

TELL YOUR MOTHER'S STORY

Volume 4

Dr Kogie Archary

Coffee Table Publication

Series Editor: Dr Kogie Archary

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Friends of Tell Your Mother's Story.

There are many who have volunteered their services to this initiative. We would like to thank all the people who have been involved with Volume 4 of the Tell Your Mother's Story Publication. In particular we would like to thank the authors for their contributions and enthusiasm as well as the many individuals who have read through the text and provided useful comments. Last, but not least we would like to thank the families, friends and colleagues of those involved for their continued support and patience in getting this publication to print.

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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 when the then Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST) was mandated by Cabinet to conceptualize and spearhead the National Oral History Programme (NOHP) for South Africa. 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 5 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 three ways. Firstly it would provide emotional support to people through affirmation and healing. Secondly it would assist communities in retrieving traditional support systems in matters such as food conservation, funeral procedures or natural medicine, thus allowing them to save money. In this way it would provide non-monetary economic assistance. Lastly the communities would be entitled to derive some benefits from the commercialisation of commodities produced with the help of indigenous knowledge accessed through oral history.

The National Oral History Programme started with a pilot project with the theme, "The 1956 Anti-Pass March to the Union Buildings by Women of South Africa", a topic which was chosen because it was one of the many inadequately documented historic events in the country's past. The DACST was well aware of the need to train its own staff and that of the National Archives on oral history methodologies. A team of historians was appointed to oversee this process. It was actually in January 2000 when the Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology appointed a panel of experts to advise him on the drafting of a comprehensive plan for the Oral History Programme. This panel met in February 2000, and in March consultations with stake holders commenced and their input was included in a report which was produced in July 2001

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Introduction

Dr Kogie Archary

The past holds the key to our greatness! The past is also a pivotal part of our sadness as a nation. The meandering past weaves us along the tributary of life that sets us free as we welcome the future, whilst embracing the present. Orality as a source of primary history, the recording of stories, the capturing of past truths as experienced in art, song, dance, music, culture, traditions, mores, values and other expressions are a rich source of value to humankind as lessons are learnt and espoused in ways that encourages ethical nationhood. It is through the difficulties, the challenges and the experiences endured by many before us that enable us 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. 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. Women are at the focal point in relationships as relationships grow, terminate or remain static. 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, their attempts at improving society need to be known and their value add to families need to be emphasised at every point in time. This fourth edition of "Tell Your Mothers' Stories" as compiled, attempts to address the need to close the gap that exists in terms of women's stories. 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, Apartheid, Decolonisation, Economic and Social Revolutions, Racism, Covid 19 and through various other traumatising episodes that have shaped world history.

The future will never be the same as we know and understand it. The present deals with futuristic technology, the 4th and 5th Industrial revolutions and so much more. As the lockdown continues through 2021, the COVID 19 Pandemic affects the entire global population. The world of work changed, families were forced to self-quarantine and nature reigned supreme. It is the women - mothers, nurses and mainly female care-givers who have provided the support, care and love required by the sick, the elderly and the vulnerable. During the lockdown, which was imposed by the national government, gender-based violence, alcohol abuse and depression were reported as some of the severest and most traumatising of episodes experienced by millions of women and society in general. However, the positives to emerge from the lockdown are the importance of nature, the need for spirituality, the activation of proper hygiene and diet as well as an appreciation for life. The importance of family and friends is highlighted and it is women who have kept the home fires burning, been champions to her (and other's) children and amazingly been that ray of hope to all, when she quietly said, "this too shall pass".

These volumes have invited writers to tell stories about ordinary women who lead their families, who drive communities, which thereafter impact society. It can be justifiably implied that this publication belongs on every bookshelf, on every coffee table, in every library 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.

For this volume, women may have chosen not to write about that aspect of their lives. Writers may have chosen not to highlight the lived and ideological difficulty - 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 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 and the African diaspora over time. The warmth and depth in the writing suggests a need to continue with follow-up editions. Metaphorically speaking, if you don't feed the chickens, the chickens die. It's a great metaphor for building a family, a community, a society, a nation, a continent and indeed the world. 2020 moving onto 2021 - has entrenched 2021 as the year of interruptions and disruptions on many levels. Home after home, community after community, country after country and continent after continent are facing so many interruptions and disruptions to life and living. Everything is changing. People are lost. Families are broken. Friends are afraid. Partners are disappearing; love is questioned, hope is challenged and faith is losing an elusive battle. In the many confrontations of life, survival is now writing a new history. 2021 is a year where mental fragility is tested alongside economic survival and normal healthy living standards. Despite, the interruptions, disruptions and challenges, the Executive Committee of OHASA has soldiered on with its mandate under the leadership of President Sekgothe Mokgoatšana. This publication, under the guidance of OHASA Editor, Prof Christina Landman has developed over the last four years. Volume 4 bears testimony to the guidance of the OHASA EXCO as it showcases a myriad of stories that are reflective of the South African demographics and African diaspora. In as much as the past is remembered and the value adds enshrined in today's older generation, it must be remembered that the future is in the hands of the youth.

This publication is a dedication to all women who have borne the brunt of hardship yet survived. It is a testimony of one of the generations that have suffered but voiced their opinion when they decided Liberation

before Education. These are the stalwarts that are celebrated amidst the difficulties of daily living in an economy that is continuously challenged. This volume contains stories that reflect on unity, renewal and reconstruction in the year of Charlotte Maxeke. As the stories unfold, what becomes clear is that women have been the backbone of society and the strength of communities come from the strength of the women who keep that community alive. The paradigmatic shift in expectations from previous generations is clearly visible in this publication as we read of stories where young women, after being married, having children, still returning to formal education despite their challenges.

In terms of reviewing this Volume, Professor Thenjiwe Meyiwa, despite her very busy schedule reviewed this publication. Prof Meyiwa is a Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research, Innovation & Postgraduate Studies at the University of South Africa. She has extensive experience in higher education, as a teacher, researcher and in administration with an impeccable academic, leadership and mentorship record with a strong focus on feminist scholarship and indigenous knowledge systems. She serves on various parastatals, community and civil society organisations, such as the Rural Women's Movement amongst others. Prof Meyiwa has authored a significant number of research articles, including co-publishing five books. Ms Nokwanda Mqadi, an emerging scholar who qualified from the University of KwaZulu Natal, Howard College with a Masters in Population Studies (2020) also graciously accepted the invitation to be a reviewer. She received a merit certificate for her research module and is a woman making a difference. Her thesis focused on young mother experiences and social protection. Her interests range across women empowerment, solidarity and independence. She is currently working for an NGO in Healthcare. In conclusion, an incredibly special Thank You to the Coffee Table Publication Writers for the submissions. To all associated with this publication, we appreciate your commitment and duty to national interest and for embracing the voluntary nature of this project. We also thank our reviewers, our sub-editors and layout team. A poem entitled "*The year 2021 Interruptions and Disruptions*" concludes this introduction.

The year 2021 Interruptions and Disruptions

Dr Kogie Archary

The days go by so quickly Heavy hearts,
Eyes closed lightly

Yet, there is confidence
Eagerly awaiting tomorrow
An abundance of hope
Racing against time

Of late
Future, oh our future, so bleak

In the blink of an eyelid, interruptions No minute to spare.
Time waits not Ever on the go
Reaction after reaction,
Reactive interruption after interruption Unfortunately there seems no hope Pity the masses
Today is lost Indefatigably lost
Oh, the interruptions and disruptions Nowhere to run, nowhere to hide
So sad

And the interruptions and disruptions, they continue...
No place to hide
Disappear they don't!

Disillusioned
Interruptions and disruptions
So sad
Reality struck home
Until tomorrow
Pity, nothing seems to be changing
Today, the interruptions and disruptions
In every home
Alas, a higher force, please help get rid of the interruptions and disruptions
Neonatal optimism
So close, yet so far!

Moving Along...

Thank you to the women, the grandmothers, the mothers, the daughters, the aunts, the sisters, the caregivers, the sisters - in- law, cousins, nieces, granddaughters, lovers, mistresses and girl friends 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 mother's stories and more fathers to pay tribute to their daughters...Herewith, follows stories - along thematic narratives - 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! An introductory themed preface - either a poem, a write up or newspaper article - is presented before each collection of stories. This volume has been set out thematically as follows; Introduction, Political Dynamics, Culture and Spirituality, Charlotte Maxeke laid the foundation for later generation success stories, Mothers, the heartfelt centrepieces of who we are; From Indenture, akin to modern day slavery to democracy; International Stories: Across the Continents...breaking down barriers and Conclusion.



Political Dynamics and Freedom

Dr Kogie Archary

Political dynamics and freedom, hand in hand, ever a challenge
Only the brave, as brave would do, read their stories, listen to their words Little realising the future would be so unpredictable,
Incriminating oneself, always on the run,
Totally sacrificing everything, not returning for 30 years to your motherland!
In complete solidarity with likeminded souls, not even working to feed their children Carefully, quietly answering the call for liberation, mother after mother
Attention to detail to win a war, stitched and sewed, cooked and fed
Lethal in thought - just to survive, prayer, positivity held them together, sometimes sane

Day by day, night after night
Yesterdays a far gone thought, but they continued the fight New dawn, new light, new beginnings, bright and sad
A fresh start, a new thought, a different fight, good and bad Maiming the weak, damaging the strong, lifting the lost
In total awareness, political dynamics were always asway Closely watching, they never stopped at most
So much sacrifice, they paved the long and winding way

Are we really free? All this pain, suffering
Now a democracy, Tata Nelson Mandela served 27 years...
Dynamic!

Freedom here, but is it truly here?
Really here? Abject poverty after 27 years... Every day, a free day,
Every waking moment, on African soil, still seeking Dynamic, yet destitute
On African soil
Mother Africa, political dynamics - yes but freedom in Africa – I wonder...

Mathabo Rachel Kunene – unveiling the secrets of a woman entrepreneur Challenging gender barriers

Dr Devi Moodley Rajab

**As one generation plants the tree, the next generation has the shade
Chinese Proverb**

Mathabo Kunene is an elegant and dynamic woman whose presence immediately changes the whole aura of the room in which she enters. She is immaculately turned out from the bright red tips of her well-manicured fingernails to her exotically coiffured tresses and elegant court shoes. She dares to create her own style. She speaks with gusto and laughs with ease and raises our interest with hanging questions of sheer disbelief.

"How can there be such corruption? Or I am a global citizen and will never allow myself to be reduced to a non-thinking loyalist. I am a free spirit!" Mathabo is indeed a free spirit, with a constitution of iron will and determination.

Her motto of life is well expressed through the words of William Purkey: *You've gotta dance like there is nobody watching, Love like you'll never be hurt, sing like there is*

nobody listening and live like its heaven on Earth

And this pervades all aspects of her life. Her home is a designer's dream of great taste and beauty. Antique furniture sits comfortably with African artefacts. A Japanese vintage kimono hangs interestingly against silken wallpaper. Her taste is global, but rooted in African soil, like her thoughts and perspective on life. She easily embraces diversity in all its beauty. But Mathabo is more than a woman with great taste; she is a warrior who epitomises renaissance in Africa.

"There is no time to waste", she says as she juggles so many different balls in the air. The Mazisi Kunene Trust, which she heads, is involved in funding and supporting schools in semi-rural and urban areas. The entire family of mother, her children and office team, work tirelessly to build a dream of making South Africa a worthwhile nation.



May 2017 at the Coastland Hotel in Durban with King Goodwill Zwelithini endorsing Emperor Shaka. Mathabo says: "I love that picture!"

She is a great advocate for education and believes that nothing can be done by proxy. When one invests in education one needs to support financial donations with personal interest and involvement. In this respect, besides education, she attends to the general environmental needs, such as sinking boreholes, flushing toilets and healthy nutrition for the learners as well as creating libraries, science and computer laboratories.

In the name of the esteemed late Professor Mazisi Kunene, whose writings on Zulu culture are being preserved by the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in partnership with the University of KwaZulu Natal, the family actively promotes learning. What makes Mathabo Kunene so special is her determination to leave behind a legacy. She embraces her African-ness with joyous pride and seeks to build bridges between and amongst communities. Long ago she endeavoured to defy the reprehensible apartheid regime that prevented her from realising her dreams of making a success of life.

Early in her career, she studied nursing and reflected on the people who assisted her to go into exile. They not only helped her in getting a passport under trying circumstances, but made it possible for her to obtain work in London.

Senior journalists, Allister Sparks, Prof Hoffenberg and Stanley Uys, were amongst those to whom she was indebted. Arriving in London in the early seventies, she soon met other South Africans, including Mazisi Kunene, who she married in 1973. Mathabo has a keen sense of justice and ability to challenge - where she needs to. She left London for Los Angeles with her family. In America she had to ward off crooks who scammed on home-owners through extortion schemes. Sadly, many people were swindled of their homes under such rackets. She recalls, "There are laws in the US that protect people from such fraudulent schemes. I wasn't going to let anyone take my home from me."

This sense of justice and energy has seen her through many battles and challenges. She is certainly integral to the story and life of the Kunene Family. Mathabo Rachel Kunene was born in 1940 in Rustenburg to the Mabowe family, who personally built a school from their own funds during the apartheid era. This indefatigable spirit shines through in all of Mathabo's endeavours. Both her parents were involved in education and as Seventh Day Adventists, raised their four children under the strict tenets of their faith. The children were delegated tasks and duties to



Aug 2018 at Mayor's Parlour Los Angeles with the Mayor of Los Angeles, Mr. Eric Garcetti

perform and each took turns in making sure that the house ran smoothly; that lunch was prepared for school; uniforms were washed and pressed in time and the evening meal was served for the family. Above and beyond these duties, each child was taught certain skills, like sewing or cooking etc. It is not surprising that Mathabo later developed these skills into entrepreneurial activities and created a boutique catering company specialising in distinctive African foods. As the winner of the NBS House and Garden show she received a Gold Award for presentation and quality of food.

In 1998 she catered for President Mandela's wedding and birthday celebrations. An entrepreneur and innovator in her own right, she has developed many projects that served to empower women. The Akhona Trade and Investments Company, which she founded was the largest women empowerment group in KwaZulu Natal in 1996. She recognised the power of the "stokvel" among rural women and embraced this practice as the cornerstone for Akhona's business enterprise. She was also the Founder and CEO of Nandi Heritage House in 2000 which supports her flagship projects, namely the School of Excellence in Amahlongwa village and the Mazisi Kunene Foundation and Museum.

As a black woman Mathabo found the business community hard to crack at first but with her sterling determination she made inroads into corporate investment companies such as Dinatla Investment Holdings, Women in Oil and Energy (WOESA) and BIDVest. They admired her commitment towards a nation building through black women empowerment. For this she received the KwaZulu Natal Women of Excellence Award in Social Entrepreneur 2012 and was finalist in the KZN Women of Excellence Award in Arts, Culture and Heritage.



Dr Devi Moodley Rajab is an award winning columnist. She is the author of *Women; South Africans of Indian origin from indenture to democracy* (Jacana Press) *No Subject is Taboo: Socio-political commentaries on SA* (Mandela Press) *Devi's Diary* (Ravan Press) a compilation of her columns in the Mercury. She trained as a psychologist and was educated in South Africa and in the USA as a Fulbright Scholar.



She is currently Chairman of Gcinamasiko and the Voices of Women Trusts. As the managing trustee of the Mazisi Kunene Foundation she is instrumental in preserving her husband's writing legacy for the benefit of African scholarship. His epic writings on Emperor Shaka are comparable to the Hindu text of the Mahabharata and the Greek Iliad and Odyssey.

Mathabo is hard to label. She shuns any attempt to categorise her as a feminist, as an Africanist, or as a member of any political or religious organisation. "I want to feel free to fall in between the cracks", she says. "I am who I am!" But at the heart of her *raison d'être*, she bears the weight of her matriarchal influence. Indeed Professor Kunene himself advocated feminism as an issue that all men should take cognisance of. "A man who has no woman in him is very dangerous", he warned.

My amazing mother, Nagamall Pillay, qualified as a teacher in 1938 Dr Kasturi Varley

My maternal grandmother was born at the end of the 1890's in the village of Vazhakulam, near Muvattupuzha in the district of Ernakulam, state of Cochin - Travancore, now known as Kerala, South India. Her name was Annamall Veghese. She was brought to South Africa when she was about 7 years old by her childless aunt and uncle. Seemingly, they kidnapped her from her family. Their excuse was by saying that they were "Just taking her for a visit to Madras". My grandmother married when she was around 13-16 years old to Dorasamy Iyer, a high class *Brahman* (Hindu priest) from Madras. From this marriage two sons and three daughters were conceived: a daughter Chellamah, son Ramasamy, daughter Letchmee who died from being ill as a teenager, my mother Nagamall (1919-2003) and finally a son Gopaul. My grandmother remarried after Dorasamy passed away as it was difficult to bring up the children single-handedly. She eventually married Mr. Veeraswamy who was a Catholic and displayed much love and affection to my grandmother and her children. From this marriage there were two daughters, Elizabeth and Violet and three sons, Peter, Paul and Daso. All my grandmothers' children were born in the vicinity of West End Chambers, the Indian market, the gold mines and its sand dunes, commonly known as the mine dumps. This was Malay Camp in Ferreirastown. Suddenly the circumstances changed. The whole community was evicted and the houses demolished for the construction of a complex of magistrate courts, the biggest ever built in the country. Evicted families had to fend for themselves.

My mother was born into a poor working class family. My grandmother kept her in school. Eventually she qualified as a teacher. Even though the local Indian community were working class, they were quite conservative. They displayed their displeasure at my grandmother for allowing mum to continue studying beyond primary education. The women came as a group to dissuade my grandmother from letting my mother get a further education. The ladies told her that a young girl should be prepared for marriage



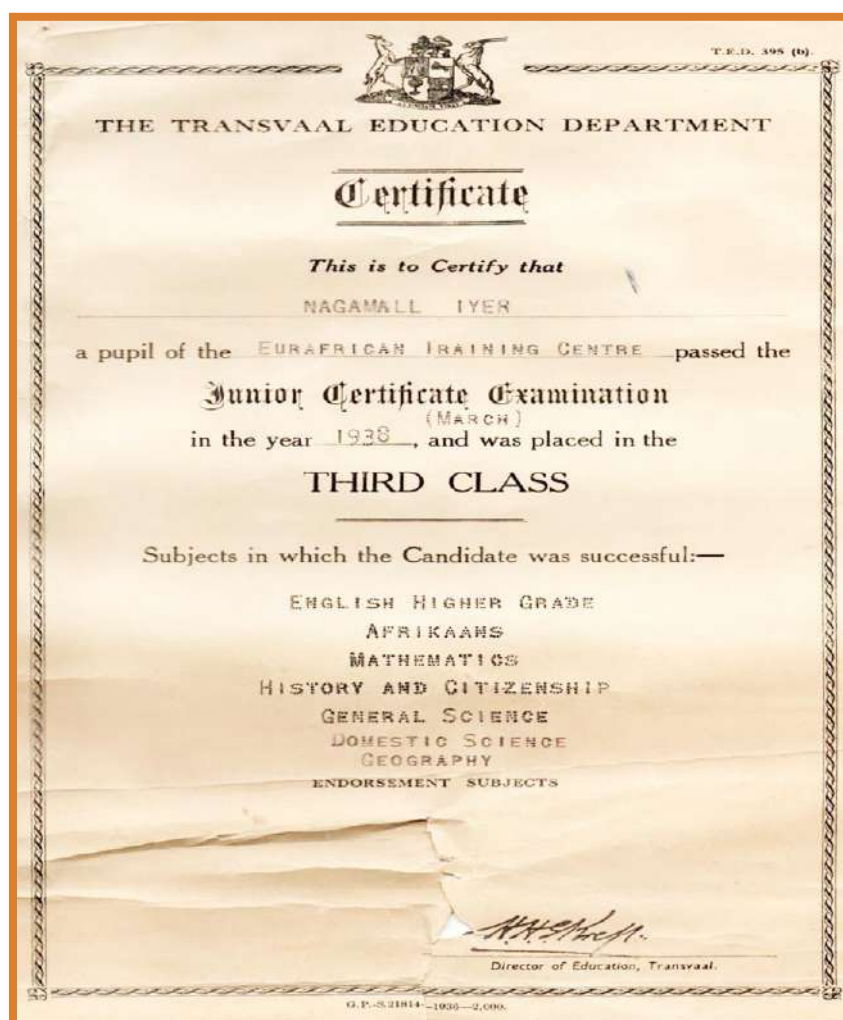
In the earlier years

and besides at this particular college there were 'Native' and Coloured men. My grandmother asked my mother in front of the women delegation - how she felt about continuing her studies. My mother said: "I love to study and my ambition is to become a teacher." My grandmother turned to the women and said: "You have now heard my daughter's decision and you should support her." The women were displeased and left hurriedly in a huff. My mother became one of the first Indian teachers in the Transvaal. Darley as she was known to her colleagues, qualified at the EuroAfrican Training College (ETC) in Vrededorp, Johannesburg in 1938.

The ETC was the only educational institution available to Africans, Coloureds and Indians for higher education and for a teacher's course in the Transvaal. Amongst her contemporaries were Peter Abrahams who later became a celebrated author and Dr Zainab Asvat, a well-known anti-racist activist who was imprisoned, banned and eventually left South Africa on an exile permit. The other woman teacher was Ms. Swami Moodley who qualified at the same time as my mother. My mother's first assignment was at the Bree Street Indian Primary School in Newtown at the salary of £ 8.00 per month. Among her teaching colleagues were Mervyn Thandray and PS Joshi, who wrote "The Tyranny of Colour", which is one of the first studies of Indian political developments in the Transvaal.

Amongst the hundreds of pupils who passed through her hands was one who eventually ended up in Robben Island for 25 years. He came from a little town in the western area to learn the 3 Rs but he added the fourth R- Revolution. His name was Ahmed "Kathy" Kathrada. Many of her students went on to become doctors, lawyers, accountants, teachers, clerks, writers, waiters, and nurses. In 1958 my mother had acquired further teaching qualifications and was tipped to be the most suitable for the head of the first Indian Girls High School in Vrededorp situated on the site of the old ETC. My mother was for a while involved in the Indian women's section of the Transvaal Indian Congress through the influence of Amina Cachalia, the sister of Zainab Asvat.

My mum's story is incomplete without mentioning my dad as he, Mr. Pakkiri Pakkiry Pillay (1904-1993) was a leader ahead of his time. He was the founder (1947) and chairman of internationally acclaimed Pakco, (Pty Ltd) which is a food canning plant in Verulam. His contribution to the regional economy is especially important because of the substantial employment created during the very depressed economy of those early years. He was involved in all areas of social life, serving on several committees and organisations and was a major donor of several religious, sporting and educational bodies over the years. Dad was a welfare worker par excellence and a champion of apartheid victims. After marriage, Mum became a director at Pakco.



My parents are best remembered for their generous contributions to the victims of the Jan Smuts Christian Trusteeship and later the apartheid regime. They were generous donors to the Natal Indian Congress, the weekly newspaper, the New Age, the African

National Congress and supported the accused in the infamous Treason Trial of 1956/60 in which 156 leaders and activists of the liberation movement were charged with plotting to overthrow of the state.



Both Chief Luthuli and Nelson Mandela were appreciative of my father's moral and financial support for the struggle. My parents became personal friends of Mandela. My mother was supportive of her brothers, Peter, Daso and Paul in their years of involvement in the liberation struggle. Due to the apartheid system the Indians living in Fordsburg, South Africa were evicted and had to be moved to Lenasia, South Africa. This brought much unrest in the schooling system. This greatly affected Letchmee my older cousin. She was the only daughter of my mum's eldest sister, Chella. My parents decided that they should help the situation. Hence, Letchmee came to live with us and attend school in Tongaat. She lived with us from 1962-1966. She then decided to follow a nursing career. She started nursing college in 1967. She excelled in her career and became a theatre sister, working *many* years in a hospital in London. She eventually accepted a wonderful job in Norway. She returned to South Africa in 1983 to look after her ailing mum. In fact she ended up looking after our grandmother and our auntie Violet.

Her contribution to the family is remarkable and will never be forgotten by all of us.

Dad was previously married for 25 years to Kaveri (known to me as Perima), who passed away from breast cancer on 30 April 1957 at age 45. Unfortunately, they could not have any children of their own. According to my elder cousins Maggie Achary, Selva Pillay and Logie Chetty, they adopted two children; Sardambal (Sarie) who was our Atha's (Dad's younger sister) daughter and then Numsoo who was Annapurini's (sister of my Perima) son. Sarie was married shortly before Perima passed away. Perima was allowed out of hospital for a few hours for the wedding and she went back to hospital thereafter. The "K" in the name Pakco had a sun emblem and it represented her initial and her hard work in building the original factory. Ugaraja and I are devastated that our brother Numsoo (Pakco Senior Production Manager), passed away on 27 February 2021. May Numsoo "Rest in Peace".

Dad decided that he needed the companionship of a wife after Perima passed away. He heard about a beautiful and learned lady in the Transvaal. He asked his friend, a jeweller in Verulam, Mr. Juta to accompany him on this mission. They eventually got to meet Mum, Dad was delighted and asked to marry her. Being a major financial contributor to her family, she immediately declined the offer. Dad, being a determined man never gave up on anything he wanted. He wooed her by sending gifts like gold watches to her brothers and paying for their trips to Durban. Eventually Mum agreed. When my parents married on 27 January 1958, Dad had one condition – she must give up teaching. She loved teaching and drove that energy into teaching us and taught us so well that teachers asked us to help the higher grade students. My parents were wonderful to both Ugaraja and me – we couldn't have wished

for any better. I was born when Dad was 55 and Mum was 40. When I was born in 1959 he said: "I was his God sent child". Ugaraja was born a year later and currently lives in Johannesburg, South Africa. He has two sons, Sanvir and Darshan. My daughter Rashika lives and works in Italy. I live in the United Kingdom.

Mum and dad travelled together and visited many countries. Dad was full of surprises. On Mum's 46th birthday – he said, "Let's go outside to the driveway". There was a brand new blue Mini standing there. "What's that doing there?" Mum asked. He replied, "Well, that's your birthday present. She couldn't drive so dad tried to teach her but gave up. He had to get a driving school to teach her. Mum learnt to drive when she was 46. My dad and mum were buried in the same grave at the West Street Cemetery.



