the bosses worry about disturbed production and profits. Very little thought is given to the stress the mothers are already going through by having to come to the queues and to work. Any mother has provided for more than they ever thought they could. Raising a child is a challenge that calls for any mother to give their all. Since each child is unique, the expertise that the mother developed through her first born is no guarantee that it will work hundred percent for the second and third born. Motherhood is like a juggler with four or more balls in the air, trying to ensure that none of them falls to the ground. At times the attempt to keep the balls in the air comes at the mother's physical and emotional risk. In recognition of the motherly instinct the Tswana people have a saying: *Mmangwana o tshwara thipa kafa bogaleng*. Translated loosely as: For the defense of her child, the mother can even grab a knife at its sharp edge. The children take first priority and self-care is relegated to the last rungs of the list. Young mothers who out of choice or out of ignorance end up as mothers, are often the ones facing trouble. They become single parents while the fathers of their children are enjoying life and developing themselves for brighter futures. If anyone thought motherhood was a walk in the park, they should ask those mothers who gave their infants away or those who disposed of them in rubbish dumps. Our gathering today is celebrating the recording of stories of mothers. I want to believe that all those who contributed



Radikobo Ntsimane and Mr. J.S. Singh: Launch of the CTP



Nthutuko Khuzwyo - 67 Minutes Tribute & Tribute to Mama Winnie

stories in this Coffee Table Publication, had a genuine sense of gratitude to those they wrote about. We deliberately chose to write about the mothers because when they are mentioned it is on rare occasions, and as a supporting role to a man. There are stories like *Fiela se Kind* which gives a genuine portrayal of motherhood. There are poems and movies and songs which also acknowledge the value of motherhood in its entirety like Brenda Fassie's song, *Too Late for Mama*.

The story goes on to say that *she tried hiding under the tree to save her child*. And the community and the husband ran

to save her, "But it was too late, too late for mama!" You and I constantly observe scenes like the one Brenda Fassie sings about. Women with babies on their backs

ploughing the fields, fetching water, carrying fire wood and often raising their orphaned grandchildren. They go on and on taking load after load and a dding ball after ball juggling to keep them from falling to the ground. South African mothers are known to mother other children either through adoption or fostering, just so such children also get a chance in life. All at a great risk to themselves. In a country that successfully performed the first heart transplant, in a country that builds world class sports stadiums, in a country that produced a quality human being like Nelson Mandela, and in a country that counts Mama Albertina Sisulu as its struggle icon, such scenes become pronounced. As if the incarceration in Robben Island of her husband Walter was not enough, Mama Albertina was herself incarcerated by the Apartheid regime three times without trial while at the same time raising seven children, two of whom were adopted. As a country we can do more to minimize the risks this nation's mothers are faced with. We can hold accountable those we made responsible to use our tax monies for the development of South Africans. And its mothers.

Finally, ladies and gentlemen, I want to commend the step that Oral History Association of South Africa and the Department of Arts and Culture took to have the stories of our mothers recorded. This recognition of our heritage will go a long way and serve as a catalyst for more initiatives from different quarters. Our mothers have not only given us love and care, but have also given us our language and the foundation to build upon, so that we can take our rightful place in society. We will never be able to pay for the sacrifices they made. We have begun to show how valuable they are to us, by recording their stories for others to know and maybe to also show appreciation of this inalienable heritage. In everything we have become, our mothers had a great deal of contribution to make. Our mothers, our heritage: and no one can take it from us. We will record their heroism, as we choose to. One thousand books will never be enough to help us appreciate that the challenges of motherhood know no racial boundary. If the challenges know no boundary, so the celebrations should not be confined to any boundaries. In a country that is committed to social cohesion and nation building, the collection of diverse stories will help us to bring down bigotry and stereotypes. Our vision to record more stories resonates with what a mother and a former first lady of the USA, Michelle Obama wrote in her forthcoming biography titled: *Becoming*.