Tongaat, South Africa. Ugaraja, Mum, Dad and I

My mother was well ahead of her time

Adelaide Joseph

I was born in Boksburg in the Transvaal in 1932. My father Manikum Ramiah Changel-ryan worked in the local goldmine which was unusual for Indians as almost all those who worked in the mines were Africans. The day my sister, Rose, was born in 1935, was the last day that my father was paid in gold sovereigns, after that they started paying him in regular currency, I don't know why it changed. Shortly thereafter, we moved to Barberton, the hometown of my mother, Salome Sebastian. While my family are of indentured ancestry on my father's side, my maternal great grandparents came independently in the late 19th century and had a farm in Barberton where my grandmother was born. Through mum's family we were related in some way to almost the entire Indian community in Barberton.

My family was Christian and we attended church every week. My father worked hard to support us, but we were fairly poor and my mother was always sickly with a rheumatic heart. She was well ahead of her time and read lots of books like *Oliver Twist* which she encouraged us to read. She also taught us that we should not be racist towards African people. I remember when an African priest visited our parish we were the only Indian family who invited him to stay.

My father was a great gardener. He grew lots of fruits and vegetables: greengages, avocados, peaches, mangoes and jackfruit which we had to protect from the local monkeys!

I went to a small Indian school. We played five stones and rounders and explored the local mountains. I spent much of my childhood helping to look after my mother and was only 15 when she died.

After school I applied to Barberton Hospital to become a nurse. It was here that I experienced the daily inequalities of Apartheid and my political consciousness developed. On one occasion, I encouraged all the African, Indian and Coloured nurses to take a stand in support of one of the African sisters who was given orders by a very rude white nurse who was junior to her. I got my colleagues to

sign a letter threatening resignation. Coincidentally it was April 1st and the hospital administration initially thought it was a joke.

We were all brought in to see the hospital manager who viewed me as the ringleader because I had drafted the letter. He asked me if I was a communist. I simply replied that I didn't know what a communist was. They realised we were serious about walking out if the white nurse wasn't dismissed so in the end she was sacked and we won.



1958. With Paul in Barberton, South Africa

After working in Barberton for several years, I moved to Johannesburg in 1957 and stayed with my aunt Dhano. I met Paul Joseph soon afterwards when I was asked by a friend to take a message to one of his sisters, Violet. I didn't know Violet so took a friend who did and we visited their home in Avenue Road, Fordsburg. Paul was there talking to a friend

but as we were leaving, he introduced himself to me and asked where I lived. A few weeks later, when I was shopping on Diagonal Street, I bumped into him. We chatted briefly and as I was about to leave, he asked me if I wanted to go to the Drill Hall the next day to hear the Treason Trial in which he was one of the 156 accused. I met him the next morning and as a result he arrived late for the proceedings and was almost charged with being in contempt of court – that was our first date!

I was not able to get a nursing job but, through a friend of Paul's I got work at a clothes factory. Paul was quite something and my life changed dramatically. My background was very religious and politically conservative.

Through Paul I started to meet comrades with lots of different views, including Bram

Fischer, Joel Joffe and Nelson Mandela. We were very close to Nelson and Winnie. Winnie and I became active in political work through the South African Women's Federation, encouraging and supporting women to get involved. Paul and I got married in the same year as Winnie and Nelson (1958). We had our first children at the same time. Their daughter Zenani was born just days before our twins, Zoya and Anand. The closeness remains between our two families.

After the birth of our twins, it was sometimes difficult for me to cope. Anand had been disabled at birth and needed constant care. Paul was often arrested, detained, imprisoned or working undercover for the liberation struggle. It got much worse following the Sharpeville Massacre and the establishment of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK). In fact, he was under house arrest when our third child, Tanya, was born in 1963.



Raised fist and sarie clad Adelaide Joseph (author of this article) is with (clockwise): Ramnie Dinat, Theresa Nannan (slightly obscured) and Tim Naidoo. Photograph provided by Adelaide Joseph – author of the article

We fought for a long time to have proper provision for disabled children. Eventually, a clinic was founded in Soweto but because of the absurd apartheid laws, our son was not permitted to attend because we were classified as Indian. Later, with support of our leaders and international comrades, it was decided I should take Anand to East Germany where they had secured a place for him in a specialist sanatorium.

I left South Africa with him in early 1965 with no idea that I was not to return for almost 30 years. This is because soon after my departure Paul was arrested and I was told by our leaders that I should not return home. Our daughters, Zoya and Tanya were smuggled out of the country to join me in London where I was then based. At this stage, I was not sure we would be reunited with Paul.

For a time, he disappeared, I was hoping that he was attempting to flee South Africa to avoid further imprisonment.

Finally, I received a telegram on 26 July which simply read: "Congratulations on our wedding anniversary". At first, I didn't understand where this

came from but then my friend noticed that it stated Lobatsi and exclaimed "It's from Paul, he is safe in Botswana". He arrived in London in late 1965 after we had gained political asylum thanks to the help of people like Dick Taverne, the Liberal MP and Amnesty International. Nadia our fourth child was born the following year. We settled into life in London, becoming active in local and international campaigns. Of course, we also continued our work as ANC exiles and within the Anti-Apartheid Movement.

Through my political work I was fortunate enough to travel extensively and meet lots of interesting people like Louis Armstrong and Russian cosmonauts Yuri Gagarin and Valentina Tereshkova, the first woman in space. Paul and I also made friends with so many wonderful people in London. For the most part we were happy despite missing home terribly but we suffered the most painful personal loss when Anand died a few years later.



2017. In Gauteng, South Africa, with Winnie Madikizela - Mandela

The struggle to win freedom from apartheid in South Africa took a long time but we finally won. One of my happiest memories in London was that day in April 1994 when Paul, our three daughters and I finally got to vote in a free South African election at South Africa House in Trafalgar Square. We had spent so much time demonstrating outside the building, it was a joy to celebrate our freedom inside it.



December 2018, London, United Kingdom, with Paul.

Devotion and service to family, community and the freedom struggle

Sally Ceathema Iyer (née Pillay)

Both my parents were born in Heidelberg South Africa. There are no records of it, but my grandparents were born in India and may have been brought to South Africa as indentured labourers. My mother, Parvathi, and father, Gangaya, had an arranged marriage around 1925. He was one of three brothers who married three sisters and I was born on 25th July 1935 in Springs, Johannesburg. I had 12 siblings. We were 7 sisters: Jagadee, Laila, (me), Baby, Kanama, Bommie, Devana and Indrani; and 5 brothers: Naran, Gopal, Haroo, Marie and Vijen. We were extremely poor and my father's mining wage was barely enough to live by. In 1948, aged 13, I left school ending my formal education. My elder sister Laila decided we should find jobs to help reduce

our collective hardship. We ran away to Johannesburg, finding work in a garment factory in Doornfontein.

In the summer of 1950, I was visiting my aunt Amardo and cousin Marie who lived in an old building known as the 'Cabin in the Sky' in Bree Street, Fordsburg. There I met Daso Iyer. He asked which way I was walking home and whether he could join me. The rest, as they say, is history. We married in 1958. Thereafter, my life changed radically. The economic grind was compounded by a new struggle – politics. Daso's activism meant absences engaged in political activities or selling the 'New Age' newspaper to residents of Vrededorp.



1959. L-R: Philipa Levy, Francis Baard, Mamma Naidoo, Sally Iyer – Author of this article in her sari, Lilian Ngoyi, Amina Cachalia, Violet Weinberg, Ruth Mompati – London ANC rep, Esme Goldberg – Denis Goldberg's wife. Port Elizabeth

In the late 1950s, I was asked by Amina Cachalia to attend the Federation of South African Women's (FEDSAW) Conference in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. The aim was to establish a branch of the FEDSAW there. Port Elizabeth had strong grassroots support and ANC links; for instance Govan Mbeki came from there.

I took care of our children, Vanitha and Vijan. Our home was the entrance to the defunct Avalon Cinema in Ferreirstown, shared with Mohammad Ebrahim, Amoy Ellery and her mother.

On entering there was a pokey kitchen; the booking office was our bedroom. At nights this area buzzed with down and outs and drunks frequenting the shebeens. We never opened the door, but Daso and Ebrahim would climb a ladder to view the drama and fights. Some were extremely violent, involving knives and iron bars. Very rarely did the police appear. I was particularly afraid when alone with the children.

My political consciousness was sparked by the Indian Youth Congress. I attended public meetings and social events to raise funds. Here, I discovered a love for dancing, which has never left me. The Congress drew large crowds at the Gandhi Hall in Fox Street. These were happy periods but there was purpose; community action was as palpable as the swirling saris and sharp suits. Our next home was a garage and back room in Hubert Street. Our landlord was Moosa Mayet. Our friendships extended to Comrades Ahmed Kathrada, Amina Cachalia, Walter Sisulu, Philippa Levy, Violet Weinberg, Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph and Ruth Mompati. Our home was not widely known, so was chosen for the very last African National Congress (ANC) Executive meeting in 1960. Comrades from Port Elizabeth, Natal and the Free State attended. Chaired by Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu, decisions were made regarding uMkhonto. I remember Moosa Mayet looking perplexed seeing a '3-piece suit gentleman' leave my bedroom! Our home was to become a safe house for many activists; Comrade

Mac Maharaj became a frequent visitor. On asking 'Mama', who took care of Vanitha and Vijan while we worked, what she had cooked, she would say, "Sissy, the comrades came, finished all".

The brutality of the apartheid regime was literally brought home in 1964 with the arrest, detention and torture of my brother-in-law Paul Joseph. We had already lost our dear comrade Babla Saloojee thrown out of the 7th floor of the Greys Building in Johannesburg. Sergeant Swanepoel, the head of Special Branch, claimed Babla had committed suicide. Thanks to the mass arrests and detentions allowed by the 90 days regulations, our life took a dramatic turn. Daso received a smuggled note from Paul, saying he could no longer hold-out during torture. The situation was urgent: Daso should leave immediately. He left in July 1964, travelling by train via Salisbury, Rhodesia to Lusaka, Zambia. He flew from there to London, United Kingdom arriving on August 9th, 1964.

I continued to work and live as normally as I could, but was being pressurised to follow Daso by Izzy Dinat and other comrades. We did not know how much the South African Special Branch had pieced together. Did they know that Daso and Paul were brothers? Did they know that our house had been used by the ANC Executive? Did they know that Daso had fled and why? Even if they did not know these things, what if they found out that Mac



Vanitha, Daso, Vijan and Me. Vanitha began school in January 1965 and I was at home taking care of Vijan

was running the movement's underground printing press, as well as preparing explosives from a rented room close to our house and in my name! I could hardly deny knowledge of ANC members using 'my room' when I was paying the rent on it. Should the SAP raid, it would not take them long to find me. These were particularly dangerous times; I wanted to be with Daso, so I agreed to leave. As a precaution, I applied for a new passport in my maiden name with the children included.

With help from the International Defence and Aid Fund (IDAF), headed in the UK by Canon Collins, I arrived in London in December 1964 with Vanitha aged 4 and Vijan aged 2. It was bitterly cold. The children did not have warm clothing and you could hear their teeth chattering! We lived in Clapham in a house we shared with three other families. We had one bedroom and an open plan lounge/dining room/ kitchen, on the first floor.

I bought a Singer sewing machine on hire purchase and advertised my dressmaking skills in a sweetshop window. The money I made went towards food and living expenses. After 56 years, I still use the same sewing machine to sew for family indeed, it is in view as I write this article.

Our house became a hub for political discussion and activity, reminiscent of my mother-in-law, Annamal Iyer's home in Fordsburg. Our doorbell and stove were well used. Dishing out plates of curry and rice to old and new friends became routine. We were now part of another community – that of the political refugee. Being absent from South Africa did not mean a lessening of our struggle, rather our struggle became more acute.

Finding work was complicated by racial prejudice and my lack of education. I did work as a punch tape operator in Stockwell, an accountant in Mile End and eventually in the Midland Bank in Battersea; quite an achievement for someone with no formal qualifications. However, the shadow of prejudice was never far it seemed. White bank colleagues became unhelpful, often shunning me. Their unhappiness stemmed from my promotion to First Cashier; I was earning more than them.

By 1969, and Nelson's seventh year of imprisonment, Daso was combining work as a teacher with commitment to the South London branch of the ANC. Fundraising was a constant occupation. I devoted many hours to making and frying samosas and bhajias, cooking curries and knitting ANC jumpers and scarves. In 1981, I replaced Rica Hodgson as Head of Welfare within IDAF. I was happy and proud to be working for an organisation supporting our struggle by assisting families where either parent was on trial or imprisoned. IDAF carried out remarkable work, channelling millions of pounds into South Africa. Five years later I started a refuge for Asian women and their children suffering domestic abuse. It was a home, with charitable status and one of the first in South London. From this I went on to become a Social Worker – my life's ambition!

I do feel fulfilled. Streatham, London seems a million miles from Ferreirstown. My children and grandchildren are wonderful examples of what we all fought so hard for: they are respectful, multicultural and inclusive, thriving in a world which – despite continuing prejudice – offers them the kind of opportunities we always hoped and fought for.



2021. The Singer sewing machine that has stood the test of time. United Kingdom.

Pundit Prabhawathi Nanackchand – political activist and scriptural guru Ami Nanackchand

In 1996 South Africa cleared the first hurdle in the path of a Constitution towards gender equality.

It was, as South Africans rightly boasted, a profoundly 'revolutionary' measure that, if it managed to negotiate the remaining hurdles, would allow democratic South Africa to look some African countries in the eye and cock a snook at the patriarchal Anglo and Francophone sphere.

What is more, as joyous gender activists had pointed out, the constitutional and justiciable Bill of Rights was adopted after much 'debate' — a curious term for the grand proclamations that party leaders recorded for the history books. It was more a choppy passage to the making of a new constitution that hitherto personified apartheid South Africa's cavalier approach to women's rights. As someone whose political attitudes originated, not at Kempton Park where the Constitution for a democratic South Africa was forged, but over 600 kilometres further east in Durban, KwaZulu Natal, Pundit

(Priest) Prabhawathi Nanackchand mirrored this new image of the new Republic decades before the ink dried on the Constitution. Pundit Nanackchand, of Indian heritage, was born in Tongaat north of Durban when it was a little village with all the trappings of the last outpost of the British Empire. The Cape-Dutch architecture of the sugar plantation workers' cottages and sugar company buildings still stand as a monument of a past legacy.

Unlike the shameful colonial and apartheid past which defied a coherent definition of women's rights, Pundit Nanackchand reflected this new enlightenment. Between 1930 and 1936 she walked to school in Fairbreeze and back from her home in Gandhi's Hill – a distance of some four or five kilometres. After that she would attend her vernacular classes under the tutelage of the late Professor S.N.C Vardacharyalu, a scholar from India, and at the same time attend to the needs of siblings – four brothers and four sisters.



Pundit Nanackchand's five children are Ami, Sudha, Arthi, Ishara and Vedant. Her children's most enduring memory of their mother is "be that person who translated ideas into action" – a doer steadfast in her purpose. In short, an unstoppable person. In her experiences with hardship under a repressive government; her close encounters with human misery and later in life during her own declining health she demonstrated to us never to accept defeat. She just got on with her job of serving her family and the poorest of the poor.

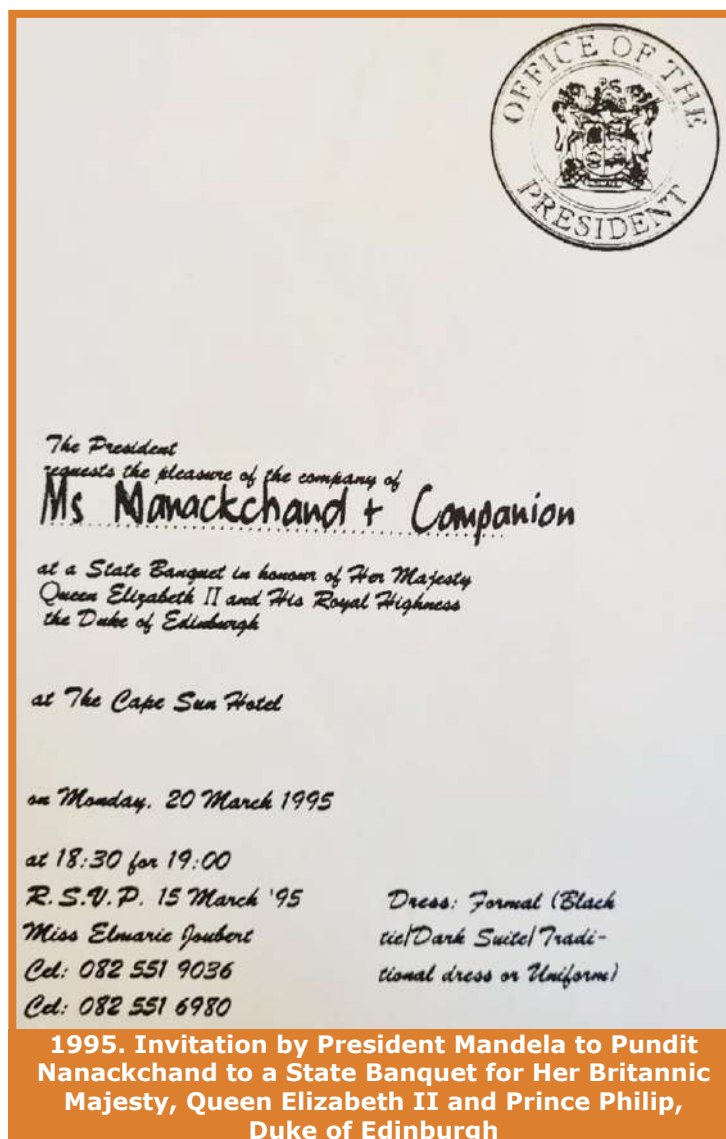
Deeply rooted in Hinduism and politics Pundit Nanackchand largely influenced by her husband, Nanackchand and her mother's brother, Gopalall Hurbans (one of the 156 members of the anti-apartheid Congress movement charged with Treason) chose the route of the Paadariyon (clergy) to advance her convictions about social reform and to involve women in public life. It was an interesting formulation and perhaps something that even former President of the African National Congress and Africa's first Nobel Peace Laureate,

Chief Albert Luthuli - with his own rural background - and his utopian notions of self-sufficient village communities would have tacitly approved.

In the year 1975 she was ordained the first women priest of any faith in South Africa. Reformers like Pundit Nanackchand were modernists who had imbibed the intellectual currents of the East and West.

The point to note is that for the Hindu stalwarts of more than 160 years in South Africa, there was a clear understanding that the women of Indian origin, both as individuals and as a collective, weren't the epitome of ideal of gender emancipation.

In a spontaneous expression of her outrage and opposition to the injustices meted out to the oppressed masses she led street protests and participated in public rallies and marches. The government was bewildered by these protests and rallies involving large



numbers of leaderless women whose husbands, sons and friends were silenced by repressive laws.

And in the context of the euphoria over the release of political prisoners, the return of exiles in 1990 and amid the new wave of freedom sweeping the country the issue she faced was, what can be done to change the mindset of this ethnic group?

She was invited to join South African clerics of all faiths to meet with the ANC in exile in Lusaka, Zambia. Much against her fierce desire not to balk at such an invitation but to pack her bags and go she couldn't because like her husband she was denied a travel passport.

In 1996 Pundit Nanackchand was elected the first woman Vice President of the Arya Samaj of South Africa.

This social and gender transformation persuaded her to realise her long-held dream of a home for single, divorced, widowed, socially ostracised and women marginalised through oppression, exploitation and abuse. In 1990, from the ashes of a disused school in Sea Cow Lake, Durban, she founded the Narain Jeawon built from the ashes of the Narain Jeawon State-Aided Primary School - Vedic Centre an institution for women.

Narain Jeawon was the grantee of the school why was it named after the late Narain Jeawon. His son Rabi donated the school plant to Pundit Nanackchand to realise her dream of establishing a home for single women.

How can a spirited young woman brought up to repudiate patriarchy and the 'commodification' of women, believe in feminism, women's empowerment and so on to know that when the high priest of power makes a crude remark about her, the answer has to be "no".

As women struggle to establish their identity, today the Centre is a citadel of empowerment for women of all races, diverse faiths and cultures where women learnt to sew, knit, cook and develop their skills and talents according to their predilections.

Sadly, she passed away in 2006.

Professor Fatima Meer's tribute was a statement of her relationship established with her friend and comrade over the years. She said the story of Pundit Nanackchand was of selfless dedication to serving people and to the political freedom struggle of this country. Meer made particular mention of the "bond of brotherhood Pundit Nanackchand forged with South Africa's first President of a democratic South Africa, Nelson Mandela; former Defence Minister Mosioua Lekota, former External Affairs minister, the late Alfred Nzo, SA Communist Party Secretary, Joe Slovo" - and Fatima's husband Ismail Meer. Pundit Nanackchand would tie a "rakhi" (thus cementing her sisterly bond with her "brothers") for them every year.



August 1990. Pandit Nanackchand with Nelson Mandela and Ismail Meer on the occasion of tying of the Rakhi

This meeting was with Mandela at the late Ismail and Fatima Meer's home in Burnwood Road, Clare Estate, Durban on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan - Five months after Nelson Mandela was released from 27 years of incarceration on Robben Island and in prisons in Cape Town and Paarl.

And when Mandela sought a Hindu priest for his inter-faith marriage nuptials to Graca Marcel, Meer suggested he needn't look beyond his sister, Pundit Nanackchand. She was one of the four priests at their multi-faith wedding.

In his tribute, former Principal Surgeon of the RK Khan Hospital and founder of the Chatsworth Hospice, Mr C.N. Pillay, said, "Pundit Nanackchand rendered yeomen service to the needy with compassion, love and humility".

"It seemed she had conceptualized early in her childhood certain basic credos for a meaningful life that encompassed political

activism, traditional values, scriptural intellect and love of humanity," he said.

That Pundit Nanackchand was a dynamic functionary and leader, adept at networking and steadfastness was never in doubt.

As we approach our 27th anniversary of democracy we cannot but remember our indomitable women stalwarts, like Pundit Nanackchand, drawn from all parts of this country; characterised by a unique diversity, who underwent superhuman sacrifices and shed their blood so that we, belonging to a different generation live a better life unfettered by the ignominy of colonial and apartheid domination and exploitation.

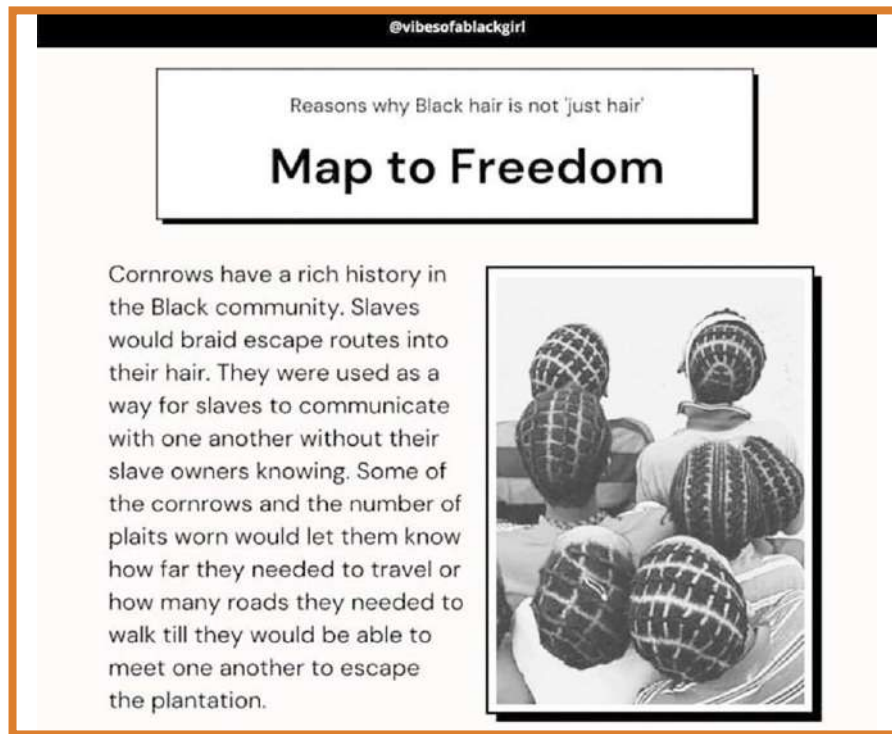


1998. Hindu priest Nanackchand for the inter-faith marriage nuptials of President Nelson Mandela to Graca Marcel



Ami Nanackchand is a South African, whose career in journalism of over 50 years on newspapers, radio and television has brought a detachment to hundreds of reports from the country's and world news spots. In a fierce battle for readership, listenership and viewership audiences, this pitted him against well-established rivals. His breakthrough came through his deployment as political reporter for POST, the Daily News and the South African Broadcasting Corporation's Parliamentary Bureau. He retired as Assignment Editor for SABC Television News. He is currently, a columnist for various publications.

Women giving Direction...



Culture and spirituality Prof Malcolm Wallis

Two of our stories, by Biyela and Govender, have a strong religious dimension. References to Christianity, Hinduism and Islam abound. Both Premie Krom-Govender and Phumzile Biyela started life in KwaZulu Natal. Both deal with wider family matters, not just the relationships between mothers and daughters. Biyela sees three themes in her piece about her grandmother: sadness, love and the hardships wrought by poverty. Govender's story also has these three elements.

Both authors, without preaching to the reader, tell of a spiritual journey involving loss of family members, separation and poverty. In addition, Krom-Govender gives an account of moving to the Netherlands when she was still a teenager and getting married there. Both authors experienced *apartheid* albeit in different ways. Krom-Govender writes about her early discovery of whites only toilets when shopping with her mother in the city of Durban, a few kilometres from the Merebank area where she lived as a child.

Biyela's story of her grandfather is very touching and a spur to anger. He died in an accident in the province of Gauteng, where he was working, but the family never found out more about what happened than that. This kind of tragedy, arising from a grotesque failure to treat people as human, was common in *apartheid* days. Biyela's story brings to one's mind the thought that the post 1994 South Africa is far from immune from that kind of family experience.

There are other highlights for me. One is child labour as illustrated by Biyela's story. There was, she informed us, no alternative. Krom-Govender's story reminds us that children who strive to improve their lives through education may be discouraged by their parents. In her case she was told not to read so much. This is an important issue now: the need for families not just to send children to school but to affirm their interest in the acquisition of knowledge. Biyela's story also highlights the continuing importance for Zulu people of marriage customs. She discusses the custom of *unkongena* which requires a bereaved wife to marry one of her late husband's siblings if there is one available.

A Hard Nut to Crack! Phumzile Joyce Biyela

Her name is Zinukile Ntuli. She is my grandmother. She had four siblings: Nozinyamazane (a girl), Thathokwakhe (a boy), Mthembeni (also a boy) and Alphina (also a girl). Zinukile was the second born and she came after Nozinyamazane. Her mother's

name was MaNxumalo and her father was Momoyi Ntuli. To me they are great-grandparents. They lived in a village called Kweyezulu, a few kilometres away from Melmoth which is now known as Mthonjaneni.

Life there was not easy. They had to plough the fields to put bread on the table. They also had cows, goats and chickens. Back then, formal education was not regarded as important. Zinukile was becoming a teenager when she lost her mother MaNxumalo and her two brothers, Thathokwakhe and Mthembeni. There was a thunderstorm on that night and they were struck by lightning and were burnt to death. She was left with her father Momoyi, and two sisters Nozinyamazane and Alphina. My great-grandfather was not at home on that day and that is why he was saved. When he came back he found his home in ashes and was told that his wife and two sons had died. A very traumatic experience for everyone, including the neighbours and the community at large.

My great-grandmother was good at ploughing the fields, so in her absence things got tough as there was no food to eat. My grandmother and her sister Nozinyamazane had no option but to go and search for work on the farms. They worked at Lemgo. Life was not easy there. They had to wake up in the early hours of

the morning and go to work. Although it was difficult, it made a difference in putting bread on the table. They left their father with Alphina who did all the household chores, but she was too young to manage everything.

My great-grandfather was not employed, he was just a king's servant. The king who was reigning then was Isilo uDinuzulu kaCetshwayo who was known as uMamonga



My paternal grandmother,
Zinukile Ntuli

woSuthu, uKhozi olugadle luphindelela kuMandlakazi who is the biological great grandfather of the king Goodwill Zwelithini Zulu. He was born on the 20th of May 1868 in a village known as Babanango and passed away on the 18th of October 1913. My great grandfather was not getting much of an income. Income never counted at that time, only loyalty to the king.

In the Zulu nation, there is a custom whereby if a woman loses a husband at an early age she remarries another man within the husband's family or goes back home because there is no one to take care of her anymore. It is called '*ukungena*'. It is a common cultural practice. A man remarries the woman to "take" care of her. The family ended up suggesting that my great-grandfather takes a second wife because Alphina was still too young to take care of all the household chores. Also trauma was taking its toll on her owing to what they had just experienced. She was too young to cope. The entire family agreed with the suggestion and he remarried soon. It was not a difficult process because it was a common practice for a man to remarry if he loses a wife as compared to a woman. It did not matter if the period of mourning was still on. My great-grandfather's cousin had just passed on

leaving his wife uncared for, which made it proper for him to just marry her. Life went on and Momoyi married his cousin's wife known as okaPhela. They soon had their own children together and the family grew.

Life changed for the better because this woman had come with the good intention of building the family. A few years later, Zinukile found someone who wanted her hand in marriage. His name was Mdati Sibiya from a village called Babanango near Melmoth. She brought him to the family for lobola negotiations. All went well. They got married and had a son, Eric. Mdati was working in the "Transvaal" now known as Gauteng and he rarely came home because of the long travelling distance.

Their son Eric grew up and also found a job there. One day my grandfather was involved in an accident at work and he died. No one knew what had happened to him. At work they had no means of contacting the family even if they wished to. So the family never knew what had happened to him.

Zinukile kept on writing letters to him. No response. Fortunately, a colleague contacted them to say he was no more. A second traumatic experience for Zinukile. Things were tough but life had to go on anyway. My grandmother was supposed to go back to her own family because she had no one to take care of her. Mdati had an older brother who was also married. His name was Nkomeni

and his wife was Mariana Buthelezi. They already had two kids when Mdati died. This woman and my grandmother were friends from youth who happened to marry brothers. She asked her husband to take Zinukile as his second wife. There comes 'ukungena' custom again, this time in my grandmother's marital life now. She had experienced it in her family and because it was a common practice in those times it was easy to engage in. They got married. Zinukile had five more kids with her new husband, two boys, Richard and Hamilton and three girls, Velemina, Flora and Grace. Hamilton is my father. The son who was fathered by Mdati also died. A few years later money was sent from work to the family and they benefitted much from it. Zinukile was able to send the children to school and to take care of all the household needs.

When we grew up we were shown pictures of both our grandfathers, our biological one Nkomeni and our grandmother's first husband Mdati. Zinukile slaughtered two cows to pay tribute to both her second husband and his first wife Mariana for saving her marriage and giving her a chance to have a family. It was a great ceremony of thanksgiving. The entire family appreciated the first wife for giving us a chance to be born in the family. My grandmother really was a hard nut to crack considering the problems she encountered in both her family and marital life.



At the home of the Rev. Hamilton Sibiya. Grandchildren and great grandchildren of Zinukile Ntuli KwaMashu, South Africa

This is a true story of what happened to the family. The theme of the story is based on sadness, love, and hardship encountered by my grandmother in both her youth, adult and marital life. Sadness and hardship are the order of the day in this story but love also comes from friends which makes it easier to carry on with life. Women have done great things without recognition and applause. I have felt that these two women should be remembered and recognised for the role they played in the family. They no longer live but their legacy still lives on.



2020; My father Hamilton Sibiya

My parents were both reverends. My father is the son of Zinukile and the family heard her story from him. My father was born in 1932 and is the last born. His siblings were Velemina, Flora, Grace and Richard. My father passed away in June 2020 at the age of 88 and my mother passed away in 2015.



My mother Gladys Bhengu Sibiya



2021; Mrs Phumzile Biyela

I began teaching in January 1987 and retired in March 2016. My hobbies include gardening, cooking, breeding poultry and writing. I also help out with my local church and do charity work with the disadvantaged in my community. I have four children and one grandchild.

As a child I did not have a voice... Lutchmee Premie Krom-Govender

Thinking of the perfect story to write, while so many memories flits through my mind, each a story on their own. Should I talk about the time that I needed to go to the toilet when in the city with Mum but we were not allowed to go into the "White toilet" or what about the time that I wanted to sit in the front seat of the bus but it wasn't allowed for "Blacks". Or about the weekly trips to the city for vegetable shopping and mum panicking whether she remembered to bring her I.D. document. Or the way that neighbours and family disrespected my Mum because Dad couldn't work after the car accident. Why did my aunty and her children hit my brothers and sisters even though we were not naughty, especially when Mum was not around to protect us. I was too little to understand the enormity of the situation. I was under 5 years of age and asked too many questions. I knew that something was not right but couldn't understand the situation in my child's mind. Even though we were very poor we were brought up very rich spiritually. Prayer was significant. Treating others with respect be they rich or poor was also a very important life lesson.

The youngest in a family of 11, now 44 and living in The Netherlands, Holland, I grew up in Merebank, Durban. We lived in the corner house and were well known in the community because there were so many of us and we were always getting up to mischief which I enjoyed most. We climbed trees and I enjoyed stealing fruit from the neighbours' trees. Despite our lack of food and clothing, time and money was allocated for spiritual events, Tamil classes and Indian dance which I particularly enjoyed. I was always the tag along, seen but not heard.

As a child I did not have a voice and nobody listened to me so I turned to God. I remember having really intense conversations with Him between ages 5 to 10 regarding food, clothing and life in general. I performed all the prayer rituals that Mum implemented. I was her little helper during those preparations for the prayer, most of the time getting in the way but she never complained. With a smile on the face, she would continue to explain the meaning of the prayer and the significance of each God.



2019. Premie Govender, Pushpa Govender, Swami Sagaren Govender, His Holiness 1008 Shri Shri Soham Babajee (from Calcutta, India) Aardhiya Ma and Teresa Singh

My eldest sister Margaret was living in the Hare Krishna Temple in Chatsworth during the 1980's so I naturally spent as much time as I could at the temple with her during my holidays. I fasted with all the other devotees, I attended their preaching sessions, I was allowed to visit the entire temple and I loved it. I remember in primary school asking the really difficult questions regarding God, spirituality and being poor. Most people ignored me or told me to stop asking such questions but a teacher at school told me that if I needed answers I should read the Holy books. So I started by reading the "Mahabharata" because sister Margaret had access to this book, in fact I read any spiritual book she gave me. I boasted to anyone who would listen. *"I'm going to be a devotee at the Hare Krishna Temple"*. Mum caught me by the ear and said *"One daughter lost to the Hare Krishna temple is enough"* referring to my sister Margaret. I did not understand what she meant so I just continued with my research forgetting about the Temple. It was really difficult to stay away from mum's lovely meat dishes anyway.

When I started my first year in high school, I was curious about other religions and their Gods, so I started visiting church with Vasanthi. I began reading the "Holy Bible". I made friends with a few Muslims at school to try to get a copy of the "Quran" but I didn't understand the text. However, I asked 1000s of questions driving them to distraction. Consequently, I had to upgrade my plans for the future. I had to step up my game. I still did not know what kind of powers I had. And no one to enlighten me so onward I went with my research.

My next stop was the local public library at the shopping centre which meant that I had to travel by bus. Simultaneously, I made up a story about not wanting to be in the same school as my siblings as I wanted to go to a school at the Ridge (situated at the other end of the area to where I lived) which meant travelling by bus each day, which also meant that I passed the library everyday!

Later I learnt that my family was worried about me because I was reading too much. A teenager should be interested in boys right? What was wrong with Premie? All I knew was that I had conscious recollection of my visions from the age of 5. I saw the heart-ache that my parents experienced to feed and cloth us all. I saw their determination to educate us. I witnessed family and friends speaking ill with disregard and disrespect to my mother because my father was unemployed. Nobody really saw me but I heard everything and to see mum's expression time and again was heartbreaking.

By age 10 I knew that whatever premonitions and visions I was having was not known in our religious groups. Seeing faces of Gods in my sleep was not normal, seeing beautiful shiny people with wings was not normal, foretelling about events that were going to happen was not normal. One had to go to a special spiritual person who had lots of years of experience to see all these things, a child was not supposed to just know these things, Impossible they said. I was basically named a tattletail. I did not even know what a tattletail was. So I took matters into my own hand, researched and educated myself so that I could use this gift to make our lives better. Mum should not have to ask anyone for money again. Things did not work out the way I had envisioned as a teenager. My visions were getting stronger, I couldn't



1998, Amsterdam, Holland. With the children that I au paired for

speak to anyone about it so I continued reading more books.

After high school I worked and studied and saved enough money to leave South Africa. At 19 years of age I decided to venture overseas to work in the Netherlands. The family was against my leaving. Lots of reasons were provided for me not to go and scare tactics were used. No one was helping me to save the money for my airfare, hoping that would put a stop to my outrageous idea. But I was determined that my answers were overseas. When I read an advert for an *au pair* (international babysitter) I responded.

I would go for one year to the Netherlands and while working there I would find out if there were other people with my abilities. Margaret understood and supported me while the rest of the family were not happy but eventually they understood that I was determined to leave.

The Netherlands was a total cultural shock to me. I was not judged on my skin colour. I was allowed to walk wherever I pleased. Everybody was eating, socialising, praying and freely talking to each other without prejudice. Amsterdam was just a "*mengelmoes*" of all colours, countries, people trying to soak up information about everything. The options were endless. I enrolled for a few free seminars to find out what was out there in the Spiritual World and Yes! Jackpot!, There were others out there like me and there was a name for people like us "Medium, Parognost, Spiritual Healer".

I learnt as much as I could in that year. An exciting time for me but then 3 months before I could go home I met my future husband Marco Wilhelmus Nicolaas Krom. We fell in love which was just not in the plan. He followed me to South Africa, met my family, asked for permission to marry me according to Indian custom and I've been living in the Netherlands ever since.

We have 2 beautiful teenage daughters, Anisha (14) and Sana (12) but unfortunately due to many cultural, spiritual and characteristic differences we are no longer married. I enrolled for courses, workshops and seminars for the following 30 years of my life, just soaking up all the different aspects to spirituality and how to use it to help others as well as myself. Without an

ounce of arrogance but tons of pride, humility and thankfulness to my parents, I can

proudly say that I am the " first Medium or Parognost" in the Govender Family, with the ability to do cross overs, communicate with Angels, every God from all religions, spirits or ancestors that have passed over. I communicate with beings that are 7/8 dimensional - Yes Aliens. I can see and vanquish demons or restless spirits but I don't like to do this because my speciality is dealing with the higher realms which is closer to Godliness. In 2003, I brought Mum and Dad to the Netherlands on their first international holiday as well as to attend my wedding. I had a golden opportunity to show them who Premie is and how my mind works. Over the years my parents have had opportunities to bond with my children. Better still, I showed them how I use their morals and ethics everyday in my spiritual journey in helping others. I married, had 2 children, divorced and live in a foreign country with no family except for my children. I am living my life to the fullest in spite of the daily challenges life throws my way.

I knew through a vision that I had at the age of 14 that I would leave South Africa never to return because in order to help and heal



2020. With Anisha and Sana, Netherlands

my family I had to help them from afar. A very painful vision to have at 14 years of age... I still have tears when I think of that vision and even though I have tried on numerous occasions to move back to South Africa, my Gift diminishes so I am still in the Netherlands but my heart is with my siblings in the land of my birth. My life's mission now is to heal the pain inflicted on Margret, Julie, Kasturie, Vasanthie, Teresa, Pam, Anand, Sagaren and Premie who were caught up in an apartheid political warfare not knowing how to reach out for help or whom to talk to.

I believe in Karma. I now try to help encourage, uplift and enlighten my family towards their own healing. I have a voice now and I plan on using it to heal and free those voices out there that felt that they were not heard or seen. It's our time to heal, to rise, to shine and help as many as we can. If you want to follow me, please search for me on YouTube. I am very humbled to have this opportunity to finally speak my truth on this platform and I greatly wish that my story is an inspiration for others to rise up and be free.



Charlotte Maxeke laid the foundation for later generation success stories Maite Manganye

In 2021, as we celebrate the life and contributions of Mme Charlotte Maxeke in the liberation struggle, whose intellectual legacy advanced the argument for gender equality. Charlotte Maxeke who came to be known as the "Mother of Black Freedom in South Africa," was an unconventional woman who contributed at a time when it was exceptionally hard for women to rise to the fore in liberation politics, yet she managed to break through these barriers and was known for her moral consistency, independence of judgement and the courage to express this. At a time when the leading African intellectuals focused on the pastoral relations that emerged as a direct consequences of the Native Land Act Of 1913, Charlotte Maxeke emerged as a dynamic thinker who could articulate the collusion of customary practices and the state in determining the material conditions of inequality and the urban/rural divide, her foresight about the crippling effects of the levels of inequality between African men and women challenges.

Evoking the various forms of inequality embedded in gendered spheres of Native life such as education, womanhood, progress and modernity, Maxeke performed a double-edged theorization as she highlighted gender ideologies that resulted in social stratification of women as an oppressed social group. She then injected gender equality, an aspect which had been missing in the intellectual traditions of early twentieth century. Maxeke's transition from native womanhood paved the way for inclusion of women and children as marginal categories in the debate about the native Question. Her conception of native womanhood not only challenged the domestication of women but also their subjection to administrative power.

Maxeke was a woman of great ability, vision and broad mindedness which was unique in the history of African womanhood (April 2012). She fought fearlessly and indefectibly in the interest of the people. Her critical stance on gender and inequality shaped a discourse about gender equality in the formative years of the struggle for liberation in South Africa, her interventions created a shadow archive of the struggle for liberation.

As we continue to commemorate her legacy, may we never forget that it remains our collective responsibility to ensure female emancipation and the recognition of women's rights as a fundamental human right that is unnegotiable. It will not happen overnight, yet it remains practical and worth fighting for. *"Revolution cannot triumph without the emancipation of women – Thomas Sankara"*



My mother was born into a Lebanese family in South Africa

Susan Parker

My maternal grandparents are of Lebanese heritage. After their eldest daughter, Genevieve, died in Lebanon, they embarked on a ship to South Africa. Jane Lewis, my mum, was born in 1921 and was one of eleven children. The other children are Anthony, John, Peter, Paul, David, Mary, Victoria, James and Rose. From the mid-1920s to the end of the 1930s, they lived in a place called Robinson Cottages which is a strong Lebanese community. Robinson Cottages was situated on the east side of Johannesburg near Wolhuter Mines and George Goch station. Everyone was poor. Families had just come out of the Great Depression. Food, luckily, was relatively cheap and abundant. The mothers of each family took turns to cook large pots of delicious food for the entire street whilst the men went out to work. My maternal grandfather had a general dealer store in Hanau Street in Jeppestown which was their livelihood. Living through World War II, my mother knew all about rations and what it meant to save every drop and every crumb. Having faith in God was essential, otherwise life with all its hardships felt meaningless. My mother was the only child that refused to go to school without shoes. My aunt, Mary, told me when I was young, that somehow my grandparents, Anthony and Susan Lewis always found a pair for Jane to wear. When my mum completed Standard Six (current Grade 8) at Mayfair High School, she took a shorthand and typing course so that she could find a job. In 1939 her parents bought a house in Doris Street in Kensington and Jane caught a tram to and from work every day. The economy improved slowly after the end of the Second World War and she landed a job in a law firm Aleck Goldberg Attorneys, as a legal secretary in the centre of Johannesburg.

At the age of 27, she met and married my father George Farah, the man who "swept her off her feet". They dated for only six months and after the wedding they drove down to Durban for their honeymoon.



A beautiful Jane in her 20s

I was born a year later at The Pearce Nursing Home which was situated in Marshall Street in Belgravia. Thereafter, my father went out regularly at night to what he called "the club" to gamble at card games. My father ran a tea-room in Main Street in Jeppestown and sadly gambled away all his profits. My mother realised that this was the unfortunate reality of her life. She had to work full time, had her babies whilst working and when she expressed her unhappiness to my dad at the continual struggle with money due to his gambling habit, she was beaten by him most nights and weekends. My parents and my younger sister, Margaret and I were now living in a house that my Mom owned at 48 Long Street, Belgravia. Women were only allowed to own their own property if they



**27 June 1949, their wedding day,
Johannesburg, South Africa**



A beautiful Jane in her 20s

could prove that they were married according to Anti-Nuptial Contract (ANC) which my Mom did. My mother would walk along Park Street up to Main Street and catch a tram from Monday to Fridays to go to work. We were at Nursery School the whole day and I remember being ill once and having to walk with my mother early that morning to the Bertha Solomon Centre in Oval Park at the corner of Marshall and Mordant Streets. The district nurse gave me an injection while I lay face down on her lap. All I remember was me screaming continuously.

In 1957, on the night of my 7th birthday, my Mom was taken to the Queen Victoria Nursing Home, which is now a derelict building at the bottom of Constitutional Hill. My sister Patty was born and 19 months later my sister Diane was born there as well. My father could not believe he had four daughters, when all he wanted was a son! My mum taught her four girls etiquette, good manners and how to make and serve tea to visitors. She cooked every night and fed us good food, shopped, sewed our clothes, cleaned, paid all the bills and took us to Church every Sunday. She sent us to The Convent of the Sacred Heart and paid the fees herself. Every Saturday she baked and even though she contributed so much she still regularly got beaten up by my dad. He had rules and woe betide anyone who broke them!

In 1961, the Murray Park Swimming Pool was built across the road from our house. We all now had something to do every afternoon and during the summer holidays. Just before my 15th birthday in 1965, my mother announced that she was pregnant. We were overjoyed that there was going to be a baby in the house. And this time a boy was born. He was named Joseph, after my father's brother who had been killed in an accident on his bicycle when he was young. My father was over the moon. He finally had a son!

We were now five children and once again, there was no money, so Joseph, my brother, had to go to creche and my mother had to go back to work. By then I was 16 years old and was working too. In the sixties, white women were just objects to be abused by men in any way. It was not uncommon to be sexually, mentally and emotionally abused by the hierarchy of the company, who were always men.

My sisters and I grew up and got married from 48 Long Street. My father thereafter sold the house that belonged to Mum. He completed the transaction with the Convent School in Park Street, Belgravia and my mother signed the Sale Agreement.

Thereafter, they moved to 24 Botha Street in Cresta. This property was owned by all five children as an inheritance. My mother managed to stay with my father until about the age of 77.

After 50 years of marriage, she made a decision that the abuse was enough! In 1999, she took a few of her belongings and moved first to my sister Margaret, who lived in Northcliff in Johannesburg. Thereafter, she moved to Durban to live with me for a few weeks and then on to Patricia, who lived in Fairlands, for a few weeks, whereafter she found a flat. The last two years of her life she lived with my brother Joseph and his family and sadly died very peacefully in 2008, at the age of 86.

She often said to me that she was: "Unsung and Unheralded". She is sorely missed by her children and grandchildren and will always be very fondly remembered.

Susan Parker shared that this photograph which was taken a few months ago while cleaning up Glenashley Beach. She married Alan in June 1970. "We will be married 51 years, June 2021. I have 3 children and 10 grandchildren. My first grandchild was born when I was 46 years old. I tell anyone that will listen: ***If I'd have known that grandchildren would be so much fun, I would have had them first!***"



My parents were moved to Umlazi Township in 1963 Busisiwe Maureen Mkhize

I was born in a reputable public hospital, King Edward 8th in Durban in 1965. I am the 7th child of 8 children. In 1963, my parents were moved to Umlazi Township from Umkhumbane which is near Cato Manor. Umkhumbane was an informal settlement and most people who lived here came from rural areas looking for job opportunities in Durban. My family together with other families were thereafter moved to Umlazi immediately after the township was built. The then government orchestrated this move and via the Group Areas Act, legislated various movements countrywide to the townships. The living conditions and standards at Umkhumbane were not good for families. My

family, consisting of my parents and my 6 siblings, were occupying a single room rented house. The houses at Umlazi were better structured compared to Umkhumbane as they were four bed-roomed houses. I had five sisters and two brothers.

Our second born sister Thembeni, passed away in 1956. She became ill due to stomach ache whilst my parents were staying in Umkhumbane. She was 4 years old at the time and was buried in the Redhill Cemetery. Unfortunately, my Mother could not attend the burial as she had a small baby at the time and was extremely ill, having experienced difficulties during the baby's delivery.



My father with my siblings at Umkhumbane before I was born

As young children, Mom took us to Church on Sundays. We visited our church members' houses on Sunday mornings before church service for prayer meetings. During the winter holidays we went to Church youth camps. My Mom was a very spiritual person and she taught us to pray, understand the bible and groomed us to be spiritual and be God-fearing.

I started school at Umlazi. When I was young, I wanted to study at Inanda Seminary which is a highly acclaimed boarding school for girls. I applied to start my high school education there and I was accepted because of my good results. Unfortunately, my parents could not afford to pay school fees. I matriculated in 1983 completing my high school education in Umlazi.

My Mother was a domestic worker and initially worked from Monday to Saturday. Thereafter, she arranged with her employer that she will not work on Saturdays. My Mother informed me that I shall work at her employer's house on Saturdays.

I was a teenager when I commenced domestic work and earned R5.00 per Saturday. This money was used to buy necessities such as sanitary pads, roll on, body cream and body spray. After I completed my Matric, I wanted to study at the university and again unfortunately my parents could still not afford the fees. Thereafter, I found a job as a Data Capturer for an Accountant, T.E. Goqo and Company based in Umlazi. I was earning R250 per month. With the income from my first year I managed to install electricity at home. At that time, not many houses had electricity in Umlazi. Even though every day was a challenge, I started saving money and when I was 26 years old, I applied and was accepted at Technikon Natal (currently known as the Durban University of Technology) to study Office Administration. Unfortunately, I could not finish my 3rd year as the savings for my education were finished. It was in 1993, when I was offered an internship programme at the University of Natal, as an Administrator intern. I earned a stipend of R500.00 per month. My mother's employer, who worked at the university assisted me with the application for the internship programme. After completion of this internship, I was offered a permanent position at the University of Natal, Medical School as an Office Administrator. In May 1986, my eldest brother, Qinisela, 23 years of age was stabbed by a stranger in our area. This killing was not far from home. Sadly, in 1994 our last-born brother Phelelani, 25 years of age, was also stabbed and shot not far from home by unknown people. These were difficult times for my family and I witnessed my Mother going through the pain of losing her children.

In 1985, when I was 20 years old and still staying with my parents, I fell pregnant and gave birth to a daughter. Fortunately, I got married to the father of my child. We were also blessed with my husband's two children. My husband and I also have a son. We bought a property in the North of Durban. My children went to schools in Durban North and



With my eldest sister in Johannesburg attending my mother's sister's funeral

completed their matric with good results. My daughter studied at the University of Cape Town and graduated with an Honours Degree in Physiotherapy. She completed her in-service training in KwaZulu Natal and relocated to Johannesburg. She commenced work as a Physiotherapist in a public hospital. My son completed his Matric and studied Architectural Technology at Durban University of Technology. Even though he completed his internship programme, it is so unfortunate that he is currently (as of March 2021) unemployed and is still on the job market.

On the 22nd of December 2020, my niece called to inform me that my Mother is sick. She said that Mom cannot walk and her legs are painful. The following day, my nephew took her to a doctor in Umlazi. After consultation, the doctor prescribed tablets for the pain which incidentally worsened the following week. Thereafter, I took her to another general practitioner in Umhlanga. Two toes from her left feet were changing colour.

The doctor diagnosed gangrene and wrote a referral letter to a public hospital for further investigation as Mom was not on medical aid. The doctor also mentioned that it is possible that my Mother's leg could be amputated. I informed my sisters and they advised that Mom is 92 years old and it is risky for such an operation. My sister took Mum to her general practitioner as Mum's doctor was on leave during the Festive Season. On the 4th of January 2021, when the medical practice re-opened, my sisters took her back to her doctor who wrote up a referral note to King George Hospital. Here, they examined her and referred her to Inkosi Chief Albert Luthuli Hospital for further investigation. She was booked for the 4th of February for further investigation to her diagnosis. On the 7th of January 2021 I woke up with an awfully bad dry cough which had started a few days ago.