Marcelle Abrahams - Author and Writer's Report

*Ten kilometres barefooted in the bush
Started raining on the way to fetch some water
Poor woman had a baby on her back,
Was struck by lightning on her way
To fetch some water.*

We need as many stories as we can get. When we take time to understand each other's stories, we become more forgiving, empathetic and more inclusive. And that's what life is all about." (Drum magazine 12, July 218).

“Telling OUR mothers’ story” _The Writers’ Reports

Ms. Marcelle Abrahams, Dr. Dhana Sagree Govender and Ms. Pam Naidu had the privilege to present their experiences in telling their mothers’ story at the various launches held across KwaZulu Natal. These are three abridged versions of their speeches as communicated at the launches.

MARCELLE ABRAHAMS

Ordinary folk telling the *Untold* extraordinary stories of Remarkable women.

When embarking on an initiative such as this OHASA project, which is aimed at unlocking the Oral History within each of us, one wondered where the journey would lead us. Now that the second leg of the journey is well on its way one hopes that those who read our stories are open to the possibility of penning their own story. In order to inspire we celebrate. Today we are celebrating the voices and pens of the contributors to this publication. I hope that at the end of this event many more are encouraged to start writing their own Mothers’ Story. Every person here has a wealth of knowledge, experiences and memories that would be valuable on paper. Let me try to capture the general experience, challenges and joys that I experienced while writing this story as a first time creative writer. Some see writing as similar to learning to ride a bike. Difficult at first, wobbly, struggling to maintain balance, and momentum but once you lift your eyes away from the pedalling motion and focus on the horizon your pedalling legs and wheels will gain traction and take you into any direction with you at the helm. Others see writing as similar to getting into the exercise mode. Flexing that creative writing muscle. Sitting, knowing what you must do but reluctant to get started. However, once you get started and feel the pain of chiselling that muscle into shape the reward and enjoyment factor kicks in until your goal is achieved and then suddenly you find yourself addicted to writing. I personally see it more as being similar to the art of pottery. One has an idea of what you want the end result to look like, you start with a chaotic lump of facts, information and memories, plonk it onto the table, get the turntable moving, adding various elements to the mixture, slowly start moulding - shaping until the object glistens and takes shape. Continuing with the process, immersed in the relaxing, cathartic, sensuality of it all until you and your art piece become one. And the end result of that “oneness” is very different to the original envisaged idea. Starting off with wanting to create a cup but ending up creating a vase for example. A masterpiece none the less. Original, different, unique and never to be replicated.

The Artistic process for me is about: **where you start, how you end and finally the presentation of your artwork.** The act of writing is the art of externalising thoughts and memories and making it a learning process. EM Forster said: “How can I know what I am thinking until I see what I say?” By putting to paper what you say, feel and remember you are able to see your words, feelings and memories- giving you space and tools to reflect. By reflecting on what you see (your words, feelings and memories on paper) you can revise it in so many ways and in so doing create something quite new and beautiful, even for yourself.

As we know there are various types of writing.

- Academic (which is more research, fact and opinion based),
- Knowledge-telling (which is mainly content based-educational and informative),
- Reflective writing (externalising one’s thoughts and emotions). Reflective writing transfers and transform’s the writers thinking,
- Etc

I found that telling my Mother’s Story was a bit of knowledge telling and a lot of reflective writing.

As noted before, reflective writing transfers and transform’s the writer’s thinking and for me in this project it was the type of writing that I endeared to.

The revelation of one’s thoughts and emotions presents its own challenges. The major challenges for me were:

1. Confronting our hidden memories which could be painful
2. Managing the risk of the “Halo effect”, distortions and setting the tone of the story.
3. Overcoming the fear of judgments.
4. Ensuring that tact, diplomacy, sensitivity and respect for all the characters in our story as well as their family & associates are maintained.
5. Maintaining authenticity and integrity of the story.
6. Choosing a genre and being consistent throughout.
7. Subordinating one’s ego in favour of the principal character.