With the outbreak and spread of COVID19 I decided to go to the doctor for an Immune Booster Drip. Thereafter, I went for a COVID19 Test. The following day I received the results which indicated that I tested positive. This was the second wave of COVID19. I then started to be extremely sick. I was weak, coughing and experienced a loss of smell and appetite. Fortunately, my daughter was still on holiday and was at home. She consulted with our doctor who

prescribed medication including different vitamins and antibiotics. I was in isolation.

On Tuesday, 12th January, I called my sister to check on my Mom's condition. She advised that I needed to visit home. My Mom was critical. I was still on isolation but I decided to visit my Mom the following day. When I was at my Mom's house my sisters, Sbongile, Zanele and Ntombifuthi were bathing her. I went to her bedroom and then realised that my Mom was terribly ill. Her left feet were so bad and it looked like she was burnt. She was not talking. She looked exhausted and restless. My sisters suggested that we call the doctor to give her a drip.

While we were still contacting the doctor, Zanele, a professional nurse announced that our Mom is gasping. We started to pray and we sang my Mom's song and my Mom took her last breath around 17h00. On Friday, 22 January 2021 around 09h00 in the morning, her body arrived at our Umlazi home. Thereafter, we went to Church for the funeral service which proceeded in a dignified manner. She was a member of this church for more than 70 years. We then departed to the Redhill Cemetery which is in the vicinity of Durban North where she was laid to rest next to my Dad.



With my eldest sister in Johannesburg attending my mother's sister's funeral



Busisiwe (BCOMH) is an HR Practitioner and works for a Financial Institution as a Regional Human Capital Business Partner (KZN Province), part of the SA Retail Mass - Individual Life Distribution. personally to make a difference, she is a KZN EXCO member of the South African Board for People Practices (SABPP). Busisiwe has an interest in empowering our youth and women. Her motto is "Do not let your past define your future."

At 55 Mum got her driver's license

Chris Matthews

Proverbs 31:10-31 "Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies". Our mom, Doreen Adeleen de Vries, was such a woman. Mom was the 3rd eldest of 10 children. She was born in a little town called Val, near Standerton in June 1922. Her parents moved to 14th Street, Fietas, Vrededorp, South Africa when she was 2. She started her education at an Afrikaans medium school where the Johannesburg Civic Centre is built today. Her older sister, Sue, and a teacher had an ongoing

disagreement that ended with Sue throwing an ink pot at the teacher. Her parents then moved all the children to an English medium school at the North-West corner of Annet Road & 8th Street. She left school before she had completed her standard 8 which was called JC - Junior Certificate at age 14 to help

feed the family at home. Her first job was at the OK Bazaars and the second job was at a clothing factory. On the first day at work as she stitched, the sewing machine needle went right through her fingernail. She suffered in silence because she could not afford to lose her job. Christoffel Johannes Petrus Behr was called up to do service in the Commandos. He used to write the most amazing 12-page love letters to her. My sister has the copies. They are from April 1940 and May 1940 and they got married a month later. He was not called up to fight in WWII because miners were exempt in order to bring out the gold to pay for the war. Two of her brothers were up in North Africa for WWII. Stoffel died in a mining accident in 1942. Having 2 babies Elizabeth Anna (Bets) 17 months and Josephine (Joyce) 6 months, she had to find work to support them.



16 June 1940, Mum married Christoffel Behr

Mum moved in with her parents and got a hiding at 21 years of age! She said that she learnt then that two bosses in one house did not work for her. She went to the Government Labour Department for employment. Most of the men went to the war effort up north; so, she ended up at Holman Brothers – an engineering company. She qualified and

worked as a fitter & turner in 1943. She earned 7 shillings and 6 pence per week. Those days women worked as artisans but they did not get a certificate for their qualifications and they were paid less for the same work. She worked night shifts during World War II. She made every single part of the pneumatic rockdrills for mining.

She married Machiel Christoffel Matthews in 1950 and they divorced in October 1959. The next five children were born as follows: Hendrik 1952, Matthys André 1954, Johanna Magdalena (Dalene) 1956, Machiel Christoffel 1957 and Johann 1959. She used to joke that there was no TV in those days which resulted in big families.

When she was asked how she managed, she said, "On my knees before God." She made our sandwiches for school when we went to bed. When poorer kids stole our lunch, she would make extra lunch for them. She woke us with tea and got us ready for the day. She never turned a hungry person away and would say, "just add more water to the pot" even though food was not a plenty. She

ensured we all had good childhood memories. She took us on a few holidays with the financial help from our two eldest sisters. We took the train from Krugersdorp to Johannesburg then Durban then Port Shepstone and then the railway bus to St Michaels on Sea by Resthaven which is a soldiers' holiday resort. Mom also took us on Sunday rides on the train. We would go to Pretoria, have a cooldrink, walk around Pretoria Gardens and the station and then come home. We would also go to Johannesburg to have a treat with waffles, milk shakes or pie & gravy depending upon the budget. She never walked past a beggar without each one getting a penny or tickey and as inflation started the coins became bigger.



As a single Mum, 1943, Quince Street, Sunnyside

The eldest sisters queued by Welfare for food during World War II shortages. They also tore and crumpled the newspapers as toilet paper was unaffordable. She used to walk us in tow from Hamberg to the OK Bazaars in Roodepoort which was 3 km away to buy our groceries which was about R50 back then around 1972/1973. OK Bazaars would box the groceries and deliver it in the afternoon which we checked against a till slip with item prices. In the 1950's the live-in domestic workers were not allowed to have their husbands living with them. They were supposed to live at the hostels. Liena worked for us in 7th Avenue, Mayfair and her husband Edward used to stay with her. The police used to do middle of the night raids. Edward would be arrested and only be released after the

fine was paid. Mom used to help hide him in future raids. When Liena died around 1956 / 1957 of a stroke mom paid for her burial at Newclare Cemetery. She also hired a bus for Liena's friends. At 55 she got her first 2nd hand car and a driver's license. Within 6 months she drove 2500km around the whole country; Johannesburg to Queenstown to East London to Cape Town and then back.

This was before freeways on single 2 lane roads. Then she got an office job. She retired at 75 and was asked to come back 3 times after that. She believed Ecclesiastes 9:10 *"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest"*. I am forever

grateful that Jesus blessed us with such a wonderful daughter of His. A lot of domestic workers' babies were named after her.

Mum owned 4 cars – all were gifts. She never had insurance either. How God blessed her. She took up sewing and modelled her clothes when she was in her seventies. Her first five children were delivered at home and last two in hospital. Mom carried very small during her pregnancy, and never wore maternity wear although her babies were about 7 pounds which is roughly around 3.2 kg. She had to produce a doctor's letter to confirm that she was pregnant. She did not tell the children (eldest, Bets, was 16 years then) that she was pregnant. She believed that you do not discuss adult issues with children.

I was born in hospital. Bets told her teacher the next day that mom was not well because she went to hospital. Bets was shocked when Mom returned with a baby. Two years later when my younger brother Johann was born, it was the same story, only Bets knew then.

Mom had to resign for maternity leave and re-apply for her job afterwards, because there were no maternity benefits then - it was still like this when Bets had her son in 1973. Women were also not allowed to belong to a union. Those unions were law abiding and protected their members by even reimbursing them for loss of salary if there was a strike. She never really spoke about the unions.

Unfortunately, when she was widowed in August 1942, she was advised by a well-meaning family to sell her house in Melville. Thereafter, she never owned a home. We lived in more than 14 rental houses. In 1970 she wanted to buy a house that we rented which was for sale for R27,000. But the banks refused loans to women who did not have a husband to sign the loan; even though the bond payments were less than the monthly rentals that she paid. Today that house with subsequent renovations is worth at least about R2 million. She started going to the Biokinetic Centre in Florida Town Hall at 56 and continued until she was 90. She earned 7 medals from them in 7 years. She passed away quietly during a lunchtime sleep, 10 days before turning 97 in 2019. What a woman, what a lady, what a mother!



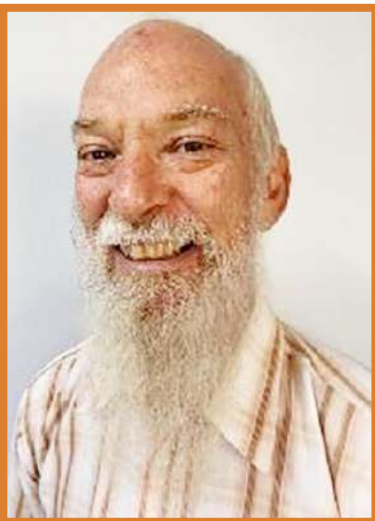
Modelling clothes that she sewed at age 70!

This story brought a lot of memories back for Bets. Here are some memories that I'll share because I think you'll enjoy them: "Was thinking today of Mom and my memories. Boet, your story of Mom reminded me of things. Mom used to play Softball. That was the same as baseball and I don't know the difference. Joyce and I used to go with and watch her play.

The team was made up of all the Women who worked with mom at Holman brothers. We used to go to Sturrock Park. My map shows it as Elizabeth Sturrock Park. When mom was expecting Dalene our chimney caught alight. Mom climbed on the roof and with the hosepipe put the fire out down the chimney. Talk of mess in the kitchen! Black soot water all over. We helped clean as I was 15 then and knew, believe it or not, that Dalene was due soon. Nowadays, girls think being pregnant is an illness or you can't do anything. We went to the Zoo often and the tram was the transport to the zoo. The tram driver fancied mom so we often stood by the driver in front. What fun.

"Clang clang" down that hill. Oh, the memories! Mom was always full of fun but as you all know ...no nonsense was tolerated. Mom and her friend played a trick on their husbands. She told your dad that the friend's husband is deaf and her friend told her husband that your dad was deaf and these men were shouting when they spoke to one another. Mom and her friend enjoyed themselves for a while and then confessed. All's well that ends well. Mom loved practical jokes.

One night she took us to the local bioscope to see a Dracula film. We were very nervous when we returned home. Oh yes, Andre, you were a baby and slept in the aisle on the floor next to mom. When we got home, I went to the bathroom and when I came out mom was lying on floor waiting for me and went "Booo...". I screamed and woke the world up. She could not stop laughing. I will never forget that episode.



"I'm Chris Matthews, saved by my mother's answered prayers to Jesus. I have a lovely godly wife (Proverbs 19:14), our son & wife, daughter & husband and their blessed two children and all of us children of the Most High. I remembered about 20 years ago I went on a father and son and later on a father and daughter camp.

The convener asked all the fathers to put their business cards away for the whole weekend and when we introduced ourselves we were not to say what we did for a living. He said that we are human *beings* and not human *doings*. I then saw how some of us men are rather a bit stunted in that respect."

House No. 344 Nkone Avenue, Kagiso 1 Mapeu Matabane

I was born Cecilia Mapeu Manthata on the 22nd of November 1960 at Krugersdorp. I am the third and last born of the family. My sister, Shika Maria Lebelo (Manthata), was born on the 23rd of December 1954 and my brother Kgwadu Victor Manthata arrived on the 5th of August 1952. I received the name 'Cecilia' because according to the Roman Catholic Church Calendar the 22nd of November is Saint Cecilia's Day. 'Mapeu' is my maternal grandfather's aunt – Please don't frown at this! In our culture the first-born child is normally named after someone from their dad's side of the family. My brother and sister got their names from my dad's

side of the family; my brother being the first boy and my sister being the first girl. If the second born was a boy he could have been given a name from my mom's side of the family.

When I was born it was an opportunity for my mom's family to name this beautiful baby girl. I am told that my grandfather having been raised by his aunt who did not have children of her own decided to honour her by naming me after her. The family stayed in Kagiso 1, referred to as Lewisham, by the locals. Lewisham was the original name given to the township when it was first established.



1948. Mom came from the village, Botlokwa, not far from the Tropic of Capricorn

My mom and dad met at Kilnerton Training Institution (KTI) where they were both training to become teachers. After they completed their studies, my dad started working at some school in Magoebaskloof and mom got a job back home in Botlokwa. She did not teach for long and soon decided that her passion was in nursing and so she left for Elim Hospital in Louis Trichardt to start training as a nurse. When they finally married in 1950 she went to join her husband in Kagiso. She got a job as a nursing sister at Paardekraal Hospital and dad was then a Principal at St 'Peters Catholic Primary School. Both my parents originate from Limpopo.

Growing up both grandparents on my paternal side were no more so I know very little about them. My paternal grandparents passed on when I was very young. I did hear many stories about them. One interesting story that stood out for me about my grandfather was how we as a family ended up belonging to the Roman Catholic Church.

I got curious about why all our relatives on the Manthata's side belonged to the Lutheran Church but we with my paternal uncle's families were the only ones who were Roman Catholics. My sister told me that we also belonged to the Lutheran Church and the

issue of my grandfather deciding to cross the floor stemmed from the fact that like all villagers the church services were held at a school until there were enough funds to build a proper church structure and that is when trouble started. Different groups wanted the church to be on their side of the village.

My dad got a place to stay at the Mothibe household when he started teaching at St' Peters. Their house was one of those few 'big houses' in the township and was very near the school. The Mothibe's were blessed with four girls, one has since passed on. She was a nun and when she celebrated 25 years

in service a special mass was held for her to re-affirm her vows. By then we had relocated to Seshego but my mom made it a point to be in attendance for Sister Monica Mothibe's big day.

Apparently, this issue took forever to be resolved and so my grandfather said to his family 'A re yeng ka mo ga Father go fitlhela bogafi bo bo fela' – Let us go visit Father until the madness is over. "Father" is how Roman Catholic Church and Anglican Priests are addressed." Little did the family realise that that would be their permanent spiritual home.



1945. Dad hailed from a place called Breitland Farm in Bochum

My dad got a place to stay at the Mothibe household when he started teaching at St' Peters. Their house was one of those few 'big houses' in the township and was very near the school. The Mothibe's were blessed with four girls, one has since passed on. She was a nun and when she celebrated 25 years in service a special mass was held for her to re-affirm her vows. By then we had relocated to Seshego but my mom made it a point to be in attendance for Sister Monica Mothibe's big day.

The bond that developed between the families over the years is so strong that to this day, even when the parents on both sides are no more, we are still in touch and attend each other's functions. Sister Monica was my two daughters' God Mother when the youngest was baptised and during the older

one's confirmation. My relationship with her was very special, even though we are Anglican I could not think of anyone for this role except my now dear Guardian Angel – Sister Monica.

House number 344 Nkone Avenue was one of those Municipal houses, very dull in appearance made up of those big, grey rough crusted bricks and grey inside because the government of the day did not see the need to make us comfortable by painting the inside of these dwellings. They were like the initial RDP houses post 1994 but better because they were much bigger and rooms were divided. We used curtains as doors because there were door frames without doors – the only doors we had was the front door to the house and the back one but inside zilch, which means nothing. So, we

had curtains until mom and dad could afford to buy proper doors and paint the inside of the house. The kitchen had cement shelves and my creative mom would take a newspaper cut in zigzag and decorate those shelves. Our crockery was proudly displayed on those shelves. The bathroom had a bath made of cement so we would put our washing basin in there, pour in water and take a bath.

My mom never compromised on her home language. She was raised by a very powerful woman who never worked in her entire life but raised five children who all became professionals. My mom was the first born. My grandmother despised people who would go to Johannesburg for work and when they got back home for the holidays they would be changed people who looked down on their

language having adopted the most prominent language of where they were based. They would be speaking either Setswana or iSizulu with that Setlokwa accent, which made a person look so confused. She always maintained that one should be proud of their roots. I think this stuck with my mom because she was a replica of my grandmother in every respect except that she was a full time, professional working woman. We, on the other hand spoke Setswana at school and in the street because that was the medium of instruction at school. We learned very early in life to interchange between the two languages. We spoke Setswana freely at school and when playing with children in the neighbourhood but as soon as we entered house no. 344 Nkone Avenue we had to put on our home language persona, Setlokwa.



**1957. Third from left, my mother,
with some of her colleagues from Paardekraal Hospital**

A hardworking, dedicated and fearless woman - I have experienced all these traits from the person I called 'mama' Celia Moloko Manthata, Ramahuma – my mother's maiden surname. At the end of 1974 just after I passed Std. 6 the family relocated to Seshego in Limpopo. My parents had managed to build a beautiful house with four bedrooms. Building this house whilst we still stayed in Kagiso was not an easy task but my mom managed.

Mum decided to start working night duty throughout the entire project period because it would be seven nights on, seven nights off. During her days off she would take a train from Park Station to Pietersburg Station with a lot of cash fully wrapped in a newspaper, put it in a pantihose which she then wrapped around her waist. I come from a family where the women are always in the lead. Funny enough to this day on my mother's side of the family it is still the case.

She faced a lot of challenges during the building of this house but she soldiered on because she was determined to move her family back home. By the time we relocated she had managed to secure a nursing post at the Pietersburg Provincial Hospital – she even had to move a few months before all of us to resume work. Dad got a job at the Department of Education.

The Sisters and Fathers at the St. Peter and Paul Roman Catholic church in Seshego, our new Spiritual home were well taken care of by my mom and her colleagues. Mama was clear from early on that she did not want to belong to the Mother's Union. She had a number of reasons why she would not cope in this organisation. She stated that she wore uniform every day when she went to work and could not imagine Sundays in uniform as well. She said the groups were usually big and so there was always unnecessary infights, back-stabbing and fighting for positions. She used to say that they have good intents but because of cliques like at formal workplaces even good intentions to be of good service to the church might take long to be implemented because of who was behind the suggestion/s. Their group was named *Nurses Guild*. They were only ten in number but did a lot for their church. Their purpose was to make their spiritual leaders as comfortable as possible – from purchasing monthly groceries to getting washing machines, televisions and fridges for them. What they did was to agree on what they wanted to achieve and together come up with a strategy to tackle their goal. They would for example agree on buying a washing machine for either the priests' house or for the sisters. Then one of them would offer the group to use her account at say Morkels, Ellerines or Bradlows and they would agree on the amount each member would contribute for a period of three or six months to avoid the said member incurring interest on the account.

These were smart women!

The masterpiece for me was when mama requested one member to accompany her to go and address an issue with a young priest. Word on the street was that he was frequenting some drinking holes in the

township and my mom wanted to put a stop to this. My mom did not only go reprimand the priest but had suggestions for him. We laughed so much when we heard the solutions that were to be tabled for 'moruti'. Apparently, she made it clear to the priest that they are not going to stand and watch him making their church a laughing stock of the community. He was told that he should include whatever it is that he drinks on the monthly grocery list and they do not mind buying that for him. Secondly, he was told that if he needed company there are decent members of the church who drink but they do so in the comfort of their own homes and he was provided with the names, told that he can always make an appointment with the two; one of them was even a Deacon in the church and husband to one of their group members.

My mother was a special character, she did all these arrangements prior to discussing with the two people but knowing her they did not have an issue. One afternoon, while we are relaxing, my brother returns home in stitches and the source of his amusement is his encounter with the priest. He met the priest and after exchanging pleasantries the priest tells my brother that he wrote down on a piece of paper what he drinks like 'MaGogo' told him – referring to my mom. He told my brother that he wrote '**Bells**' but my mom and company bought '**Bols**'. We were finished! We had such a good laughter.

Each time Dad looked at mama he would start laughing all over again. Do you think my mom was bothered? She said to my brother 'next time you see him you must tell him I am not responsible for his drinking behaviour' and she was done.

My mom's passion was designing tablecloths using different colourful fabrics and cotton. She would design flowers and take her time when she was off to perfect them. She donated some for the Fathers and Sisters at church for their dining room tables. On the Wednesday morning that mama passed on in hospital on the 16th of January 1991 when my sister and I went to inform the church we were requested to wait for the Senior Priest in their dining room.

The table was covered in one of the table cloths that our mother donated to them. When we informed 'moruti' about our early morning visit, he kept quiet for some time and then said to us 'Do you know this table cloth'? We responded that we do and his next words were 'May her soul repose in eternal Peace'. We discussed a few things with him because the family had decided to lay her to rest on the Saturday the 19th of January 1991. Thereafter, we left. Guess who was chosen to officiate at her funeral? Well, it was the very person that she had reprimanded. He was so saddened by mama's passing but did not miss the opportunity to share with all in attendance about all the funny moments he had with mama.

He has since also passed on a few years ago. He was stationed in Seshego to the end. Being brave, not bothered to be unpopular and confronting issues head on made me admire this person I called mama. I learned a lot from her that at times you need to share with others irrespective of how much you have. I always got amused at how mama would take decisions without being opposed even where extended families were involved. My mom and dad complemented each other because he was such a relaxed human being though a disciplinarian married to this fierce individual.



1979. My loving Mum and Dad relaxing at their home



A librarian by profession, Mapeu has worked for the City of Johannesburg for almost 20 years and left the employ in 2010; having spent the last ten years as a Manager (Libraries). She briefly joined the Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance as a part-time Facilitator.

During that time she also started doing some freelance work for a number of Publishers and she is still in the business of promoting information resources on her own. She is a mother of three independent daughters. She is very passionate about reading and loves cooking. She is a member of the Limpopo Archives Council, National Council of Library and Information Services and the Tshwane North Technical and Vocational Education and Training College Council.

My source of inspiration Cheryl Hlabane

A woman who played a significant role in moulding me into who I am today is my mother. A phenomenal woman who went over and beyond her passion to serve, without a doubt, my source of inspiration, is none other than my mother, Ethel Jabhisa Hlabane. She was born in Tongaat in 1949 to Fabian Mbazima and Selina Ngcobo as the first of five children. Her siblings are Busisiwe Nzimande, Ntombenkosi Myeni, Bhekizizwe Nzimande and lastly Lindiwe Nzimande.

Born in 1983 in a small town called Hambanathi in Durban, I was fortunate enough to have had a blissful childhood growing up within a very close knit family. While my mother worked in Johannesburg as a teacher, I was raised by my maternal grandmother, Selina Ngcobo, aunts and cousins in an environment that embraced love, laughter and deep family values.

It was at the age of 7 that I joined her in Motso Section, Tembisa, Gauteng, a completely new environment with people who not only spoke different languages but were incredibly fascinated by the rawness and pureness of my IsiZulu. We settled in

Bapsfontein, a zoned agricultural area approximately 16 km north-east of Kempton Park, where my mother taught at a farm school. This school was established after she identified a farm where children were not learning because of a lack of schools within reasonable distance. Being the only teacher at that time, she singlehandedly taught classes from Grade 1 to Grade 7.



Cheryl Hlabane (8 months old)



My niece, Hlengiwe Mhlongo, Mom, Ethel Hlabane, cousin, Khanyi Myeni and older sister, Millicent Mahlaole. Location-Tembisa

It was quite refreshing to be in that environment and that is when I first realised her passion for teaching because she would sacrifice time away from me and my two older siblings, Smangela and Vincent to ensure that the farm children got the same level of education as other children in urban areas. She loved learning at every opportunity she got. And by the time she passed on she was pursuing her 3rd degree in addition to other qualifications in between.

Another transition, this time a bit harder than the first happened in Standard 4 when we moved to a multiracial school in the suburbs in Kempton Park. However, as much as racism at that time was at its peak, the standard of education I received back from the farm school was high enough to ensure that I blended in smoothly.

My mother would always tell me that in a world full of Cinderella's, I should not be afraid to be Batman. She encouraged me to always push myself and I excelled in both academics and sports. This saw me being promoted to a school prefect. I still had the village champion deeply etched within me

and most of the cool and trendy things at that time like relaxed hair and jeans surpassed me. I would say, my being basic, was my unique selling point.

Since my mother was a single parent, the next mission of taking me to Windsor House Academy in Kempton Park was quite an expensive one. I remember her assuring me that if I really wanted to go there, I could. This meant cutting on our budget and only getting new clothes just once a year and mostly having to make do with hand-me-downs from Smangela, who was 10 years older than me.

My mother instilled a culture of reading in me and a lot of my reasoning and open mindedness comes from what I have read. She was so giving and never discriminated against anyone.

I remember we had friends of different nationalities - Diego De Carvalho from Angola and Nkululeko from Zimbabwe, to mention a few - and this exposed me to people's livelihoods outside South Africa. She did not earn much, but would not hesitate to give



2020. Tembisa, Andries Shakoane (dad), Cheryl Hlabane, Ethel Hlabane (mom)

our last food supply to someone who would come knocking at our door in need. It was then that I started admiring the spirit of giving in her.

My mother was always creative and innovative with a main focus on people who came from underprivileged backgrounds. She founded Khula Home Based Care Centre, an organisation that offered door-to-door care for the elderly. She helped them register for South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) grants and gave them food parcels. Being the people's person that she was, she is one of the people who championed the idea of food being served in public schools back in the 90s.

She was more than a mother. She was a mentor who was really instrumental in shaping so many lives. At some point, I worked in human resources and as much as my career was thriving I wanted to do more. My mother reminded me not to forget what I have always dreamt about while growing up and to always pray and have confidence in God. Visiting my vision board and updating it in order to aim for greater success was something that she would always encourage me to do.

I then started to work with various charity organisations that focus on homeless women and children until one day I walked through the doors of Frida Hartley Shelter and my life was never the same again. Starting out, so many doors were shut on me and I had to

deal with a lot of rejection. But I never gave up. I set out to find out why companies were rejecting my proposals and used the responses to go back to the drawing board. I restructured the profile of the organisation, updated the website and activated Frida Hartley's socials. This led to a complete shift in fortunes for the organisation with bigger companies starting to believe in my vision.

Looking back, my mother was the kind of person who when she walked into a room, you would feel her presence. She oozed confidence and I definitely inherited the respect, sense of humour, loving and caring nature that she possessed. Her best lessons to me were through actions. It was so easy for me to follow in her footsteps because life of giving is not something that I had to learn. It is how I lived.

Because of her, today I am an intelligent woman who has managed to propel herself into charitable endeavours of scale. One quote that stands out when I think of her is, "We need women who are so strong they can be gentle, so educated they can be humble, so fierce they can be compassionate, so passionate they can be rational, and so disciplined they can be free." (Kavita Ramdas at an address to female graduates at Mount Holyoke College in 2013.

Today I am a strong woman because the apple did not fall far from the tree. "They don't make them like Ethel Hlabane no more".

***May her dear soul rest in peace.
17 May 1949 – 25 July 2020.***

Mma, our mother Matlhodi Hilda Mahalefa Nkitseng, Sekibela, Mabuse and Thabang Mahalefa

A baby girl named Matlhodi Hilda Matlala was born to Ntlapu Louisa Matlala in July 1952. She is the second born child from her mom. She is our precious mother who has demonstrated personal strength to her family and community at large. She was born into a poor family, led by her grandmother who was depending on a 3-month social grants payout. At the time through the saying "*ga re lekane re se meno*", our mother and her siblings understood that we are not all equal, so they learned to accept their circumstances. Her grandmother was the breadwinner while her mother Ntlapu went away to look for a job in Johannesburg. Grandmother managed the family by this Tswana Idiom "*Bana ba motho ba kgaogana tlhogwana ya tsie*".

Matlhodi attended Moiletsoane Primary and finished school at Kweneng High. Her uncle, Timothy Matlala, played an important role in her life. He had a positive influence on her development and upbringing. He was a missionary.

The family stayed at a missionary house for years and also lived on the property of the University of the North (Turfloop), now called University of Limpopo. During their stay at the missionary house, all the children at the mission attended school. It was at this time, during the Guidance lesson, that teachers advised students about study options and this developed her informed knowledge on life and studying further.

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As a student, Matlhodi loved the choral music competitions as a youngster and she now enjoys this at church. During her teaching career she encouraged learners to participate in the school choir.



Contemplating the future, uniform clad - attending Kweneng high school



Proudly posing with Mum Ntlapu Matlala after getting her 1st degree

There was poverty and peer pressure during her teenage life. Pocket money for a month was R1 and the bus ticket was also R1. Most teenagers became discouraged and lost their enthusiasm for school because of poverty. During that time people believed strongly in superstitions and it was a serious matter. For example, young girls were not allowed to be out of the homestead after six in the evening.

Our mother lived in a rural laid back village where everyone was known to the community by their achievements and family name.

Our mother got married at the age of 24 in June 1976 into another poor family at Mmametlhake. James, her husband, was working in Johannesburg and came back once a month. She was at home with the in-laws and two children, Nkitseng, born in December 1969 was 6 and Sekibela (Choki) who was born in October 1976. There was no transport to visit her husband in Johannesburg. Vehicles were very scarce. As a young mother her role was to cook, plough the fields and clean. She looked after the family for four years but she soon realised that education may be the answer to her problems.

She started out on a different personal journey after having children. She received a bursary from Hebron College and this helped her to achieve a Junior Secondary Teachers Course (JSTC) qualification which is currently relevant to a Diploma in Education. In 1978, Mabuse was born. After completing her

studies in 1981 she was appointed as the Setswana teacher at Thufane High School in 1982. The following year she was transferred to Mmametlhake High School because she wanted to move nearer home. Athel, her mother-in-law was looking after her children.

As a young teacher many opportunities were presented to her. She was deployed to Mmametlhake High School to improve the school results in the Setswana matric class.

Fresh from tertiary education she saw an opportunity to prove her capability and skill. She produced good results and since then has never looked back. The headmaster for the school protected her position and her work because she could deliver as required. She was appointed and received a salary of R400 per month from the Department of Education, under the Bophuthatswana Government. Compared to Bantu Government, it was a high scale paying job. And the salary improved as years in the field progressed.

An opportunity which became a source of extra income for her was marking of scripts for the matric examinations. Every June and End of Year examination was an opportunity to mark exam papers. Through this experience she was able to gain more content for the subject at school. It evidently helped her to know the examiner's style of setting papers and improved the students' results which were now noted as being excellent.



1976. At her wedding with husband, James Mahalefa

She achieved a minimum average of 80% pass rate and received awards. Mum started out as a sub marker and became a senior marker.

Towards her retirement in 2010 she was the chief marker and a senior subject cluster facilitator. As a cluster facilitator she was responsible for all teachers' subject improvement. Schools improved in the subject during her tenure because teachers often came for content discussion. The meetings helped the whole cluster and during her leadership she saw a young new teacher also climbing up the ladder. Nanki, as she called her, came as a student teacher and today she is the subject examiner. Our mother had produced excellent teachers and when she retired she worked with two of her students, Rabalao Leonard and Nanki Matjila. They are Setswana teachers under her cluster and Mum proudly produced many more professionals in different fields. She enrolled with Vista University and obtained her Degree in Education. A fierce, hardworking mother – she did not rest and graduated again with her Honours Degree in Education.

There were many challenges that led to her retirement. Tough times don't last but tough people do. In 1984 she became pregnant with her last born son, Thabang and gave birth to him in 1985. She experienced complications during labour and this led to a coma. She recovered and bounced back to her work. In 2006 she became ill due to a stroke. The stroke affected her left side and she was hospitalised for a month. After her discharge life changed. She could not walk and lift her left arm. She fought back to her recovery. In 2010, during her recovery another illness hit her. She was diagnosed with arthritis. She again fought hard, was hospitalised but she recovered after major knee surgery. As she always said, "When you fall, never ever stay down and cry, get up and move forward". She has done it many times. She is what the world loves to hate, pure, authentic, tested and brave. That is

why her kind will save this world.

In 2011 she met a social worker who invited Mum to a meeting regarding a vulnerable street kids centre. Through her experience as a teacher and her studies she was identified as a perfect candidate to speak to kids about support and other matters. The centre was built for the kids. Another opportunity was identified when the Nkangala District encouraged the formation of an Older Persons Forum which would assist older retired persons and pensioners regarding their vulnerability and well-being. She drafted the constitution and this non-profit organisation was registered in 2013 and a certificate was issued. She was elected the Chairperson of JS Moroka Older Person's Forum in 2014.

Since 2014 the group managed to tour several places. They visited Durban and Cape Town. They have participated in several sporting activities and represented the province over the years. Then in 2016 a District Forum was formed. Our mother was chosen to lead the Forum. The same year, Mpumalanga Province formed the Provincial Older Person's Forum. She is currently an active member. In 2019, as a stakeholder representative from the Elderly Forum, in a meeting for Victims crisis centre, she was elected as a Treasurer in the interim committee meant to assist resolve challenges. They managed to resolve the matters and finally the Committee was elected.

Patriarchy has always been a struggle. A missed appointment as Deputy Principal at a Middle school. Another woman teacher was appointed because her husband talked his way through to the principal and the wife was appointed. Systems have flaws. In another incident a close colleague missed an opportunity because her letter of appointment was meant to be hand delivered to her. The letter was opened and another application was made to the same school and the appointment was changed. But against the odds, Mum made it!



Nkitseng Mahalefa

As her children, we appreciate our mother because as an aspiring young adult she realised education may give her a better quality of life. She persevered and achieved her ambitions in life. She also gave back to the community. Nkitseng, her eldest son is head of archives and oral historian in Mpumalanga, Sekibela Manthata nee' Mahalefa is an entrepreneur, while Mabuse Mahalefa is at home affairs and Thabang Mahalefa is also an entrepreneur.

“Dr Mom” – a priceless chart of a distinguished academic mom

Masindi Sikgomo

“Dr Mom” as we affectionately called her, was born on April 15, 1964 to parents, Matsibekanye and Koporo Mabelane, of a customary arranged marriage. Father Koporo and mother Matsibekanye were forced to give up school after completing Standard One and Four, respectively. Somewhere else, on May 12, 2000 a child was born. However, this little girl's joy turned to sadness in an unanticipated twist of fate. Her mother passed away in 2006. The child's sorrow was short-lived as her father remarried and she was no longer bereft of the love and care of her biological mother. That little girl was me, Masindi Sikgomo. Through a heart-wrenching trip from her roots to now, Dr Maseke Mabelane, touched lives beyond expectations including mine. “Maseke taught me that no matter whatever our trials and tribulations are we should laugh through them all because the ultimate consideration should be our capacity to survive them.” Today, my adopted mother is my heroine. A woman who has qualms about such matters as polygamy. Her experience of a polygamous marriage in her family has left her with a bitter experience. As a rural girl she had dreams of the good things in life - getting married, owning a house and a car. But those desires were not voices of a past generation only. Currently, she has houses in Polokwane, Emalahleni and Mbombela. Her first car was a small 1.3 litre Mazda 323 hatchback.

Maseke's passion for education, development and growth has rubbed off onto us - my four siblings as well as her nieces and nephews. In fact, two of her nieces Kgomotso and Minky are medical doctors whilst my brother Theo, is an electrical engineer having qualified with a Master's degree and my sister Langi, is a civil engineer. Maseke's teachers had faith in her quest to succeed in life. She excelled in the sciences always finishing among the top ten achievers. She obtained her Master's degree in Educational Management (Cum laude) from the University of Johannesburg - formerly Rand Afrikaans University (RAU). Her doctoral thesis was on a topic closest to her heart – “A Strategy for Developing a Sustainable Pool of Women



My Mom since 2006, Dr Maseke Mabelane

Leaders in the Mpumalanga Province”. In 1984, she also obtained the best results for her Senior Primary Teacher's Diploma in Lebowa in 1984.

The dynamics between empowered and disempowered played out in 2004 when she was bestowed the honour of Provincial and National Manager of the Year for Servant Leadership by the Black Management Forum (BMF). This launched her further in her development path. As a school principal and a member of South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) she participated in the development of the Site Steward Manual in Scottsburg, KwaZulu Natal and later trained the trainers in Mpumalanga as her contribution to democratising the workplace. To this day, she is a union member and believes democratising the workplace is a life-long struggle. She grew up from SADTU, the Confederation of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) Women Sub-Committee and its regional structures.

After graduating with a BSc degree with majors in Mathematics and Psychology, Maseke specialised in teaching Mathematics and Physical Science. She had a relentless passion to teach maths. She first taught Mathematics to a Standard Four class at Bakopa Primary School in Tafelkop. In 1981 in the absence of teacher Ramatsetse (who was on sabbatical scholarship leave) she contributed to teaching maths to the Standards Nine and Ten classes at Boleu High School. Having difficulty with resources at school, including funding they studied Physical Science through reading the textbooks.

At Mamokgalake Chuene she taught Mathematics to trainee teachers who enrolled for the short courses. She would finish writing the speed test, write the memorandum and take the batches except her class's batch to mark overnight. It was not by chance that she became a Mathematics and Physical Science teacher. She also served as Deputy Principal and Principal at Moruti Makuse Primary School which she helped establish in 1992. In 1997 she was seconded to the Mpumalanga Department of Education as a Labour Relations Officer. And in 1999 she was promoted to Gender Focal Point because of her predilection towards gender mainstreaming.

From 2001 she was appointed as Director for Arts, Culture and Language Development and Chief Director for Cultural Affairs, Sports and Recreation and Corporate Services in Mpumalanga and Limpopo Provinces – a post she holds currently. Maseke believes apartheid had honed her to be resilient and that no hurdle was insurmountable to clear in the pursuit of one's dreams and passions. Having grown in a deprived and neglected Limpopo Province where she had to fetch wood and water on her head, made her understand that only education could make her life and that of others better. That is why she encouraged us all to study and her benchmark 95% and over was the norm for her. She believes that all these experiences have grounded her to be the person she is today.

A woman of substance

Both her work and personal travels took her to Mozambique, Swaziland, Namibia, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America, Canada, Turkey, Dubai, Russia, Israel, Jerusalem, Jordan, Egypt, Italy and Medjugorje. Because of her love for Danielle Steel novels, she has dreams of visiting locations in the author's books - places like Paris, Central Park in New York, San Francisco and California. Perhaps one day her dreams would come true. Maseke is steadfast about human capital development, particularly the development of girls and women.



Maseke in her final year in Senior Primary Teacher's Diploma in Mamokgalake Chuene College of Education



Maseke when she was a Mathematics and Physical Science Teacher at St Pauls High School in Limpopo

Her Master's Thesis and Doctoral Dissertation attest to this goal. Through her pipeline Foundation she intends pursuing human capital development further. By her contribution she aims to instil in the beneficiaries the need to think right and live optimally.

Maseke believes that everything starts with a thought and an idea. She has served the Public Service Administration for 37 years and is intrigued by its evolution. She believes that public servants are entrusted with the responsibility to serve humanity though she perceives less inclination by some of them to understand the role they are entrusted with in society. She hopes that one day the recalcitrant public servants would come to terms with their obligations, responsibilities and service agreements to serve the public well.

Maseke is childless but she is surrounded by her siblings Mahusoane, Madire, Selema-tsela, Sefulare and Sepeke and their 27 children. She still maintains close ties with her siblings, nieces and nephews and my siblings and me. She has such a heart of gold - our pride and role model.



Maseke as School Principal of Moruti Makuse Primary in Emalahlani Municipality, Mpumalanga during a Sport Day



Lethabo one of my two brothers, Maseke, myself and my sister Langi - June 16 Celebration in KwaMhlanga Mpumalanga

Masindi is a 20 year old young woman studying Financial Accounting at CTU Training Solutions and is in second year. Her vision is that of a multi-skilled renowned Chartered Accountant who inspires young girls in particular to follow the finance stream. She is a social butterfly and enjoys reading, camping and following trails.

**ODE to a Mother So Divine
(26 June 2014)
Rayanta Rana**

Sometimes I feel I forget...the chaos of life leaves me in a fret
Sometimes I want to talk to you ... hear your sweet voice saying 'Hello my baby'
Sometimes I want to feel that warm, full, tender and perfect touch
So that all my worries, fears, anxieties flutter away... far out of reach

Then I remember
And it hurts.

But just as quickly... I feel a cool breeze envelope me
And I feel the trickle of a tear
Because... I know ... you are near.

Just as quickly I see your beautiful face with that lovely smile
My heart leaps as long as a mile
Because I know you are here...even though you are there!

How come you are always there when I am at my most vulnerable?
How come you come into my dreams when I am scared?
When I feel I cannot cope and life leaves me unable?

Is it true?
It is for sure!
Because you are my Mother... and one so Divine
Always guiding me along the right line!

You have been the angel who kept me safe when I was a cell
You have been an angel – even - when I was a teenage hell
In your quiet, calm, loving manner
You guided me through the years as I became a mother
And it was at that moment I realised... how a Mother's Touch Can be so Divine

And now that I yearn for you Now that I long for you
I know that you needed to be at peace and to rest
No more suffering for a person so wonderful
Who has left behind a legacy of memories so full

As a new chapter of my unique life I now start
All my fears, tensions and anxieties are ripped away
And I start to look forward to a brighter day
Knowing you are walking with me... and we will never... ever be apart.



Rayanta grew up in Durban. Graduated in Mathematics and Statistics before joining one of the big four consulting firms. She started working with SAP in 1997 and then this career took her to the Philippines, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Oman, Dubai, Saudi and Northern Europe. Rayanta lives with her husband and two children and her beloved dog in Surrey, England where she is the Chief Customer Engagement Officer at SAP UKI.

To my mother, MaKhuluse

Dear MaKhuluse

I struggled so much to write you this letter because I was looking for the perfect words. The truth is ours was never a perfect narrative. It was flawed but I cannot dispute the fact that you were a great mother. For the first time since you departed, I want to express myself and tell you how much you mean to me as well as how I wish that you could be here with me to witness my journey but unfortunately, God decided otherwise.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to be alive, allowing God to use you as a channel to bring me to this planet. I understand that you were young and scared but I respect your boldness. You named me 'Silindele Nonjabulo' because you expected so much from me and you wanted me to live a life filled with joy and happiness. I have heard so many stories about you, people have told me so much. Some judged you for your life choices. Some blamed you for having me out of wedlock. I grew up with so much resentment towards you because I never took some time to try and understand what you went through. I listened to other people's opinions about you. Growing up has made me to reflect on the few memories I have of you and I want you to know that I no longer blame, judge nor resent you.

I am so blessed to have seen you live your life not being bothered by people's opinions about you. I saw you as a young woman eager to live your life to the fullest as if you knew that it would be cut short at such a young age. I wish I could have the same bravery and approach life in the same way you did, in a way that would satisfy me instead of others but ever since you left, things have not been normal. I have had to defend myself against bullies, try to rectify some of your mistakes and keep to the promise of finding my little sister.

I write this letter from a place of pain because over the years I have tried to block you out of my mind and pretend like you never existed. I tried to pretend like I did not miss you. The truth is, I have and I still miss you every day of my life. I keep fantasizing about how life would have turned out if you were still alive. I think about the things we could have done together, the conversations we could have had, the places we could have visited. I don't even know if we shared anything in common. My favourite colour is black, I hope you liked it too. At times life becomes so hard such that I wish I could raise you from the dead. It is a bit funny for a 29-year-old to say that they miss their mother, right? Well, the truth is, you are an important part of my life that I cannot ignore.

This letter is to tell you that I understand, I may have blamed you in the past but I have come to understand that you had your own reasons for doing the things in the manner which you did. I hope that you are able to read letters in Heaven because this one is from my heart and I really wish that you could see it. I understand that you were young, that you couldn't raise me. For the longest time I thought you resented me but now I understand that you also had dreams which you wanted to pursue hence you couldn't be always there for me. I underwent so much pain whilst you were still alive but not around. The time was so limited during your visits, I was not able to tell you everything.

I remember how you read my school reports with a smile telling me that you wanted me to be a doctor. I am so sorry I am phobic to blood, I couldn't follow the medical profession but I will try to get the title somehow and I hope that it makes you happy. When I was given an opportunity to write about you, I wanted to draft a perfect story but the truth is, MaKhuluse, you were a young woman, in search of her identity, trying to understand who you were and your life was cut short a bit too early.

I have run out of words, all that I want you to know is that I wish to make you proud, I've kept the promise of finding my little sister, she is a spitting image of you. I don't know if you are closer to God wherever you are but my wish is that my little sister and I will be safe and filled with strength. *Thonga elihle*, MaKhuluse, we miss you and wish that you could be here with us. I don't want to claim that things could have turned out differently had you been still alive but maybe that could be the case, either for the better or worse, who knows.

I want you to rest knowing that your kids are prepared to fight the challenges of this world. How is Ayanda? I wonder if she has grown into a big girl. Do people grow that side? What really happens? I don't know. All I know is that you and Ayanda remain an important part of my life and hopefully, Sethabile too although she did not get to meet her and doesn't remember how you looked like. *Sizophila ke mama*, we will strive to be the best that we can be and represent you in every positive way that we can. *Asephelile amagama ke mama*, I have run out of words, this letter is an expression of my love for you. *Lala ke ntombazane*.

Khuluse! Hlongwa, Gence Mtumaseni, Shoji Gabhisa, Khawula Mdindela, Joji

Social Cohesion and Nation Building From Colonialism to Indenture - akin to modern day slavery - to Democracy

Newspaper Report: Natal Mercury Nov 16, 2020

We need each other: Premier Sihle Zikalala

Karen Singh

Durban - UNITY and social cohesion among South Africans were essential for the future prosperity of the country, said KwaZulu-Natal Premier Sihle Zikalala. He was speaking at an event to commemorate the 160th anniversary of the arrival of Indian indentured labourers held at the Shri Mariamman Temple in Mount Edgecombe yesterday. The premier paid homage to the indentured workers who were shipped from India and first arrived in South Africa on November 16, 1860. "We honour the courage, sacrifice and struggle of those 152 000 women, men and children. They span 1.5 million proud South Africans of Indian heritage," he said.

Zikalala said the Indian forefathers and mothers would be proud that people of different races had worked together to build schools, temples, hospitals, churches, *universities and mosques*. "No community has done this on their own. It has taken the

toil of all of us. Indian labourers were in the oppressive system that also saw the African migrant labour system prevailing in South Africa," he said. He said people should remember the heroes and heroines who fought for freedom. "We salute all of those who fought for the liberation of our country, who fought for the heritage of our society as a whole," said Zikalala.

He quoted Oliver Tambo, who in his acceptance speech for the 1980 Nehru Award of International Understanding in Delhi, capital of India said that after just two years of forced labour, Indians staged their first strike against the working conditions in Natal. "Tambo said their descendants, working and fighting for the future of their country, South Africa, retained the tradition of militant struggle and were today an integral part of the mass-based liberation movement in South Africa," he said. He said this proclamation was made with the understanding that South Africa belonged to all who lived in it.

(<https://www.iol.co.za/mercury/news/we-need-each-other-premier-sihle-zikalala>)



Picture: Doctor Ngcobo/African News Agency(ANA)

KWA-ZULU-NATAL Premier Sihle Zikalala (left) and the deputy chairperson of the Shri Mariamman Temple Society in Mount Edgecombe, KwaZulu Natal, places a garland on a monument honouring women during an event on 15th November 2020 to commemorate the 160th anniversary of the arrival of Indian indentured labourers in the country

Some heroines wear a white sari...

Desiree Priya Perumal

The history of Indians in South Africa is one that depicts many heroines'. Those who have faced unimaginable odds and exceptional circumstances to ensure that not just the Indian population but all people of colour in South Africa are able to live as one. However, heroines are not always those who have fought the struggle in public, attended the rallies or banded together to stand against the injustices face by the people of our beautiful country. Some of them were merely mothers, wives and women oppressed by their circumstances, who saw a vision for a better future and in their own silent ways encouraged and groomed their young to take hold of their futures and use their circumstances to their advantage.

This is one such account...

Amaravathy Rangen or Indenture no. 141056, as she was known, arrived at Port Natal in October 1909 on the Umzinto XLVI from Madras, with her father, Rangen Thasiry, mother, Kuppu Athimuran and her two older sisters, Thanji Rangen and Devanai Rangen. Amaravathy and her family were from North Arcot in India and were mere earth workers in their village. At the tender age of 3, together with her family she undertook the +/- 40-day journey, by sea to

an unknown land. Her parents were in search of a better future for her and her sisters and believed that this journey would ensure a better life for their daughters.

Once they arrived in Natal, the family were assigned to the Tongaat Central Sugar Co. Amaravathy's childhood saw her grow up surrounded by the shadows of Natal's own white gold. She was an intelligent and creative child and as the years wore on she went on to becoming big sister to 3 more girls and finally a brother. The standard of the time dictated that Amaravathy and her siblings were not able to gain any formal education however this never stopped this hard working young girl from joining her parents in their work in the sugar cane fields and learning as much as she could about the environment around her. Despite the poor working conditions and long, laborious hours Amaravathy's hard working nature was always evident to all who saw her.

By her 16th birthday, Amaravathy's father decided that he had to find the perfect husband for her, as he had done for her older sisters. Following the custom of arranged marriages at the time, the bride and groom only met at the wedding ceremony. So as the twilight gave way to the dawn, on a summer



June 2005. With my grandmother and her sister on the occasion of my 16th birthday. On my right, Jessie Munsamy. On my left, my grandmother, sari clad Govindammah Perumal

morning in early 1924, Amaravathy and her groom, Munsamy Chinnan were married at a ceremony that took place at 3am.

Married life for Amaravathy came with both joys and sorrows. Shortly after they got married Amaravathy and Munsamy had their first daughter, Ruby Soobramoney. Times were difficult, money and food were hard to come by. Munsamy had a difficult time finding permanent employment and opportunities for women, especially women of Indian descent were few and far between.

For many years Amaravathy sought employment at the homes of wealthier Indians in the form of housework, especially the washing of laundry. She had heard whispers in the community about factories opening in nearby areas and with her curiosity peaked and her need to support her new little family she ventured into the newly charted world of the "Clothing Factory". Having always had an interest in sewing and pattern making Amaravathy was employed as a machinist at a local factory in Lorne Street, in the now Durban Central Business District. She saw the clothing industry as a growing empire and encouraged many other young women to seek employment at the establishment she worked in. As the years passed and the clothing industry in South Africa grew, so did Amaravathy's little family. She gave birth to three more beautiful daughters, Jessie Munsamy, Govindammah Perumal and Dhano Munsamy. Her experiences working in the clothing industry also provided her with a new skill set and within a few years she had learnt how to create a designer men's formal shirt from a simple piece of fabric.

Her little family was once again going to be blessed with another little girl, Asothie Govender and Amaravathy finally believed that the tides were turning in their favour when tragedy struck. Amaravathy's worst nightmare came true when amidst all her efforts, 8-year-old Dhano suddenly fell ill and passed away. Amaravathy was devastated and left working to dedicate more time to her family however she never forgot the potential of the growing clothing industry and the independence that it offered the woman of the Indian community. She resolved to encourage her daughters to never be afraid to push the boundaries of the norm and to use every opportunity to be better. As they grew, she shared the skills she had learnt in



June 2005. My grandmother's youngest sister Asothie Govender

the clothing factory with them and all four went on to have successful careers within the clothing industry and to share Amaravathy's wisdom on life with their own children.

Amaravathy's greatest passion lied in her ability to help and inspire others, her calm and intelligent nature made her an unassuming opponent while her sharp wit and intelligent nature ensured that she was always someone people turned to if they were ever in need of a friend. A deeply religious woman, she put God and her family at the centre of all she did.

Renowned for the delicious aromas always wafting out of her kitchen, many remember a small framed, neatly attired woman, in her signature white sari, hair pulled back in a neat French braid stooped over a hot stove, eager to share what little she had with all who called to her home. In her last remaining years, the Group Areas Act allowed



August 1961. Munsamy Chinnan, my father Ronnie Perumal, as a baby, an unknown relative and Amaravathy Rangen at my Dad's 1st birthday

Amaravathy and her family to move out of Magazine Barracks into their own council home in Marigold Road, Asherville. A home, that her daughter Asothie and her family still live in today.

Amaravathy tragically passed away at the age of 78, when she collapsed a few roads away from her home, while on her way to attend the funeral of a relative but her tenacity and adventurous spirit were passed on from her daughters to their children and grandchildren.

Amaravathy was a woman who was never afraid to try something new, inspired by her parents, she took every opportunity to

ensure that her children had a better life than she did. Three generations later, I still feel her influence in the choices that I make and the encouragements I receive from my family. In her own, simple way, she inspired us, her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren to venture beyond our limits and to believe that the world is in the palms of our hands. Her dedication, sacrifice and simple encouragement are why I believe some heroins wear a white sari!

Dedicated to Amaravathy and all the mothers and wives, whose silent encouragements made us all great, as well as to Amaravathy's eldest and favourite grandson (my father), the late Mr. Ronnie Perumal.

Desiree is currently employed as a lecturer at the IIE Varsity College Waterfall campus in Gauteng. She is an avid reader and in her spare time enjoys learning new skills and spending time with her loved ones. She is a firm believer that life is a series of adventures and always manages to find the silver lining under any dark cloud.