Despite the challenges it was also a joyful and very rewarding experience. The joys and rewards were:

1. Definitely a learning experience that took me out of my comfort zone.
2. The joy of connecting with likeminded individuals from diverse backgrounds who are amenable to forming a Writer’s Circle.
3. The knowledge and confidence that our mothers’ stories have been told on various platforms even as far afield as Finland, Thailand, the UK, etc where people are dying to read about the SA experience and seeing how the next generation are showing shoots of growth.

The greatest joy for me is that my Mother’s story has been published and for that we are allowed to stand a little bit taller.

We might have started out as **Ordinary** folk writing the **Untold** stories about **Remarkable** women and apprehensive of where the journey would take us but now at the end of the first leg of the journey, we find ourselves having come full circle and realising that we are not so ordinary after all but rather exceptional for being courageous, stepping up and opening up a bit of ourselves for generational prosperity. What a privilege to be part of this initiative. Thank you to the team of writers and OHASA for encouraging us to articulate our stories for publication which according to my judgement is: “Perfect in its imperfections: A masterpiece!”

DHANA SAGREE GOVENDER

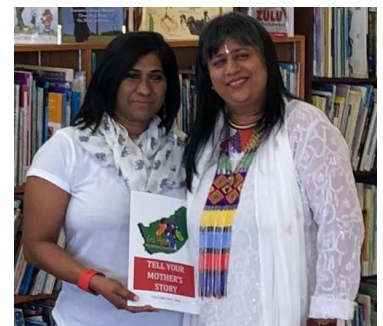
As an author and post-doctoral researcher having published journal articles, I approached the task of writing my mother's story with much trepidation. My mother's story was not one that could be written easily. I resisted this task. With the persistent encouragement of Dr Kogie Archary to write the story, I finally did. The first draft of the story was sent to my siblings for their approval and was met with the response, "It is best to allow our deceased mother to rest in peace." The story had captured the painful episodes of my mother's life and would not have left the reader with dry eyes. I accepted my siblings' feedback and withdrew the story. After further persuasion, I re-wrote the story as a tribute to my mother highlighting the aspects that I wished to remember with fondness. As a contributor to the first volume of our mothers' story, my account remains partial and selective allowing the reader to know some aspects of her life. I remain grateful to the editor for giving me an opportunity to honour my mother whose loyalty to her family and home would certainly earn her a Ph. D of Profound Household Dedication. This project of writing our mothers' story holds the promise of exponential growth in the future by capturing the diverse experiences within our rainbow nation.



Maggie Achary with Dr
Dhana Sagree Govender

PAM NAIDU

During my growing up period, quality time spent with my siblings was so important because my mum had taught us that no matter how much money you had or whatever position you had at work, that you must always respect yourself first, then others. Prayer, she said, will always provide answers to anything that you ask your God for. My siblings were too embarrassed to speak about our childhood and our challenges. I had decided that in order to overcome my side effects of my illness, that I would acknowledge my fears and gain trust in my strength. Just as my mum had taught me to do so. This is the result of my mum teaching all nine of her children through her love that each day brings renewed HOPE.



Pam Naidu and Kogie Archary

THE REVIEWER'S PERSPECTIVE by CLAUDINE HINGSTON

Growing up as a little girl, most of the stories I was told were about strong or famous men. Even films, television and other media tend to focus on men with women playing supportive roles. One reason for this is because it is usually men who tell these stories and men cannot really tell women's stories. Gradually, there was a reluctant shift to telling stories of women but only about the powerful, the mighty and the famous. The stories of strong, hard-working, determined ordinary women were left untold or swept under the carpets. It gave the impression that these women were uninteresting or did not make any significant contribution to their families or communities. By these stories not being told, we were reduced to hearing a single story. Well known feminist, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie warns about the danger of hearing a single story. It provides a one-sided view and it is not the complete story. Also, by not knowing our mothers' stories, we are deprived of stories that will help us to transform our lives, learn about our history, broaden our perspective and cope with the challenges of life. However, moaning about this does not help the situation.



Dr. Claudine Hingston, one
of the reviewers with
Yashica Moodley - Librarian

Action must be taken and this is why this book, *Tell Your Mothers Stories* is powerful and important. It details the lives of ordinary women whose stories may not have been told. It gives us an insight into their lives and we come to see that these are strong women who have contributed to the success and greatness of their families and communities in various ways. Reviewing this book made me realise that although women's lives can be tough, yet we can carve a meaningful pathway for ourselves and others. The characteristics displayed by the women in the stories are ones that present day young women should strive to emulate. This is why it is important that these stories be told. It is therefore crucial that as women, we should talk to each other, listen to each other, work with each other and share our stories to even men as well. Men too must know and acknowledge women's stories. We need to document stories of past and present ordinary women and leave them as a gift for the future generation. As a reviewer, I want to state that the stories are amazing, interesting and inspiring and I would urge all present to make an effort to read the book. I also want to thank all those who worked tirelessly in compiling and publishing this book to keep up the good work and continue to document more of our mothers' stories. Please note that these stories have to be told or they will die, and when they die, we cannot remember who we are or why we are here." I therefore urge you to keep on telling these stories for only in telling them can the worth of women be acknowledged by present and future generations.

The book has reached international shores: - Australia, England, Germany, France, India, Scotland, Fiji, Mauritius, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Sierra Leone, Zambia, USA, Canada, Finland, Netherlands, New Zealand, Thailand, Ireland, Swaziland and many other places...

Feedback Report by Marcelle Abrahams

Tell Your Mothers' Story Volume One 2018 was launched and showcased on various platforms (Libraries, Business Chambers, Institutions of Higher Learning, Local, National and International Conferences, etc) and the interactions and positive feedback after each launch was tremendous. Some of the feedback:

1. "I consider this project so necessary and worth supporting"
2. "The event escalated to another level after the formal proceedings were concluded with the guests freely interacting and sharing their mothers' fascinating stories from way back when."
 - A grandmother who travelled by ship to SA with the specific purpose of teaching and catering to the needs of deaf children. So topical in our society right now with sign language recognised as the 12th official language of SA.
 - A third generation librarian.
 - A grandfather and father who encouraged the granddaughter/daughter to write a book and the lady now being encouraged to realise her forefathers' dreams and visions.
 - Another who was inspired to dig out all the old family photos, get the family together with the view of trying to pin some sort of narrative (names, dates, places, occasion) to the photo."
3. "During the interaction I met people who were born in Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone and Uganda. The atmosphere was great and I did not want to leave. It was also good to see the diversity present. From as young as 10 to our oldest writer Mr. Singh (age 86) being engaged and involved. I valued the tactile gesture of each writer passing the first book, with a meaningful phrase, onto another writer. To me it looked like the start of writer's circle being created with more space for others to join".
4. "I certainly share Prof. Christine Landman's sentiments: "Let telling your Mother's story become a fashion trend". Trend, Trendy and Trending. Using old school methods and various social media platforms".

The Way Forward

In 2017 Durban was declared a Unesco City of Literature. A first for Africa. The aim is to partner with Unesco and the organisers of various Literary Tourism routes, writing and book festivals so that our mothers' stories can reach a wider audience. You are encouraged to join us in support.

Pictures
from
2018
Launches



Vani Aveyan and Sumanthra Folly



Thando Mawabo



Glen
Ashley
Library



Adv. Zandile Qono-
Reddy, Dr. Hlongwane



Sarres Harrinarain
and Devi Munien



Thobela Ngidi: Manager-
Libraries & Heritage



Ms Abrahams, Dr Hingston and Prof Naidoo at MANCOSA



Durban North Librarian Vanietha Pillay – middle standing

BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

Dr. Kogie Archary

In 2014, I was tasked with fundraising for OHASA, which proved to be an extremely challenging task. I tried to be as innovative as possible by promoting the OHASA brand in terms of sourcing t-shirts, mugs and other items. This proved rather challenging. Thereafter, a Gala Dinner was hosted, followed by Fundraising Business Breakfasts which were graced by leading and prominent individuals from our society. After much deliberation, I got the nod to go ahead with the Coffee Table Publication. This has been an interesting project as I have received stories from various locations, however, there has been a strong presence from Kwa-Zulu Natal.