My Grandparents went Back to India **Govindamma Moodley**

The story of Mrs. Moodley. My father was Munsamy Moodley and he was born in Madras, India. His father's name was Munsamy Moodley but his mother's name is not known to the family. They arrived in the Colony of Natal in South Africa on the 22nd of July 1911, travelling on the ship, the SS Umlazi. My grandparents returned to India in 1916 because they were offered the opportunity to go back to India. While they were in this country, the British plantation farmers expected them to cut trees, clean the land and plant sugarcane. They had no decent place to live and were given very little food to eat. In fact, their food was rationed and they received small packets of mealie meal, mealie rice, sugar, brown bread, a few vegetables and oil. They were treated very poorly - akin to modern day slavery despite

living and working during indentured times. They were paid a wage of 5 pence a week. At the time my father did not want to go back to India. He preferred to stay here because he enjoyed the climate and was comfortable within the community wherein he lived. He stayed with my maternal grandparents who also hailed from India. My father helped them by serving tea and running errands because he was still young. The family loved him. During this time, they lived in Magazine Barracks which was in Mt Edgecombe. They planted vegetables, fruit trees and sugarcane. They walked long distances without shoes. They did not have comfortable clothing. In 1916 there was still no world peace. During this time it was very difficult for people to move around without being caught in riotous acts.



Standing: My mum's eldest brother, Mr MS Reddy, youngest brother Johnny; second eldest brother Gopal
Sitting: Third brother Runga; my grandfather Moonsamy; my grandmother, Veeramma and fourth brother Vartha

My father, along with many other people who lived in magazine Barracks did not have access to proper food, water or clothing. They travelled by bus - called the Mynah - to and from their destinations. When my father was old enough, he started to work on the sugarcane fields. He was happy and respected his elders. His maternal grandparents loved him as if he were their own son. He lived with them for many years and worked hard.

My mother was Kistamma Reddy and she was the eldest daughter of nine children. She had six brothers and two sisters. My mother was a very kind and quiet person who liked to help others. My mother farmed a piece of land on lease. The farm was 13 acres. She rented it from the health department in Chatsworth. On this plot she planted fruit trees and vegetables which was sold at the morning market. She carried water and plucked the fruit and vegetables with her brothers and sisters.

My father was about 25 years old when he wanted to get married. He and some of the family members moved to Seven Tanks to build their tin- iron - and - wood house. They lived in this house for many years. Thereafter, my father and mother got married in Chatsworth on her 23rd birthday. They decided they wanted to live on their own so they moved to Chatsworth Bayview. They built a wood -and- iron house. They lived there for many years and had eight children- four boys and four girls. Their children were named Ponusamy, Pobathie, Gopaul, Visaluthme, Thiralindumi, Govindamah, Govindamma and Velutham.

My parents were not formally educated at school but through the school of life, living and learning, they knew how to survive; they started with what they knew - planting vegetables and fruit. They sold the produce in the market via hawking, mainly to white homes. They used the Banga – a long stick that is placed on the shoulder when you need to carry items. They also had a horse and cart. The horse's name was Lutchmee and she was brown and beige in colour. Lutchmee was a very calm horse and we enjoyed riding her. Our house had no running water, so we had to carry water from the pond for whatever we needed. In 1949 there was an outbreak of civil anarchy. My father was unaware of this.

The 1949 riots were a direct attack on Indians. My father went to sell his goods and was caught in the centre of this fighting. His legs were broken and we did not know where he was so we assumed he was dead. After the riots, my uncles went looking for him. Unbeknown to us, a stranger helped him and three weeks later he was brought home by this very stranger. In 1953 my father passed away. My siblings and I were still very young. My mother struggled to raise all of us.

My mother saved some money and bought a piece of land where she built a brick and tile house. She was indeed a role model and taught us many skills such as cooking, cleaning and gardening. Under her guidance, we learnt how to plant, nourish and harvest the crops. Observing her, we learnt how to distinguish when the fruit were ready. She allowed us to venture out into the world by sending us to the market to sell the harvested crop.

I am Govindamma (Gonnam) Moodley and I had the opportunity to attend Bayview Chatsworth School until standard 5. I left school at age 13 to help my mother on the farm. I did not look for industrial or other work as my mother was alone on the farm. My eldest brother, whom we affectionately called Daddy, went into Chatsworth to collect his insurance money when he met my future (not known to me at the time) mother-in-law Pushpa Moodley. She was looking for someone small to go through the window to open the door to her house as the children were locked inside. He identified a child in the vicinity nearby who could open the door. After the incident was settled, she engaged my brother in a serious conversation and mentioned that she is looking for a wife for her son.

Shortly, thereafter, the Moodley family visited our family home to introduce themselves to my sister, Govindamah. However, as she was older than their son, they asked for my hand in marriage. This was the nature of an arranged marriage which until the 1980s was quite popular in our country amongst the Indians. The concept of arranged marriages was brought down from India when indentured labourers settled in their country. Families would arrange marriages between young people according to caste, family names and other attributes.

Initially, Mr Bob Moodley's family lived in Port Shepstone. Thereafter, they shifted to 53 May Street in Durban where he was born. Bob went to Greyville Boys School and studied until standard 6. His family moved to Chatsworth in 1952. They lived there for many years. He worked at the Pelequin Hotel where he was a wine steward. On 3rd November 1968 Bob Krishna Moodley and I got married and we had three children. My daughter, the eldest, married Logan Pillay on the 3rd of November 1996. He unfortunately

passed away on 2nd November 2005. My elder son, Rajan married Sarah Moodley on the 30th of October 1998 and my youngest son married Avisha Moodley on the 17th of October 2004.

My husband started work at Reckett and Colman in 1977 as a line supervisor. In 1983 he had a heart attack which crippled him. He passed away in 2001. I have 6 grandchildren, Preshnee, Deshnee, Kasaven, Kaarmanie, Divya and Xander.



**My husband Bob Moodley and three children, son Rajan; daughter Premilla; youngest born Pregalathan.
Durban**

Born on the 3rd of January 1944, in Chatsworth Bayview, I am now 77 years old.

I am a member at the Rama Krishna Senior Citizens. Here we have prayer services where we sing songs and praise the lord. Visits from doctors ensure patient care. I am also a member of the Brinkvale Senior Citizens. I attend 3 times a week. We go out on trips and visit places and I also have lots of friends here. We laugh, share jokes and spend our mornings together sharing stories about our lives. I have been a member of the Brinkvale Senior Citizens for 20 years now. I love my family and friends very much.

A huge 3 legged pot sizzled over the open fire Nalini Pancham

It was a hazy morning with pockets of mist in the valley. The sun crept up the azure horizon. She lay on the bed racked with labour pains. This was her ninth delivery. Her seventh delivery gave her a set of twins, a boy and girl. Drenched in sweat a bouncy baby girl was born in November 1958, the tenth child of this adorable Mum was me, yes Me, and this is my story of an amazing woman who fought odds to bring up her ten children - six girls and four boys.

Growing up in this large family on a small farm holding never lacked for love. We had our fair share of arguments and this was diffused very quickly by Mum. Friendship and comradeship prevailed. One of the early lessons Mum taught us was to "patch up our differences". Dad emphasised "forgiveness" and his favourite line was 'For God to forgive you once you have to forgive someone ninety-nine times ninty-nine' which I have never calculated but I just knew it to be a huge number.

My parents, Kiwlapathy and Mahabir, who married in 1938 were proud farmers. Mum toiled the soil besides her adored labourers whom she regarded as her extended family. Our day started before sunrise. A huge 3 legged pot sizzled over the open fire cooking a pot of pap for the morning meal and lunch. Afternoon was putto with farm fresh vegetables or meat. Samp was also prepared. I also ended up in the line with my plate and sat beside the girls savouring our meal. We sat around a huge fire which was always burning in the evenings. I listened to the labourers speaking of *Nkoko*, my Mum. I learnt that she would not stop for lunch and used that hour to chat to her vegetables which she sowed herself. She would water the plants herself despite the installed irrigation system. They called her "*inganekwane yomama ehuhlaza*", the green mother fairy.

Such was my mother - the lady with the green fingers ... flowers of every hue blossomed amongst the vegetable patches. Growing up I could not tell whether it was a vegetable or flower farm that we had. The life of a farmer was a difficult one. Ma took pride in the presentation of the harvested crop.

Tomatoes were graded according to sizes and quality. With the very ripe soft ones we played bashing. Splash! Since I was the youngest I escaped the tomato fights and innocently splashed all. What a sight.



As a youngster, sari-clad,
ready for work on the farm



In her garden,
as the Matriarch of our family



**With her beloved labourers on the farm.
I remember them speaking of my Mum and I am filled with pride when I reminisce**

Potatoes were carefully washed and prudently graded. Today, I look at the quality and think of those glorious days in the farm when life was so carefree. Little did I realise that Ma made it so - not once showing us the hardships of being a farmer. Apartheid reared its ugly face and we lost our farm during the rezoning to the "whites". The animals and poultry had to be sold. We had to quietly downsize and quickly move - from the vast countryside of Cliffdale, which is about 40kms west of Durban to a small house in the suburb of Tongaat on the KwaZulu Natal North Coast. Ma showed us a happy face but

this move was draining her inner peace and guttering her happiness. Yet, she put on a smiling face and joyfully told us that now we will not be called *farmers* anymore. Incidentally, the term *farmers* had a negative connotation amongst local South African Indians as farming was viewed as consisting of menial tasks which did not require much skill nor quality education even though *farmers* and farming sustained humanity and included huge and varied responsibilities. Mum also shared that we shall have running water in our taps and electricity at the click of a switch.



**With her beloved labourers on the farm.
I remember them speaking of my Mum and I am filled with pride when I reminisce**

Having no high school in Cliffdale, I had to live with my aunt in Chatsworth and was always ridiculed and called a *farmer* by both fellow pupils and some teachers. Mum told me to stand up for myself and ask them "If it were not for the farmers what would you eat?" Those days on the farm will forever be etched in my mind as the happiest days of my life. Memories of Ma, the matriarch..., who dressed us in absolute splendour in fashionable gowned dresses of the season which were designed and personally stitched by her. She herself, was the centre of attraction with her elegantly draped sarie, moreover, she even wore saris to the farm to do farming!

Business being in their blood, Ma and Dad opened a general dealer store specialising in clothing. I helped them after school to run the shop and learnt business acumen from an early age. I witnessed Mum being a "calculator". Doing the math mentally and giving the correct change. Her memory was impeccable. She could pinpoint in the store-room where items were placed. Dad Being the independent woman that she was, on her travel to India, she purchased aused to continually say, "just ask Mum". Unfortunately, being in the confines of a shop did not appeal to Mum.

Mum bought a smallholding of 5 acres and gave up the shop to go back to her passion of farming. Dad was overjoyed. After Dad's passing, Mum chose to live alone being the independent woman the tourist hotspots of

South Africa from the strawberry and wine farms of Cape Town to the Maize triangle in the now Mpumalanga. From Mozambique she sent us postcards of the luscious prawns. In Zimbabwe she cruised Lake Victoria Falls.

Mum spent her retirement with her children and grandchildren. The grandchildren became the apple of her eye and she shared her wisdom of the land to them. Living alone in a house was not an ideal situation for Mum. She valued her independence. After much coercion she sold off her assets and came to live with me for a short while. Thereafter, she moved to a granny flat at my brothers place - once more gaining her much loved freedom and true independence.

Being the independent woman that she was, on her travel to India, she purchased a beautiful white *banares sari* with gold work. She prepared in advance for the day she was to depart this world, leaving in a small bag her items of clothing that she was to be dressed in, her will and money for her final expenses.

Kiwapathy Mahabir (23/10/1923 – 21/12/2019) left us with unforgettable memories...Nalini Pancham is the offspring of Kiwapathy and Parthab Mahabir. She is married to Robin Pancham and they have two sons and an adorable daughter. Nalini is the youngest child of her loving parents who have departed from this earthly plane. They shared a tremendous love story for 48 glorious years.



2019. Durban, South Africa. The family at Mum's 97th birthday.
I am sitting next to Mum

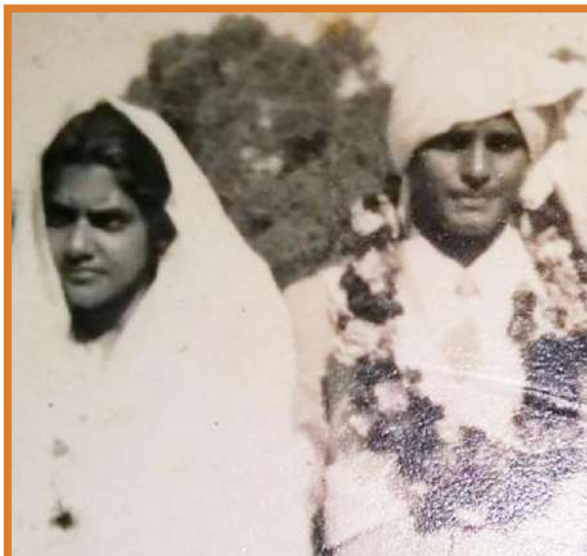
Basmathi Biseswar (née Jeebodh) was born on Zeelager Farm Roxana Kishun and Romola Maharaj

Basmathi was born on 22 April 1931 at Zeelager Farm Estcourt in Northern KwaZulu-Natal. Her dad, Dasrath Jeebodh was a prominent businessman in Dundee and later relocated. Her mum was popularly known as Miss Roopai of Greytown. Basmathi had five brothers Harry, Mike, Sewpersadh, Huribunse and Ganesh and one sister Phoolmathie. While life was tough in the early years, the family survived on the love and support of her parents. The Indentured ancestry, family roots and geographical area of India where they came from is not known.

She attended a school on the farm until standard 6 and was forced to leave to assist with the daily household chores as well as taking care of her ailing mother. Her father had a stall in the town's morning market. As a young woman she assisted her father to sell fruit and vegetables in the market. Life was tough as she had to get up early in the morning to milk the cows, gather wood and fetch coal to prepare meals for her family. There was no time nor opportunity for further education.

As a result of the poverty on the farm, Basmathi together with her parents and siblings moved to Durban. They resided in First Avenue, Greyville. Life was untenable and difficult in Durban. Thereafter, the family relocated to 181 Alexander Street, Estcourt which became her

permanent residence. As a teenager one can only imagine the hardships that she had to endure in supporting the family. Basmathi assisted her father in selling fruits & vegetables, while tending to her siblings as her mother was sick. Her parents wanted the best education for their children. Gyanpersadh Biseswar who was a teacher at New Hanover High School married 18 year old Basmathi.



On their wedding day in traditional gear, the sari, sash and turban



Romola on the left and twin Roxana on the right with Mum in the centre. In 1953 the girl twins were 6 months old. Indian Hindu tradition was prevalent and practiced among the descendants in South Africa. Culturally, the black dot was placed on the child's forehead. The reason for the black dot is to keep away evil eyes. According to Romola, "This was shared with us as children by the elders"

Basmathi and Gyanpersadh had five children - their first born Veena Ramkisson, a daughter became a successful teacher; second were Romola Maharaj and Roxana Kishun, a set of female twins (authors of this submission) who were born prematurely. With the love and attention of their mother they survived, grew up, later married and are living well. Sadly one of the second set of male twins Anil Rai Biseswar passed away when he was 18 months old. This was a devastating blow to Basmathi and her family. She was, of course, an immensely proud mother to be blessed with two sets of twins. The Biseswar's got married in 1949 which was an exceedingly difficult period in South Africa's history. The anti-Indian sentiments were traumatic. Basmathi was not directly affected during this unstable period but life continued to be tormented by the strict apartheid system formally introduced in 1948.

Like her family she was confined to the Estcourt area and not given the opportunity to support her family in a free society. As the writers, when we reflect on her life, we wish that she had a better future. Her resilience and strength no doubt played a pivotal role in keeping the family intact. During the fifties and sixties while taking care of her children, she simultaneously took care of her husband's brothers and her father-in-law. She had to care for her husband's brothers as her mother-in-law died leaving behind two young boys. The Biseswar's took care of the two younger brothers and they were partly assisted by an uncle. Basmathi handled the responsibilities for the household. She was expected to provide care for everyone, such as washing their clothes, preparing meals and attending to the daily household chores. She was the only daughter-in-law and they all lived together. She entertained guests from all over South Africa who frequently visited and stayed in the family "home." During the first part of her marriage she and her family lived in Raisethorpe, Pietermaritzburg. Life was extremely difficult as her husband was the sole breadwinner in the family. Even in Pietermaritzburg she



The Old Lady Basiswar

walked a long distance to fetch water and attended to various other household chores. Later the family moved to Sydenham in Durban. She related her life story to her children. She was devoted to them and nurtured them to be decent human beings. As the daughters were growing up, she taught them to cook curries, prepare breyanis and make roti. Under the watchful eye of their mother they learnt to cook. Basmathi and her husband were aware that children also needed to participate in extra-curricular activities and she supported her daughters Veena, Romola and Roxana who participated in gymnastics, high jump, long jump and netball. The daughters excelled in netball and were selected to represent the province in tournaments in South Africa. Their talent was stifled as the apartheid system restricted their participation in national sports. Basmathi was once again disappointed that the system deprived her daughters of the opportunity to participate in activities in which they excelled. Basmathi ensured that her children received the best education there was. She ensured that her children were also ready for the workplace. Her eldest daughter became a teacher,

Romola worked at an Attorney's Company in KwaZulu Natal, while Roxana spent a decade in the United States of America. She worked at the University of Southern California in the International Office. Indeed, Basmathi was a proud mother as all of her children aspired to great heights and achieved success despite

living under harsh conditions especially during apartheid and racial tensions. In her lifetime she was able to see South Africa develop into a democracy. Basmathi loved her grandchildren who also emulate aspects of their grandmother's life. She was able to influence the grandchildren where tradition, culture and values systems are concerned. Indeed a holistic experience for the grandchildren who themselves are now parents. There has never been, nor will there be, anything quite as special as a love between a mother and her children. This phenomenal, dedicated, compassionate and hardworking person was our Mum She defined resilience. She had such faith and was a very giving and positive person. Our house was like a central hub for family and friends; no one ever left hungry or without feeling a bit better than they did when they arrived. We miss her very much.



Romola Maharaj (Left): I am a retiree. I am blessed to have a daughter, a son, their spouses and four grandchildren. I live in Effingham, Durban. My husband is Pundit Praveen Maharaj.

Roxana Kishun (Right): I am married to Roshen Kishun and we have two sons. The eldest is married. My husband and I lived in the United States of America for ten years. My hobbies are cooking, reading and gardening.



My Mother's Journey

Premilla Gokul Sitaram, 27 March 1939 - 04 July 2013

Varsha Singh

My sisters and I are incredibly lucky to have had the unconditional love of our mother, Premilla Gokul Sitaram. Love, happiness, integrity and trust are some of the best gifts passed on by our mother. Today, as the four of us stand in different parts of the world as strong women we have a lot to attribute to our Mother for whom we have become. Rayanta lives in the United Kingdom and works for SAP as Chief Customer Engagement officer. Aarthi is a teacher and lives and works in Australia while Veetha is a philanthropist and lives in Durban, South Africa.

Our mum was the eldest of eight children, seven sisters, Lallie, Umi, Prashantha (late), Sashie, Pravisha and Senyuktha and her brother, Joy (late). Just as she has touched our lives so has she inspired each of her siblings. My mum was born and grew up in Isipingo Rail which is in the south of Durban in KwaZulu Natal. Her parents Samsunder and Chandramoni Gokul were Hindus and pioneers of Isipingo Rail. They were pioneers and amongst others provided the land for the building of a school in Isipingo Rail – Gokul Primary school. It was from them that she learnt the values of family and giving to the

community. Mum attended Isipingo State Aided Primary school (also attended by my sisters and I). She then went onto Durban Girls High school.

Mum and dad met in January 1961 through mutual family friends and were married on 16 December 1962 in Isipingo Rail. Mum was a dedicated wife to Johnny Sitaram who was a schoolteacher. Together they made a great team – working together bringing up their daughters, being there for their families and the community as well as enjoying dancing and travelling.

To me, when I think of our mum and all that she accomplished in her quiet and gentle way I am reminded of this quote of Mahatma Gandhi *"in a gentle way, you can shake the world"*. For a woman of her generation, a generation when women had limited opportunities - our Mother accomplished many things. Mum was hard working and an enterprising woman who gave the phrase "work life balance", real meaning. I do not know how she did it – making sure we had our meals, taking us to after school activities, doing community work and running her



Rayanta Rana, Premilla, Johnny, Varsha Singh, Aarthi Govender and Veetha Sewkuran
(The Last Hurrah!!)

business. She had two successful businesses – a garden service (KRSNA garden services) and a florist (Tammy's florist). Both businesses were chosen due to her love for gardening and flowers. In both businesses mum employed women and men from the local community, Isipingo (garden service) and Chatsworth (florist). At the same time she also made time to serve on the parent committees of our schools and in the Girl Guide movement – raising much needed funds and providing support to activities. In addition, she was as an accomplished dress-maker, a skill she acquired after studying under the late Ms Gonum Pillay in Durban after high school. Mum shared both dress making and floristry skills with other women in the community, her sisters, daughters and many friends.

She is an inspiration to us and someone we everyday aspire to be like. Let us not forget what an amazing cook and entertainer mum was. She hosted family, friends and strangers at her dinner table and made them feel welcomed and comfortable. There are so many favourite dishes but mums' fish biryani was amazing – to this day every time I cook it I try for the perfect dish that in a small way resembles hers.

Mum was also a good counsellor and she made time to listen and give guidance to many – family, friends, and colleagues. Being

the eldest daughter - in - law she was supportive to the family – my cousins have fond memories of her –

"I had the privilege of living with Mrs Premila Sitaram fondly known to me as my big Mamie (my aunt – in Hindi – Mamie refers to my mother's brother's wife) for over two years whilst completing my secondary schooling in Isipingo. Being the elder sister amongst her siblings and the eldest daughter - in- law in the Sitaram family she served as an inspiration and a role model to both family members, friends, nephews and nieces. As a mother she achieved her goals of ensuring that her four daughters were well educated and equipped with life skills to live independent and successful lives in a global society. As a wife she complimented and supported my uncle Mr Johnny Sitaram to enable him to pursue the various leadership roles he trailed across community and sporting fraternities of our country. She had a very fiery entrepreneurial spirit and saw no boundaries or barriers that prevented her from venturing into many successful business initiatives ranging from home gardening to garden services and finally to becoming a florist" Bob Dilrajh, nephew.

Mum loved to travel with dad. Together they travelled to many places and made visits to their daughters who live overseas. The memory that stands out for me is meeting

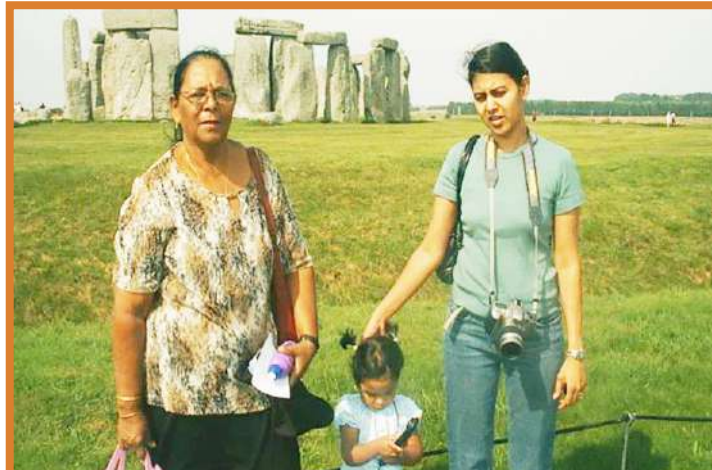


Family time with Johnny and her sisters and brothers-in-law

mum in London while she was visiting my sister Rayanta and she being my guide for the day at Greenwich.

Our mothers' legacy of character, love, wisdom, encouragement and faith will definitely be passed on by us to her grandchildren and her great grandchildren. I will forever be grateful for having a Mother like Premilla who continues to be my role model and inspiration!! My Mother is the embodiment of a perfect wife, mother, friend, and colleague – the standard I will continue to strive for.

"My mother was my role model before I even knew what that word was" Lisa Leslie. This is so true not just for me but for all daughters. I love you Mum, Varsha.



Stonehenge, England. Mum, Tehya (granddaughter) and Rayanta (daughter)



Mum interacting with village people in Kashmir, India

Varsha Singh Varsha is committed to the creation of world-class organisations and bettering the quality of lives of people in developing economies with specific focus on Africa. Her career spans over 25 years across various roles in South Africa, Africa and Internationally within the Tax, Customs, and International landscape. Her passion is to inspire and enable organisations and people to unleash their full potential and to empower them to meet their goals. Varsha is married to Navin Singh and they have a son Kunaal- Sher.

21st January 2013 was a day of reflection and sudden realisation

Shereen Singh

9:00 PM, 20th January 2013, this is the time etched in my mind. It remains the most memorable and treasured conversation with the most amazing lady in my life. We talked about her health, my health, my children's academic pursuits and the conversation finally moved to me giving her detailed medical assurance for the next day, which sadly never came.

On the outskirts of KwaZulu Natal, a North Coast town called Stanger, lies tucked away. In a tranquil little village for Indians called Kearsney, on the 15 November 1942, a humble couple, Sukrani and Ramnath were blessed with a beautiful little girl. Being the eldest of seven children and being a female did not augur well for the privileges to education. Since times were financially challenging, education for this lady was limited to only Standard 4 (Currently Grade 6). Despite this, she grew up standing strong and courageously alongside her parents and six siblings. For

within her lay the nurturing, nourishing and supportive traits which helped the family break free from the bondage of limitations.

She would fondly reminisce of her school days recalling the warm organic meals which were served in the soup kitchen. She recited these treasured moments with love and gratitude often asking her siblings if they remembered them too. We always asked the million-dollar question: How did you and Dad meet? You were from Stanger and Dad from Newcastle.... and so, the story continues....As she blossomed into this virtuous, responsible, and hardworking young lady she was sent off to a relative's home in Durban. Perhaps because he was financially more stable or perhaps to enlist a suitor for her... who knows! So taken aback was my paternal grandfather by her culinary skills and respect, that he immediately sought for her hand in marriage to my dad. Many a visitor would vouch for her speed in whipping up a



**Mum and Dad, KH Singh and Veenapathie Singh
in the early days**

delicious traditional Indian meal inclusive of roti within an hour without the need for rsvp. Her life was certainly not a bed of roses. Can you imagine having two children, being pregnant and suddenly as fate would have it, you are now living in a stable? This was when she was blessed with my second brother. As life went on, she just stood strong defying all moments of adversity. She forgave all who inflicted harm upon her and reunited family members. So pure were her intentions.