MOVING AHEAD...2020 VOLUME THREE

The **ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA (OHASA)** invites you to write for the **2020 Volume Three of the Coffee Table Publication: Stories of Women: 2020_ A Tribute to Women ... sharing their stories_**

You are encouraged to write for our publication. Your participation will ensure that Women of all races, places and spaces will be applauded, appreciated and acknowledged because of your engagement, enlightenment and empowerment. You are encouraged to write an article that Tells your Story (if you are a woman) OR Your Mother's (or any other female that has influenced you) Story. It should be Arial size 10, single line spacing. You could write in paragraphs, using sub-headings. Pictures also make for interesting reading and captures the moment. The following information or format could be used in your write up. However, there is ample room for creativity. Please note that you are not restricted to sticking to this format. You may even use a combination of the options.

DATE OF SUBMISSION: Before 30 APRIL 2020

OPTION 1

Written in paragraphs by answering the following questions

	Stages in life	Experiences	Content
1	Birth to two years:	Where were you born? Year?	Parents: Explain family background. Extended family.
2	Early life	School, friends, family, life in general under apartheid	What was your life like while growing up? Who were the important role players in your life? What did you enjoy most while growing up?
3	Teenage years	Difficulties / cultural disputes/ moral challenges	Did you face peer pressure? What influence did your culture / belief system have on you? Any memory of superstition / old wives tales/ folk tales / storytelling that shaped you?
4	Young adult life under apartheid	Trials / struggles / successes	Success to include family, children, spouse etc. influence of adult friends / civic groups etc.
5	Marriage / children / extended family life	What experiences can you share? Economic difficulties? Social issues? Political strife? The environment?	Did you work? Were you protected at the workplace? Remuneration? Uniforms? Travelling?
6	Mature adult	Changes in the country? Your contribution.	Were you active in movements that led to change? Other experiences that you may have had.
7	At present	Share your thoughts... hope for the future? Sadness? Achievements, etc.	If you could change anything what would it be and why?

OPTION 2

Brief biography: This should cover birth, early childhood, schooling and life after schooling. A memorable moment in your life or your mother's life under apartheid. It is almost given that when you request people to write about their lives under apartheid they would focus on the hardships and their resistance to apartheid, i.e. political activism. This is true for many people, and women in particular who, regrettably their histories still remain 'hidden'. Contributors are urged to write about this. Colleagues are strongly urged to begin to document about other aspects of their lives that remain dormant. Contributors are also encouraged to write about any aspect of their life or their mothers' life that they feel is pertinent and deserves to be documented. These could range from challenges unmarried women, especially black women, faced in acquiring accommodation in the urban areas; how they managed to survive and raise children, sometimes single-handedly through what the then government perceived as illegal means (e.g. beer brewing or street hawking); entertainment careers (Contributors must write about their memories or that of their mothers who were aspiring musicians, artists, sport enthusiasts, etc., in their communities); community developers, but due to apartheid laws, which restricted the advancement of black people, they struggled to achieve their dreams. View about post-apartheid South Africa: Hope/Dream for the future? Sadness? Achievements, etc.

OPTION 3

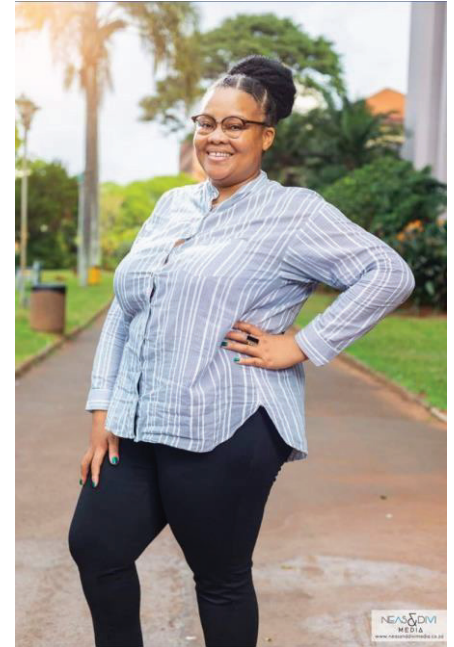
Writers are also encouraged to tell community stories. Perhaps an individual wants to pay for the page that pays homage to his / her crèche / sporting club etc. Then the story / page could revolve around the women that played the pivotal role in the formative years. **In Conclusion**, remember to be creative. You can write as family or as a group. We are looking for stories that cover the length and breadth of our country. We are looking for women's tales from all provinces, the plaas, the plush neighbourhoods and townships. Join me in telling women's stories. This is a great initiative. Please be involved.

BANKING DETAILS: R 250 per page / 500 Words and a Picture / OHASA, ABSA Bank, Pretoria / Account No: 4067826673 Please include a payment reference which must reflect your "Name, Surname and CTP". This will help us in identifying the contributors. Unidentified payments will be put into a suspense account and will result in the suspension on your subscription. P.S.- There is no restriction on the number of pages per story, although, each page has to be paid for. Should you require any further information, please email: ohasafundraising@gmail.com. Regards, Dr. Kogie Archary

Review by Luthando Ngazile Ngema, an emerging scholar at the School of Arts, Media and Cultural Studies Department - University of KwaZulu-Natal

This book is important. It brings up the voices of women, in a patriarchal, racist, sexist society that works to shut down the black women centered narratives. The stories carry memories that shed light into our painful apartheid past. The resilience that women faced in South Africa, is captured in various stories: where reflections are made on typical South African life on issues of child labour, marriage, displacement, immigration and single parent-hood, to name a few issues. Women in these stories, hold the banner as 'hard working' as Prince Jongisilo Pokwana ka Menziwa reflects on his grandmother and says: "[She was] A hard worker, a leader, an advocate of black consciousness and self-determined, a teacher of both culture and western education" (page 9). The stories of the black and brown women in this book are ever more important, as sources of memory as their positionality in South African society, is captured through how they endured hardships through lack of education, abusive marriages or single mother hood, to name a few issues. To be a woman in South African society, means existing in the zone of nonbeing, within the wretchedness of this zone, these women survived. They survived in a society that had no place for them to flourish. They still held their families together, they still worked jobs that paid peanuts, in order to feed their children, and therefore substituted their household income. These women had hope and faith, and were devoted to their religions, husbands, in-laws within a separatist South African society. Mnoza ka Malane, captures the spirit of these women, in her title: "The Rise and rise of the matriarch". These women, showed leadership in the face of hardship, through everything working against them. In the story by Busile Cynthia Ndlovu, the hardships are captured through her story of displacement, with grandparents who were farm workers. The often displaced family, still survived South African separatist laws, the children were educated. Her parents with the help of her grandmother, the farm worker, provided and protected them as children. Ndlovu remembers her parents as her heroes. In contrast (but still reflective of the zone of nonbeing) to most of the stories was a story by Samu Ngwenya, titled: "A Mother does not always know". Ngwenya highlights her personal encounter as motherless child. Her mother abandoned her, for reasons such as- she looked too much like her father. Leaving her to grow up with a woman with her family, distances away from her biological parents. Ngwenya's story captures the reality of dysfunction in our society. Malerato Elsie Mrubula, in her story titled: "Beyond heterosexuality: A journey of self-discovery", in her self-reflexive journey as a lesbian woman, who had to suppress and succumb to societal pressure, shares how she overcame the pressures and broke away from her heteronormative life and lived her normal life as a lesbian woman, in her search for freedom and happiness. I have highlighted some of these stories, as a tiny peak to the overarching message: Women are strength, women are the backbone of South African society. The stories are deeply emotive as some are giving homage to the women that raised a society. Packaged to reflect our socio-economic-political circumstances. The essence of the stories, really captures the spirit of fighting oppression and subjugation. Abafazi balimisile lelizwe.