Her countenance was one of grace and poise. Her marriage to my Dad, Mr. KH Singh was till death parted them on 18 November 2001. I was always intrigued by the relationship which they shared. I never bore witness to anger, quarrels or moodiness. How did they keep such a balanced nature? "It's all about respect", she would say. Save all your drama for your room, not for public consumption. Such was her wisdom. Her humbleness and acute intelligence were the strength my dad eked off in his business ventures. Together they made a formidable team. They ran a successful transport business, Singhs Sands, together. Her characteristics, values and skills are ubiquitous in our family. She was a

beacon of hope, strength, courage and emitted a light which shone brightly wherever she went.

Upon reflection, I often wondered how did she accomplish all that she did? Well, she was certainly a mastermind and a master planner! All roles were skillfully scheduled from 6:00 AM to 5:00 PM. We the children, her three sons, Dhuram, Prem, Heera and I, only daughter, were scheduled into completing household chores, running errands for neighbours, attending cultural classes and gardening. Notwithstanding all this, we were still given golden minutes, time to play with children in the neighbourhood and watch television, when that finally arrived.

My brothers are all businessmen. Administration was a skill akin to this brilliant lady. Amid her chores, we would be seated at the table to complete our homework diligently. It would not be long after that when we would be rewarded with a hearty family meal accompanied, without fail, with hot roti. Tiredness was certainly not in her vocabulary. Giving her children the opportunity to further their education was her goal. Despite being



From left to right: My children Selisha Ramduth and Shivekk Ramduth, my mother Veenapathie Singh and I, Shereen Singh

the only daughter, I was privileged to continue with my studies in Durban. Irrespective of not having any lofty titles behind her name, I can unequivocally articulate that no university can confer a degree worthy of her intelligence. She was a lady of great calibre and a humanitarian at heart. As the years flew by, we witnessed the artist within her.

It was when she joined the NOFTA (NEW-CASTLE ORGANIZATION FOR THE AGED) CLUB in Newcastle, she indulged this platform to share and further develop her own growth mindset. Participating in plays, singing songs, painting, sewing, and travelling were just some of the joys which resonated not only with her four children, but also her nine grandchildren. She instilled in us certain philosophies which we witnessed her live her life by: "do it now" "do not say I cannot do it" and "cleanliness is next to Godliness". Respect for the environment was a value which was inculcated into our daily lives from a very young age. We were ingrained with life skills which we all carry through in our lives. Her daily mantra chant was: NEVER WASTE ANYTHING (FOOD, WATER, ELECTRICITY AND TIME). She was the Golden thread which decorated not only her immediate family but the extended family as well. Her unconditional love for her siblings remains unparalleled. Her brothers are Choonilal, Rajan, Jairaj and Bhim. To date, their eyes still swell up at the mere mention of her. Her presence resonated positive vibrations with young and old alike. Her humility and supportive nature won many hearts, locally and abroad.

This lady was MY MUM: Veenapathie Singh, who taught me to be limitless.

V: Valuable

E: Encouraging **E:** Engaging

N: Nourishing **A:** Adoring

P: Persevering

A: Attention to detail **T:** Telepathic

H: Hard-working **I:** Intelligent

E: Energetic



I am **Shereen Ramduth**. Being determined and maintaining a philosophy of the cup is always half full has allowed me to enjoy a myriad of challenges in my life. I currently reside in Abu Dhabi, UAE where I have been teaching Mathematics for the past 5 years. My life purpose is to constantly develop a world of better, brighter children who will serve their families unconditionally.

My Daddy was Orphaned at 9 Abigail Sienna Govender

I am Abigail Sienna Govender, presently in Grade Seven at ML SULTAN'S St. Mary's Primary School in Merebank, which is approximately fourteen kilometres from Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. My school is an urban, public, primary school. I was always interested in the name of my school and decided to do my own research. Mulukmahomed Lappa Sultan known as ML Sultan was born in Kerala State in South India on the 5th of February 1873. He received his education in India. In 1890, ML Sultan migrated to South Africa in search of greener pastures. At the age of eighty he was very spiritual. Simultaneously, Mr Sultan was also a wealthy businessman with a strong belief that young Indians should be educated to prepare themselves for future employment. This was not possible for indentured and passenger Indians in South Africa. In 1941, the ML SULTAN Charitable and Educational Trust was formed. Mr Sultan donated money for the ML SULTAN Technical College and various other educational centres in Pietermaritzburg and to the North and

South Coasts of Natal. The ML SULTAN Technikon is now referred to as the Durban University of Technology or DUT. The late Hajee ML Sultan was a South African Philanthropist, being amongst one of the most generous of his time. St. Mary's School is a benefactor of the ML SULTAN Trust, hence, the name of my school: ML SULTAN'S St. Mary's Primary School.

This is the last year for me at my school and today, 15th March 2021, will forever be etched in my mind as it was absolutely amazing when I was called out at the morning assembly. The principal, Mr R.Ramdeen announced the names of the new prefects and I was elated to be one of the leaders for 2021 at my school. I live with my

maternal grandparents - Parvathy and Poobalan Naidu and my daddy - Terence Govender takes care of me. I love knowing about my family history therefore I asked my daddy about his interesting family tree.



2020: In Phoenix, Durban, South Africa. Me - Abigail Sienna Govender (12), my daddy, Terence Govender (34) and my beautiful loving Sheila Ma (68)

When I talk to my daddy about his family he becomes very sad. We went to visit his Auntie Sheila in Phoenix so that I could get to know more about his side of the family. Daddy calls her Sheila Ma. Daddy told Sheila Ma that I wanted to know more about his parents. Sheila Ma is a loving and caring grandma. She proceeded to tell me about how she came about taking care of my daddy when he was very little.

My paternal grandmother, Sindha Moodley had six sisters and three brothers, unfortunately, one brother passed away at a very young age. My grandmother was a very bubbly person, full of fun and laughter. She was the fourth amongst the six sisters. Her family rented in Chatsworth.

Sheila Ma says that initially, they grew up in Cato Manor, together with their parents. Thereafter, the Group Areas Act of June 1950 was enforced by the Government. Certain residential areas were allocated for each race group in South Africa. This Act was one of the main legal instruments used to reinforce Apartheid, emphasise the provision of separate residential areas, educational services and other amenities for the different races.

The Indians that were living in areas such as Mayville, Cato Manor, Clairwood, Bluff and Riverside were forcibly removed from their homes and moved into the two main townships, which were Chatsworth and Phoenix. Life was very difficult for Sheila Ma and her family without their own home. At least the family was still together. They would continuously apply for houses through the House of Delegates. That was the rule then if you wanted your own home.

Grandma Sindha worked in Student Prince Factory in Clairwood, South of Durban in KwaZulu Natal. When she met my paternal grandfather, Rony Govender, at her cousin's house, it was 'love at first sight'. They fell in love, got married and had a child. He is my daddy, Terence Govender. Thereafter, they moved to Cato Manor. Dr Ronnie Govender received a Commonwealth Writers' Prize for a play where he introduced humanity to Cato Manor. Friends and colleagues of the acclaimed playwright are describing him as a pioneer of theatre. He is best known for his books – 'At the Edge' and 'Other Cato Manor Stories' – which were prescribed in schools. My daddy grew up in Cato Manor, an area, highly conflicted in South African history.



**L-R: Three sisters - Sindha Moodley, Mogie Moodley,
Gonam Moodley - Sheila Ma**

Ronnie Govender (1934 - 2021) was born in Cato Manor, Durban, and had strong feelings about this community.

My grandmother was asthmatic and her condition became so severe with her breathing that she had to leave work at the age of forty two. My grandmother was very ill and needed to be hospitalised. Before she went to the provincial hospital, King Edward 8th Hospital, my dear grandmother spoke to her sister Sheila. She asked Sheila Ma that should anything happen to her, would Sheila Ma please take care of her son Terence. Sadly, my grandmother was in a coma for two weeks and passed away thereafter, in October 1996. My daddy, the only child, was only nine years old when his mum passed away. Tragedy struck again. Nine months later, his daddy passed away. My daddy lost both his parents when he was only nine years old. I have never met my paternal grandparents however I know that they are guiding and protecting my daddy and me.

Gonam Moodley(Sheila), was born on the 14th of September 1952. She is my late grandmother's third sister. She also had a close bond with all her siblings. Sheila Ma, as we fondly refer to her, went to River View Government Indian School but she left school

at the age of fourteen. It was accepted in the sixties if you left school in Grade Eight. Sheila Ma had many friends in school. She was a qualified cutter at the age of twenty and worked at Man About Town Clothing Factory in Mobeni which is not far from Chatsworth. She worked there from 1968 until 1972. She was the head cutter. Her job was to cut the lining for the suits which were ready to be sewn. Sheila and Logan Reddi were married on the 2nd of December 1973. They went to live in Phoenix. Sheila Ma finally got her own home, approved by the House of Delegates. They have four children- Vino, Mala, Cassie and Dean.

Sheila Ma took care of my daddy as well after his parents passed away. She instilled good values in my daddy by teaching him cleanliness and respect. She ensured that he completed his Matric. Each of her children love my daddy and they regard him as their brother. My daddy loves his cousins and refers to them as his three sisters and brother. Thanks to Sheila Ma, late Grandpa Logan, his sisters and brother, my daddy is now an independent, responsible and intelligent young man. My daddy is now thirty four years old and takes care of me. He teaches me good values and wants the very best for me.



Terence Govender, Cassie, Sheila Ma, Mala carrying baby Cherise and Vino Moodley

I am so honoured to dedicate this story to my paternal grandparents - Rony and Sindha Govender and to Sheila Ma and the late Logan Reddi. Love Prevails.

My future mother-in-law with the present title: Saviour Kaminee Moonsamy

On the 14th of April 2019, after 25 years of life, I finally understood the bond between mother and daughter. I was in hospital for just over a week with a catheter inserted into my neck for a medical procedure when suddenly my pulse dropped during the treatment. Various machines were put onto me and the medical team began banging on my chest as I was slipping in and out of consciousness. Whilst the medical staff were resuscitating me in hospital, Aneesha Dayanarain began pleading with God to protect me in a frenzy of prayer whilst she was at the temple. An hour later when she came to the hospital to see me she then realised that her sudden exchange with God happened the way it did because of what the staff just told her. It was that day that fate had given me a woman who felt for her child before knowing what transpired- that kind of intuition is only bestowed on the person best known to the world as 'mother'.

Aneesha - a phenomenal woman, a woman that depicts strength and courage, is my future mother-in-law. Yes, you read correctly. There is a stigma attached to the relationship between a mother and her daughter-in-law but my story is one that will debunk this negative stereotype. I am in no way dismissing that some relationships can be toxic but I also want to share a sense of hope for future daughters-in-law and that is, your mother-in-law can be your saviour, like mine is for me.

We share a bond so unique and maybe that is because our paths of healing were similar. Our healing led to a double triumph and that culminated in me finding a mother and her finding a daughter.

Seven years ago, in 2013 I was introduced as Avinal Dayanarain's girlfriend and today I have become just as valued as a biological Dayanarain daughter would have been. This family has accepted, loved, taught and respected me. From sharing secrets, venting to each other, empowering each other and shopping to our hearts content, we are so



"Nobody can love you the way your own mother can love you"

A popular adage, true in so many ways. I want to add that this beautiful woman standing next to me did not give birth to me but loves me more than that of a birth mother to her new-born.

My future mother-in-law Aneesha and me - Kaminee

connected. How did this union begin? I will tell you.

Aneesha was born on the 8th of April 1968 to Ramdayal and Saraswathie Gobind who were overjoyed with the arrival of their first child. Nani never worked a day in her life and nana was a tailor all his life. Together they had 4 children, Aneesha, Ravlyn, Navita and the youngest was a boy, Yogesh. All raised in Merebank, Durban South in KwaZulu Natal, in their family home that was passed on from one generation to the next.

This was a home filled with heritage, heart and wholesome family recipes where Aneesha was nurtured since birth. Growing up with three siblings, Aneesha being the eldest required more attention due to being Asthmatic.

Needless to say, Nani and Nana raised their four children with utmost care and instilled all the morals and values that they live by today passing it onto their children!

With being as open-minded and fun loving as they could be, they still demonstrated what is expected of young women and men in the Indian society that we live in today as growing up in the Apartheid era life was not easy especially if you are woman and not of colour. In the Indian community back then, ladies were never encouraged to follow their dreams and ambition. As little girls they learnt from their mums and grandma's that they need to take care of their homes, their families and serve their communities. Cooking, cleaning and taking care of your husband, his family and your children was the only kind of "career" women were encouraged to have as this was the ideal representation of what an Indian wife/mum should be but the girls of the Gobind household were raised differently and were taught independence. This broke the stigma of "your purpose in life is only to be a housewife." Living in the apartheid era, women were subordinate to men and this applied in varying degrees within the different race groups. It was men who had the authority in society and were responsible for decision making in both their families and the communities that they lived in.

The struggle for freedom from oppression, community rights and most importantly gender equality was vastly ignored in history. Defying all odds, Aneesha never let society intimidate her or her goals. She knew what she wanted and what she had to do to achieve it whilst fulfilling all her household responsibilities as well.

Aneesha went to P.R.P Secondary, where she met her future husband Ashwin Dayanarain. With her high school sweetheart at her side, she was ambitious and independent. She studied Pharmacy at the then historically Indian University of Durban - Westville (post 1994 after mergers, now University of KwaZulu Natal) but discovered that she was talented in other fields too and switched to Information Technology at the ML Sultan Campus, now called Durban University of Technology. Whilst studying she went on to pursue her career, at the age of 19, at the Department of Education as a clerk and married her sweetheart in the same year.



Aneesha and her siblings: youngest sister Navita, only brother Yogesh and younger sister Ravlyn

Little did she know that as her family was growing so would her career.

Everything she wanted from a little girl was finally happening. From one department to the next she became a state accountant in the Provincial Department of Sport and Recreation. Amidst all this growth she had two children, Ashlyn and Avinal.

She juggled between raising kids, working full-time, studying part-time and dealing with her health in-between until one day her eldest son fell ill at the age of 8 and was diagnosed with Leukaemia. Having undergone treatment for 5 years and receiving constant care, he has been in remission since. Ashlyn's illness did not, however, get the better of her. It encouraged her to become a mother who needed to display a sense of hope so that they both could be okay. With her son's health being priority, work was at the bottom of her list but she continued to balance work and life with such tenacity.

Her drive for success revived when her kids were older and started to achieve their own success. She grew from year to year and in 2019 became Assistant Director of Finance and, thereafter, she became the Assistant Director of Information Technology (current occupation) at the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Sports and Recreation.

It is the beginning of December 2018, that month where we diet all year long to eat with no limits, right? Not for me. I started ignoring strange physical symptoms at first. I tried to

carry on with the festivities until I could not ignore the way I was feeling anymore. My doctor conducted a few tests and then I was off to Johannesburg for a brief holiday. Whilst there my doctor prescribed a B12 injection, with a warning not to bump myself and an order to see her upon my return to Durban. It was Christmas Eve and I did not get a chance to go to her until the 30th. She had many concerns and said she needed to make an appointment for me with the Haematologist. This doctor said I needed to have a Bone Marrow Biopsy and those results revealed Acute Promyelocytic Leukaemia, a type of cancer that effects white blood cells.

With a positive mindset I began treatment which was a painful process for the first half of 2019. During this transition and treatment, I lost myself, my hair and my bubbly personality. In January 2019, my fiancé's mum became mine and we developed a different kind of bond. A bond that went from shopping together, to her giving me bed baths and ensuring I have everything I need to fight this battle. She gave me strength when I was at my weakest and wiped my tears like the earth absorbed rain.

Most of my memories of staying in hospital became a blur and I doubt I could have endured any of those days without her love, support and willingness to heal me. One may think life is so unfair to her because she had to relive those years with Ashlyn with me. I know it must have brought back painful memories but things are clearer now. This woman whom I have the pleasure of calling my mum today was chosen to become a soldier for young people fighting internal and external wars. I was lucky enough to have her protection, love and kindness during my war and I make a promise to her that I will always be at her side during any battle she faces.



Performing one of the rituals at their Hindu wedding

Mum and I are looking forward to planning Avi's and my wedding which is scheduled for January 2022. She is patiently waiting to start our wedding shopping and if we are lucky, perhaps a trip to India (COVID-19 dependent of course!). This will be both a spiritual journey and a chance for my queen and her princess (her nickname for me) to have another fun-filled adventure. Today, mum has transitioned from working 7:30am-4pm in the office to cleaning and cooking on alternate days because of the national state of disaster and the lockdown regulations. She has succumbed to shining the oven more than her usual routine...

*Oh! How I adore you Aneesha...how I love you mum.
#curedfromcancerwithkissesbyAneesha*

Kaminee was born in St Aidan's Hospital, Durban on the 17th of May 1993 and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree from Pearson Institute of Higher Education in 2016. Currently, she is a Student Affairs Adviser at a reputable institute fulfilling her passion of supporting students and empowering young minds.

International Stories: Across the Continents

...breaking down barriers

Dr Kogie Archary

I walked across the road
Never thinking I would sail across the oceans
Time transported me over the continents
Everyday, something new, something rare
Racing against time, we packed and left
Never a second to be lost
Ambition strong, keeping the fire alight
Testing my patience, never to flicker
International waters we crossed, my family and I
On a sailing ship back in the 1930s
Native journeys, naive as I look back Alas, across the continents
Longing for peace, I flew from country to country

Searching, sighing, sighting
To this beautiful land, we owe our allegiance
Our tomorrows are gounded, we have berthed
Reaching new destinations, new places
I allowed myself to breathe, a breathe of fresh air
Each day a new experience, a slice to my heart
Such beauty abounds amidst the pain and suffering

Aching for new adventures, bloodshed along the way
Crossing many watering holes, streams, pools and rivers
Resisiting nature, fighting the wild
Ostrasizing ourselves, onwards we trekked
Step by step
Skipping along the way, when our hearts were light!

Tested every now and then
Honourbound to our motherland
Each of us tried...a new life awaited!

Catastrophes along the way
Our varied paths, strewn with challenges
Nesting along this journey
Time helped us cope
Inner strenght forced us forward
Near breaking point our company
Each day, we stepped up
Nearing our final destination Tearfully we left our homes
Silently we sough forgiveness for leaving loved ones behind!

My Journey from Sierra Leone to South Africa

Dr Claudine Hingston

I am Claudine Anita Cassandra Hingston (nee Beckley) and I was born in Freetown, Sierra Leone on the 15th of September 1970. I sometimes wish that I had been given one African name at least. I however do understand how I came about my names. I am Krio by ethnicity. The Krio people of Sierra Leone are descendants of freed slaves and re-captives who settled in Freetown. Most of the freed slaves had been given western names by their slave masters and there has been a persistence of these western names over the years. I grew up in an extended family with my parents, Cashopeh and Modupeh Beckley, my elder sister, Victoria, aunts, grandmothers and cousins. It was a rule in our house to pray as a family every morning and to go to church on Sundays. My parents also believed in the value of education and they were determined to give my sister and I a sound education. At the age of three, I started pre-school at the Central Nursery School in Freetown and at the age of five (on my birthday), I started primary school, Class One, at the Leone Preparatory School, also in Freetown.

When I was about seven years old, we moved from the city to a village on the outskirts of Freetown known as Allen Town. As it was a bit far from my school, I had to wake up at 5am every day to do house chores and prepare for school. One of the chores was to light the fire which involves going to the outside kitchen and using wood or charcoal to start a fire to cook breakfast and boil water for tea and bath. I did not like doing this as I had to be on the lookout for snakes which had the tendency to slither into our compound from nearby bushes. I usually left the house at 6.30 am for school and sometimes ate breakfast on my way to school. Another challenge of living in Allen Town, was that there was no pipe borne water and we had to fetch water from a stream. The good side though was that there were a lot of fruit trees around and we grew vegetables as well. Thus, fruits and vegetables were always available and we also had livestock such as pigs, goats and sheep. On the whole, life went on with few hitches and all too soon it was time to progress to secondary/high school.



Sept 2020, Durban, my 50th birthday with my family in Durban, daughter Naomi Danica, husband Egerton and son Egerton Junior

A week before my 11th birthday, I entered the gates of the Annie Walsh Memorial School to start my secondary school journey. The Annie Walsh Memorial School is the oldest girls secondary school in Sierra Leone and West Africa. I was put in Form One 1 A, where all the youngest girls were placed. I made many new friends and sailed through to Form 3, always in the A class. However, on getting to Form 4, the excitement of being a senior went to my head and I did not focus much on my studies. To my horror, I had to repeat Form 4. This was a wakeup - call for me. Eventually, I made it to Form 5 where I undertook the General Certificate of Education (GCE) Ordinary Level Exams and then proceeded to the Lower and Upper Sixth form where I undertook the GCE Advanced level exams and completed my secondary school journey. My life at the Annie Walsh Memorial School was however not only about studies. I enjoyed spending time with my friends during lunch time and talking about everything under the sun. I also looked forward to thanksgivings, sports and prize giving ceremonies. I must say that apart from gaining a solid educational foundation, I enjoyed my time at the Annie Walsh. On completion of secondary school, I started my tertiary education journey at Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone (USL) at the Arts

Faculty. I moved into college residence, Lati Hyde Female Hostel and for the first few days, I felt lost as I have always been with my family. Anyway, I eventually adjusted to my new surroundings. During those days at Fourah Bay College, things were not that easy. Water supply was limited so we woke up early to shower and store water for the day's use. Transportation to and from the college was not always readily available and we had to walk the long hilly distance. Despite these problems, we managed to study and have fun as well.

Some of my best memories are at Fourah Bay College where I made lifelong friends, went to parties, discos, drama programmes, dinners, sporting events and many other social events and functions. All too soon, I got to the final year and I graduated in December 1993 with a Bachelor of Arts degree.

I am sure you are curious by this time about my love life. So yes, I had a boyfriend, Egerton Hingston, whom I eventually married. He was my childhood sweetheart, since I was 12. We dated throughout my secondary school days, my college days and eventually got married in 1995.

After graduating with my BA degree, I decided to do a one-year diploma in Cultural Studies at the African Studies Department at Fourah Bay college, USL. I soon completed it and armed with my qualifications, I set out for the world of work. My first employment was as a teacher at the Bishop Johnson Memorial School where I taught English language and literature. I taught for a year at the school, then moved on to work as an Information Officer at the Government Information Services, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Sierra Leone in 1995. I got married on April 20, 1995 and had my first child, (a daughter, Naomi Danita) in 1996. At that point, I felt a sense of satisfaction as I believed that I had attained it all - a degree, a post graduate diploma, marriage, a child and a job. I never thought I will undertake any studies again. Life however has a funny way of taking you on paths that you never thought of. Whilst working at the Ministry, I realised that I needed to get a professional qualification for my job and I decided to enrol for a one-year Mass Communication diploma

at the Mass Communication department, Fourah Bay College.

Going back to study was a difficult decision as I now had a family to take care of and a job. I however took the bold step, applied for a one-year study leave and started my studies at the Mass Communication department. I am proud to state that I finished with a distinction. On my return to work at the end of the study leave and on attainment of my Mass Communication diploma, I was promoted to Senior Information officer. Also, the then head of the Mass Communication department had been so impressed with my good grade, that he encouraged me to teach at the department. I did this on a part time basis as I had to contend with my job at the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. It was a great experience teaching the undergraduate Mass Communication students. In some of our discussions, the issue of gender came in and this whetted my appetite to know more about gender issues. This spurred me to apply for a master's programme at the Gender, Research and Documentary department (GRADOC) at Fourah Bay College.

Before delving into my experiences as a masters' student, I think it is but fitting that I share my experiences during the decade - long civil war in Sierra Leone. Initially, life in Freetown was sort of normal as the conflict was confined to other areas of the country. The conflict eventually escalated into Freetown and the worst time for me was in January 1999 when armed rebel forces entered the capital. I was awakened on the morning of the 6th of January 1999 by the sound of guns, bombs, screaming and frantic knocking on our door. That was the beginning of horrific happenings. It was like hell on earth with the constant firing of guns, dropping of bombs, burning of houses and people, raping of girls and women, and killing and maiming of people. It was a struggle to stay alive and keep safe as the rebels were on a killing, chaotic and destructive mission. I watched in horror as the rebels amputated the hands, ears and feet of people, wondering if this was also going to be my fate. Dead bodies were heaped in the streets and I became numb at seeing all the death and destruction around me. One of my worst moments was when the rebels entered our house, held the family at gun point and



2018. Empowering to make a difference with schoolgirls in Sierra Leone

proceeded to take valuables from the house. I managed to escape to the back of the house with my daughter who was a toddler by then and I fell into a hole. Another worst moment during this already bad period was when the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) regional forces attempted to regain Freetown. For two whole days and nights, we laid on the floor with no food or water as bullets and bombs whizzed in the sky. I could go on and on about my experiences during this period, but let me move on to another chapter in my life. I am just thankful to God for surviving during that period. Coming back to my master's programme, classes started at four pm, which meant that I had to go straight to class from work. It was a bit challenging to be working full time, going to class, studying, taking care of the family and doing household chores, yet I was determined to succeed.

On finishing the classwork and exams part of the course in March 2004, I left Sierra Leone for the United Kingdom(UK) with my family, with permission to complete my dissertation in the UK and to be supervised online. You may want to know why I left for the UK. My husband was awarded a scholarship to do a PhD in Engineering Geology at the University

of Leeds and we decided to relocate as a family to Leeds. Settling into a new space can be challenging. I had left everything behind including the life I knew and I had to adapt to a new way of life. I wanted a job that will give me time to work on my dissertation, so I registered with a work agency which gave me the leisure to work on my availability. I was able to complete and submit my masters' dissertation on time. The final results eventually came out and I am proud to say that I passed with a distinction. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the graduation in December 2004, and so I graduated in absentia. Life went on in the UK and I started working for the Leeds City Council. I had another baby (a son, Egerton Junior) during my stay in the UK and was very immersed in my work and family.

Life went smoothly in the UK until 2009 when I lost my mum. I can remember that bitter day on the 23rd of April 2009 when I was informed that my mum died. My sweet mother, the person who loves me unreservedly, now gone. It was one of the lowest periods in my life. I made the trip to Freetown with my family to arrange the funeral and to bury my mum. I felt as if my life was over. I returned to the UK after the funeral and forced myself to move on. In 2010, my

husband was offered a job in Durban, South Africa and he wanted us to move as a family to South Africa. After staying in the United Kingdom from 2004 – 2010, moving was a hard decision. However, move I did and this brings me to another chapter.