Luthando Ngema's multidisciplinary interests include understanding urban cultures; representation of gender issues in the media; political communication; communication for development. Ngema, teaches and supervises at post graduate level. She is currently in the process of completing her Doctoral studies.



Review by Zandile DJ Zeal Dladla Events MC and National Radio Presenter

There is nothing that lives on like the spirit of a mother, these precious stories make you dig deep into the tapestry of society and how a woman's life is at the core of family and life as we know it. Whether your mother was present or absent, straight or lesbian, married or single, educated or illiterate, rich or poor – that woman definitely influenced your life. I am not yet a mother but these stories definitely remind me that the profession of motherhood is all about influence. From the mother or grandmother that was a farmer to another who was a political activist but for each story teller, in hindsight, now they know why their mothers or grandmothers did what they did with their lives, and how it made a difference. One of the stories is written in SiSwati and it highlights the plight of a black mother raising her children under apartheid law. Nonwhite women were and still are, in many African countries, at the bottom of the picking order in spite of government policies addressing gender equality. The attitude of doing things for yourself as a woman is almost a hereditary quality, and the best mothers are the ones who would do anything to empower their child to be independent and do better in life than they could. This collection of stories is far from glamorous yet enjoyable and some will move you to tears as you think about your own mother's story. You will be left introspectively wondering if you will ever do a perfect mothering job or you will be left inspired to be more intentional about mothering. To acknowledge my own- Thandiwe Nonhlanhla MaDlamini Dladla, now that I am older and I have read these stories, I know she has always been a perfect Mother and continues to be one. That is why this book is so important – we should all tell our mothers' stories.

The world must continue to learn that living up to the title "Mother" daily does not come as naturally as giving birth on that one blessed day.



**Zandile
"DJ ZEAL"
DLADLA**
**MC, Public Speaker, SABC
Presenter**

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**Liberty Radio Award Best Commercial
Breakfast Show 2018 Finalist**

Sunshine yellow personality and versatile entertainer Zandile Dladla was born a communicator. Her impeccable communications skills, in both IsiZulu and English, saw her gearing towards a career in the broadcasting industry. This has led her back to her home town of Durban following a decade of studying and working in the City of Gold (Johannesburg).

She started off her colorful journey at METRO FM as early as 2008, after winning a Ponds competition with Azania Mosaka. She took the opportunity and ran with it while honing her skills and making a mark in the deep house space. With mentors such as DJs Vinny da Vinci and Christos she became one of the most sought-after club DJs and MCs in the industry. She hosted weekend evening shows titled The Urban Beat for five years where she consistently increased listenership, attracted brand sponsorship and spear-headed national radio tours.

She later moved on to joining East Coast Radio and finally being head-hunted to join growing coastal station Vuma 103 as a breakfast co-host of which she effectively served at for a year. Zeal has proven herself to be a commercially viable brand because with her contribution to the "Good To Go Morning Drive" show she has seen the listenership at Vuma 103 tripled in one year. She has since broadened her horizon as one of the most sought after speakers at women's events nationwide, a voice over artist and has just shot a television talk show pilot to further spread her wings in the competitive broadcasting world. DJ Zeal continues to diversify and grow her national footprint with a growing number of listeners, more speaking and MC engagements which has seen her share stages with the likes of businesswomen Carol Bouwer, Thami Ngubeni, among others.

For over a year now Zeal is working one of her dream jobs at the biggest radio station in the Africa – UKHOZI FM as a presenter and content producer for the following shows, and has increased the number of listeners – Nationwide 90.1 – 107.4FM:

1. Friday 'Ikhwezi LoKhozi' 2am – 4am
2. Saturday 'akumoya' 10pm – 2am