I arrived in South Africa with my family in July 2010 and settled in Durban. New space again. I had to start all over again – to find a new job, new schools for my children, a new place of worship, make new friends and adjust to a new currency. The last thing on my mind was doing a PhD. Anyway, after serious consideration and encouragement by my family, I applied and was accepted to do a PhD in Gender Studies at the University of Kwazulu-Natal, Howard Campus, Durban in 2011. During my PhD studies at UKZN, I worked as an Anthropology and Gender Studies tutor, a Writing Place tutor/ team leader and a Gender Studies lecturer.

Much as I appreciated working and earning money, it was not an easy feat juggling studies, work and family life. At times, I felt like I was spiralling out of control, but I clung to my goals and had a fierce determination to succeed. I made it. It was one of the happiest days in my life. Shortly after my graduation, my father passed on in Freetown

in May 2015. It was another dark moment in my life as I could not attend the funeral because of the raging Ebola epidemic during that period in Sierra Leone, which claimed the lives of thousands of citizens. After graduating, I started working at MANCOSA (a branch of Honoris United Universities) where I still work as an academic and as head of the Centre for Women Leadership. Through my work, I have met many girls and women, whom I endeavour to inspire and motivate. I am also involved in research work and have written and published a number of articles mostly on women, gender and leadership issues. I lecture as well and enjoy passing on knowledge to my students.

Despite being in the South African space, I also strive to give back to my home country. I am involved in and engage regularly in empowerment and motivating initiatives and programmes for girls and women of Sierra Leone. I also go home annually to spend time with my family on that side and to give back.

There is much to share about my life but I am limited by space. I will end my story here but let me round up by saying that my life journey has shaped my life for the better and I am proud of the woman I am today.



April 2015. Graduated at UKZN, Durban

My Mother's Australian Childhood in the Bush

Prof Malcolm Wallis

Born in Hertfordshire, England in 1922, my Mother, Annie, (always known as Nona), had no experience of life in the country of her birth until the start of her teenage years. This hiatus occurred because, soon after her birth, her parents decided to move to Australia to seek a better life, a decision they carried out when she was one year old. After a long sea voyage the Poyser family disembarked in Fremantle, in the state of Western Australia in 1924. It was my Mother's second birthday. My Grandad decided, soon after arrival, to join a state funded scheme which enabled him to become a settler in the far southwest corner of Australia, land being allocated to him as part of what was termed 'group settlement' by which settlers ('groupies') were organised in groups of farms in the hope that they would make a living and help develop the country. In his case the focus was on dairy cattle and pigs.

Most of his group were immigrants from the United Kingdom, although in other parts of the state the joiners were mostly Australians. The nearest town was called Denmark (unconnected to the Scandinavian country – it was named after an early traveller in the area) 33 km away. The area of settlement itself was called Kentdale because the River Kent flowed through its very scenic valleys and hills. My Mother's early life was as a result spent in a remote place where living conditions were the opposite of the privilege

and luxury on offer to white settlers in many parts of Africa, such as Kenya where we lived in the 1950s and 60s, where her employment gave her the opportunity to compare at first hand the lives of the settlers there with those she knew as a child in Kentdale. She used to work for a big Kenya firm that supplied farming equipment.

Other features of the early days of this family in the bush were:

- There was seen to be a need for substantial deforestation, which would nowadays probably be opposed by environmental activists.
- Houses had to be built, mostly by the settlers themselves, to replace the shacks they lived in when they first came to the area.
- Basic services such as water and sanitation were nowhere near current standards.

One issue which affected our family's economic prospects was the supply of labour. In this respect their experience was in sharp contrast to what happened in South Africa and, to a lesser extent, colonies such as Kenya and Zimbabwe. The indigenous population, known as Aborigines, were not available as labour because of the nomadic style of life they led, which had the effect of them moving from place to place with no single



The school on my grandfather's land in Western Australia

base. South West Australia, according to the statistics, has always had a very small Aborigine population, possibly the smallest in the whole country. The Aborigine story is a complex and controversial one but, for this story the reality for these white settlers was that the Aborigines hardly existed let alone served as a source of labour.

Child labour became a central part of her childhood. My Grandad had little choice but to require the whole family, including my Mother, to work on the farm. She therefore started work at the age of six. It did not help that my Grandma had health problems which limited her contribution and she had plenty to do in any case. Some help came from white 'drovers' (confusingly sometimes also called 'bushmen') who occasionally travelled to the area seeking work. Some assistance was supposed to come from government 'foremen' but it was poor in most respects. A lot of the settlers had little or no experience of agriculture, because they came from urban backgrounds in which gardening may have featured but such limited experience must have been of little use in running a farm in which livestock was the main focus. Our family was better placed than most. In Granddad's case this was because he had prior experience of working an 'allotment' in England, a small plot allocated to local people by local government. My Grandma had worked in the 'Women's Land Army' in the 1914-1918 War which was also relevant experience.

In a sense it was fortunate that the farms were manageably small (standard size of 160 acres). My Mother thus became a farm worker at the age of six. In her own words 'the children had to work hard – round the cows up and, when old enough, help to milk them and clean the separator - a job which had to be done thoroughly and we hated it.' She does not say what age was reckoned to be 'old enough'

She adds that hay making was 'fun' (Wallis 2002:6). She later went to the east for a brief time in 1934 to the state of Victoria where she was employed to harvest peaches from one of the orchards belonging to another branch of the family (she ate too much of the picked fruits and became sick).

Schooling was a major problem. At the beginning there were only three or four children of school – going age but their needs had to be met. There were no schools in the area at this time, the nearest being 30 km away. My Grandad and some of his fellow settlers decided to rectify this major deficiency. This meant tackling the state education department based in Perth, the capital of the state. which, in terms of the prevailing federal system of government, had responsibility for education in Western Australia. My Grandad, who became a bit of a local leader, seemed to have played a leading role in approaching the authorities in Perth. The reply received was that three conditions had to be met to have a school and a teacher (note the singular):

- A site had to be identified
- There must be at least eight children of school age
- Someone would have to be identified to ensure that adequate standards of hygiene could be met, especially toilets.

The site problem was solved by Grandad allowing it to be built on his land. Planning permission does not seem to have been required. The second of these requirements was the most problematic. My Grandad opted for what we now often term the practice of being 'economical with the truth', following the UK public service tradition. He devised a cunning plan to get past the bureaucracy by inflating the numbers by including children who were merely on the way to reaching school age. His version is 'There were 23 names, not all of school age but they would be one day!' (Poyser 1976: 38). It would be great to report that he included those not yet born (which perhaps he did), but I do not believe he was that devious.

The Perth authorities agreed to accept the assurances given so in due course Kentdale had a school. There was one teacher to look after all age groups from six to thirteen. As time passed more children came in but it seems there were never more than thirty enrolled. Because of there being just one teacher there was just one class for all ages. This is similar to South Africa's farm schools. The area appears to have received visits from **missionaries**, perhaps because the absence

of formal churches presented them with a marketing opportunity (although the scarcity of Aborigines was a limiting factor for normal missionary work which would have targeted them). Strangely, one such missionary who forms part of this story was a Mr Livingstone, who was based in the town of Denmark, and claimed to be a descendant of the more famous Dr David whose activities in Africa in the nineteenth century are well known. Mr Livingstone was also, my uncle writes, a 'bushman' (Poyser 2012: 23).

This preacher introduced to the Kentdale community what was known as a magic lantern, a very early version of a projector, which showed a series of still images. It was found to be entertaining. A more serious and influential visit was from two lady missionaries of a little known sect, whose very puritanical beliefs had profound effects on my Grandma and some other members of our family later on.

My Mother was, however, less actively part of organised religion than others in the family especially after her marriage. In 1943 she married my father who was typical Church of England, which meant that he was a nonparticipant in religion of any kind.

This story is about the importance of community support and leadership under tough circumstances.

My Mother was part of the Kentdale community in which people helped people out in all sorts of ways. However, the circumstances were such that chaos and financial disaster were not readily averted. After the great depression of 1929 many settlers decided to leave the scheme in the 1930s, including our family. The decision made was to go back to the UK. It was also influenced to my Grandma's health problems, which were stress related, and the need to help out with the increasingly elderly Hertfordshire branch of the family in England.

My Mother's childhood in the bush came to an end. On reaching 'home' in Hertfordshire she had to go to a secondary school because she was still of school going age. She spent one week as a pupil there. After the end of term she was considered too old to continue her education! She kept in touch with people she knew in Kentdale; towards the end of her life she asked (in vain) to see Jean Southall, a school friend and neighbour from back then and once or twice saw Jimmy Ward, a former neighbour and another alumnus of Kentdale, who greatly assisted me when I visited the area in 2008.

My Mother's Australian story is a complex one about which much more could be said, but this short account may be of special relevance to South African readers because it makes possible comparison with a very different settler experience. I hope the picture that I have presented demonstrates that what happened in this rather obscure and beautiful part of Australia was a far cry from the cheap labour based versions of settler colonialism seen elsewhere, especially in South Africa.

Appendix

There are two photographs of my Mother and Uncle, before going to Australia and then 70 years later.

A note on sources

I have drawn on the recollections of my late mother, who passed away in 2017, and others. Some of the information is derived from conversations but mainly from the accounts written by my Mother, my Uncle Henworth and my Grandad. I was fortunately able to visit the site in 2008 in the company of Jim Ward. It is now a wattle farm. My brother, Chris, added value by his comments.

Crowley, F.1970. **Australia's Western Third**. London: Heinemann

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Poyser, H. 2012. **Somewhere in the West**. Denmark: Denmark Historical Society. This is a remarkably detailed and perceptive account of my uncle's life as a boy in the group settlement.

Wallis, AR (Nona) 2002. **Nona's Diary**. Published privately.



Prof Malcolm Wallis has lived, worked and studied in several universities in several countries, mostly in Africa. He was an Executive Dean (Management Sciences) at the Durban University of Technology in KwaZulu Natal before retiring to live in Cape Town. He is widowed but his daughter, Rebecca, and grand - daughter, Hannah, live nearby.

**Marina Audrey Brownridge-Brinkhuis
Betwixt & Between. What's in a name? 'Call'd Marina,
for I was born at sea" and am a haven for many ...
Call'd Audrey for I am of noble strength
Marcelle Abrahams**

My mother, Marina Audrey Brownridge-Brinkhuis (1.4.1939 – 3.10.2018), in my view was a woman ahead of her time. A woman who battled the odds that were stacked against her and who forged her way accordingly. She adeptly navigated her way through her career and worked at improving the standard of living of her family and the communities that she found herself in during various stages of her life. By her forging the way forward she also cleared the path for me to follow suit.

I cannot describe her as a typically affectionate mother who loved cooking and anything domesticated. She did however show her love and care in so many other ways. Now that I reflect upon her life I value and respect these characteristics of her so much more.

She, born on 1 April 1939, was the youngest of two children born to Marianna Davids (1904 – 29.7.1961) and Thomas Fisher Brownridge (7.8.1902-1.8.1968). David Brownridge (now deceased) was her older brother. Her father was a widower with 5 children when he married her mother on 5.3.1938. His children from his previous marriage, now all deceased, were Adelaide, Jesse, Andrew, Cyril and Ivan (all registered at birth as Brownridge).

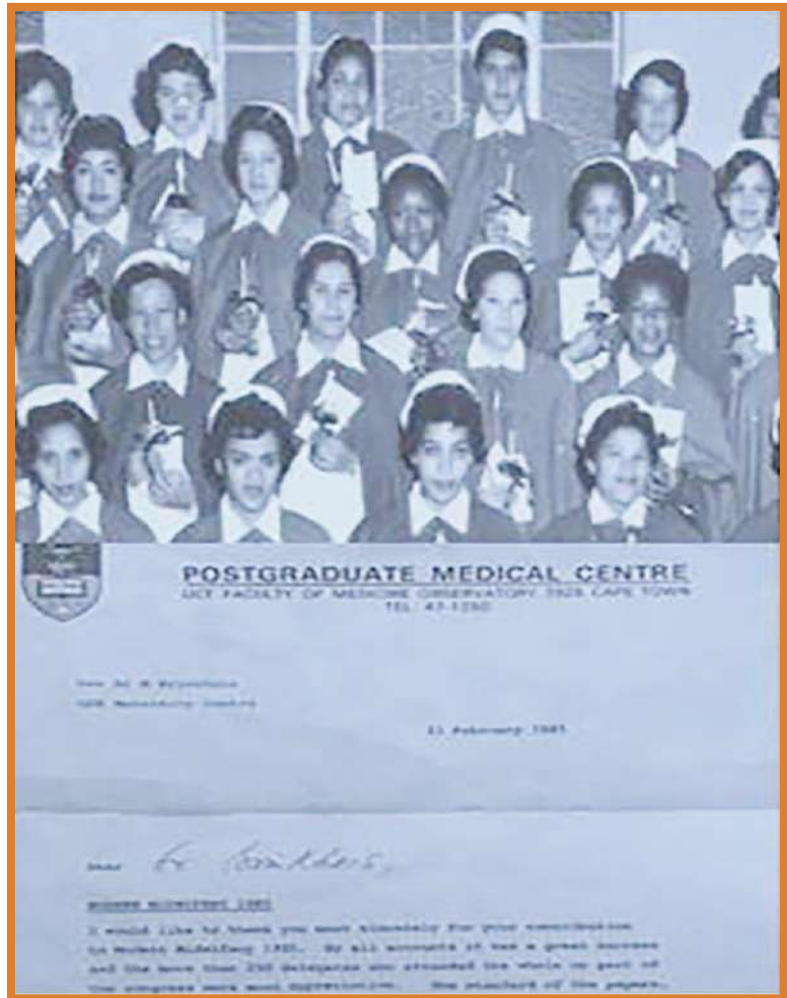
The members of the Conrad-Davids family were Moravian Khoisan converts, possibly freed slaves, who owned and tilled their own land in the Moravian Mission Station of Mamre. I do not know much of their history but it is certainly worth exploring. Her mother, the eldest of 4 daughters, took the reins of the farming and other entrepreneurial activities. She was an astute business woman and managed the operations with a firm hand. My mother attributed much of her tenacity and professional skills to her own mother and grandmother, Sophia Davids nee Conrad, who drummed in her the importance of education and being financially independent. Her mother was "Oudnederlands"



literate. To this end my grandmother insisted that my mother receive a good education no matter the cost or sacrifices. In essence I have at least 3 generations of indomitable women who subscribed to the same values.

The Brownridge family on the other hand were Salvation Army Missionaries. Originally from Scotland the Brownridges accompanied the Booths to various parts of the world as part of the Salvation Army Outreach team. We have documented evidence of the American and South African legs of their missionary journey. Her paternal Grandparents after a few trips to South Africa decided to settle in South Africa for good. The documents that we have on record reflect the marriages of my mother's great-grandparents, Thomas Brownridge and Mary Hannah on 17.11.1842 in Scotland, my mother's grandparents, Thomas Fisher Brownridge and Annie Campbell King on 15.10.1891 in New York, USA and my mother's parents, Thomas Fisher Brownridge and Marianna Davids on 5.3.1938 in Mamre, South Africa. Her father, who we affectionately called Grandpa, was schooled at Furnace Road Public School, Muirkirk, Scotland.

My mother was born in Wynberg, a suburb of Cape Town, and shortly thereafter her parents settled in Mamre about 55km north of Cape Town along the West Coast. Racial segregation and classification have been part of the South African history since the 1600s. She was born in the period where racial segregation and race classification were becoming more entrenched with the likelihood of it being enacted in law. According to my mother, my grandfather, when he went to register her birth, was given the option of registering her as a white child. He vehemently refused as he wanted her mother to be fully recognised as his wife and the mother of his child. She was then racially classified as mixed. The Apartheid regime gained power in 1948 when she was 9 years old and the Immorality Act, Population



Registration Act and Group Areas Act were eventually enacted in 1950 when she was about 11 years old. A confusing period for a young girl and a difficult, painful and emotional period for members of the family who had to navigate their way between two worlds. My mother's paternal grandparents, who were Christian missionaries, embraced her mother and often broke the laws which they thought were unjust. Life went on and they persevered and persisted even at the risk of being jailed for defying these unjust laws.

Another story about her birth registration that is etched in my memory is that her mother wanted her to be called Mariaana, an Afrikaans name (a mixture of Dutch, Khoisan and German languages), but her father who claimed to not knowing how to spell or pronounce the name correctly registered her as Marina, an English name. Whether this was inadvertent or intentional we do not know but the name Marina with its varied pronunciations stuck and was well received.



She started schooling very young and completed her primary schooling at the Mamre Moravian Mission School (now Mamre Primary School). Her parents decided to enrol her at Genadendal High School, now known as Emil Weder High School to further her education. Genadendal, the oldest Moravian Mission village in Africa and the oldest mission station in South Africa, is about 185km away from Mamre. Today a 2 hour drive by car but back then it was a day's

travel by train. She had to do the journey on her own. The locals fondly call Genadendal "Genaal".

At the age of 11 going onto 12 she travelled all alone by train to Genadendal to board with the Lennert family so that she could attend Emil Weder High School. The principal at the time (1951) was the late Dr. Frank Quint who was later appointed as the SA Ambassador to the Netherlands in 1986. Up to this point all

her formal education was done in Afrikaans and she was known as a very "slim kind" (clever child if translated into English).

At the age 14 going onto 15 she was sent to Cape Town to do the final two years at Goodhope College, a private English Medium Seventh Day Adventist Missionary School where she matriculated at the age of 16. Throughout these years she battled with proper English in the written form. It was during these years that she managed to develop a strong network of friends across Africa. Her 3 children attended the same school.

After matriculating she did a brief stint of typing but found that this was not for her. She wanted more out of life. With no funds and limited opportunities imposed by the Apartheid government she was persuaded to enter the nursing profession. Here she once again found her niche, excelled and passed with honours in almost everything. Certificates and Book Awards are proof. She continued her studies even whilst married and qualified in obstetrics while two of her children were still toddlers.

There is a letter dated 21 February 1985 originating from the University of Cape Town's Postgraduate Medical Centre (UCT's PMC) and signed by Prof. Herman De Groot, thanking her for being part of a team that presented at UCT's PMC and for her contribution towards Modern Midwiferyii.

Somerset Hospital, located in Greenpoint, Cape Town, and Groote Schuur Hospital, located in Observatory, Cape Town, were her training grounds. The children's library at Groote Schuur Hospital was my first library as she would borrow children's books for me to read. She ended her professional career as a matron of Peninsula Maternity Hospital (PMH), located in District Six, Cape Town, which closed down and was incorporated into Mowbray Maternity Hospital (MMH) where she continued in the same vein. She has featured in newspapers, annual reports, appeared on television and took to the podium at prestigious events on many occasions. PMH was our homework centre, after-care centre and study centre. She would often take us on guided tours of the hospital

if there was anything interesting to showcase and educate us such as the installation of new equipment, what foetal alcohol syndrome looks like, the role of incubation, etc.

Despite being a high achiever she was also a people's person in the professional arena. Her former colleague Matron Karin Moore, the current Matron of Mowbray Maternity Hospital, said "Marina was a role model in the true sense. She served her people with the utmost respect, dignity and passion. She mastered the art of listening." Her colleagues and patients loved her. The stories that emanated from her tenure at PMH & MMH are left for another day. After her retirement at MMH she continued with various projects and interests such as the - Retired Nurses Association, University of the Third Age (U3A) for senior citizens, Clivia Club, Senior Citizens Club, Scrabble Club and at the age of 79 was involved with the PMH Memory Project (District Six). Ms. Chrischene Julius a principal of the PMH project said "Between Amelia, Ravaughan and Marina, the body maps were lovingly decorated with graffiti and mounted on the entrance wall of the Day Centre in Caledon Street. In the final stages of the project Marina ably went up the scaffolding as we installed a mural to District Six and PMH! Her name can be found there. We will remember Marina for the love she exuded during the workshops, always patient and kind."

Her professional and social life was enriched by many experiences and travelling adventures, the latter instilled in her by her father. My mother always said that she inherited her drive, ambition and work ethic from her mother and her wanderlust and penchant for travelling and dreaming from her father. She had many mantras. The one that comes to mind is that it was her responsibility to show us South Africa and it was our responsibility to see the world. Another one was that the diligent today will lead tomorrow.

Her life would not have been complete without her husband, Charles Martin Brinkhuis (18.11.1937- 23.9.2013) with whom she had three children, at her side. They met as teenagers, got married on 27.11.1962 and celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in the year prior to his death.ⁱⁱⁱ

As I reflect on this brief snapshot of a few aspects of her life the first thought that comes to mind is that she was fit to present to postgraduate medical students at UCT yet the apartheid government, during the height of apartheid in the 1980s, refused to issue a permit for any of her children to study there. The memory is still extremely painful.

The second thought is that she managed to keep this Brownridge-Brinkhuis family together, nurture us as children as best as she knew how and held her own no matter the circumstances. The family had its fair share of ups and downs that was typical for a family of colour during the apartheid years.

I can only conclude that, like her name portrays, she was born in the proverbial wilderness of betwixt and between the colonial and indigenous, tossed about in the stormy oceans of life yet she found her bearing and gave us roots of which we can be proud of. She gave birth to and participated in many noble causes and was a haven for many. Not your typical mother but of noble strength indeed.



I, as the only daughter of a woman of noble strength, stand firm in her legacy of education, economic empowerment for women and working towards an egalitarian and just society with selfless service to the community. Because of her I can firmly stand tall.

- i. **Photo 1: Top** - Marina in front of a mural of PMH at the District Six Community Day Centre. **Centre** - Marianna Brownridge (nee Davids) **Bottom** - Thomas Fisher Brownridge.
- ii. **Photo 2: Top** - Group class photo taken at Somerset Hospital when Marina qualified as a midwife. She is in the top row 2nd from the left. **Bottom** - The upper part of a letter by UCT addressed to Marina in 1985.
- iii. **Photo 3: Top** - Marina & Charles at their 25th wedding anniversary on 27.11.1987. **Bottom** - The Brinkhuis family on a caravan trip from Cape Town to Sun City in 1980. Charles, Marina, Ryan, Marcelle & Randall.

For that legacy I am grateful!!

Marcelle Abrahams, an advocate for lifelong learning, has studied commerce at the University of Western Cape, project management and enterprise risk management at the University of Cape Town and development finance at the University of Stellenbosch Business School. Her professional career is steeped in Corporate and Development Finance with experience in both the private and public sectors.

A special thank you to Mesdames. Amelia Brinkhuis nee Welcome and. Belinda Chalkley nee Brownridge for their generosity of spirit.

Previous Launches and Reviews



VOLUME 1 BOOK LAUNCH : 21 JULY 2018 _OHASA_ PROGRAMME 67 Minutes Tata Nelson Mandela & Tribute to Mama Winnie Mandela Coffee Table Publication _ Tell Your Mother's Story

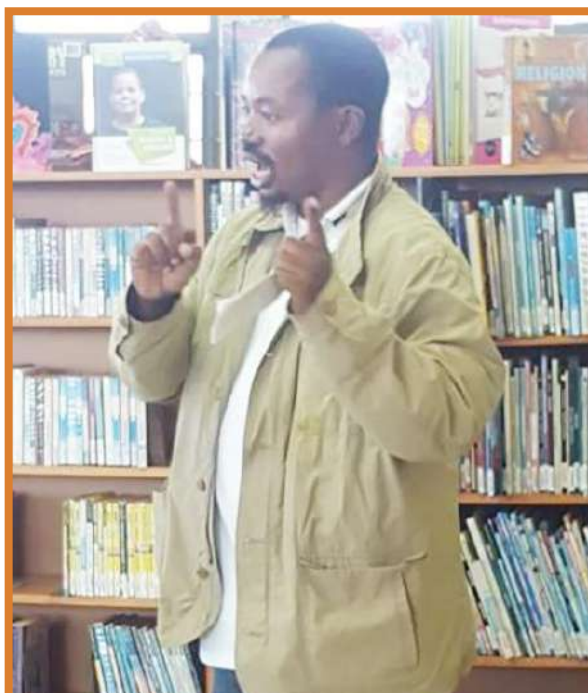
	Item	Name	
	Upon Arrival – Tea	Library Colleagues	12:00
1	Greetings	Dr. Kogie Archary OHASA ECXO	12:30
2	Welcome	Mrs. Yashica Moodley Glen Ashley – Librarian	12:35
3	67 Minutes & Tribute to Mama Winnie Madikizela – Mandela	Mr Ntuthuko Khuzwayo OHASA Secretariat	12:45
4	Background to the project	Dr. Kogie Archary OHASA ECXO	12:50
5	The Writer's Report	Mrs. Marcelle Abrahams	13:00
6	The Reviewer's Report	Dr. Claudine Hingston	13:07
7	KEYNOTE ADDRESS: The Recording of Women's Stories: An Inalienable Heritage	Mr. Radikobo Ntsimane	13:15
8	Q & A _ Audience	Dr. Kogie Archary OHASA ECXO	13:30
9	Launch	Mr Jaisingh S Singh	13:40
10	Vote of Thanks	Dr. Kogie Archary OHASA ECXO	13:45
11	Book Sales	Deshaj Parthab & Team	

REVIEWS: VOLUME 1, 2018

Dr Claudine Hingston: There is a dearth of women's stories and the few that are told usually focus on renowned and public-figure women. The stories of ordinary women are left untold, giving the impression that they have not made any meaningful contribution to their societies. This is what makes these compiled stories unique. They detail the lives of women whose stories may not have been told and whom many will perceive as ordinary. We are provided with an opportunity to take a journey into their lives. On reading these stories, one realises that these women are not as ordinary as people may think. They are strong women who have contributed to the success and greatness of their families and communities in various ways and they need to be acknowledged and celebrated.

We are given an insight into their lives, the challenges they faced and the ways they coped with them. Also, the stories bring about the realisation that having little does not hinder one from making the most of life or assisting others. Although a journey into the past, *Telling Your Mother's Stories*, has a tremendous bearing on our present and future. The characteristics displayed by the women in the stories (strength, resilience, determination, vibrancy and resourcefulness) are ones that present day young women should strive to possess. The stories furthermore inspire, motivate and empower us to persevere in life, despite the challenges we might face. In conclusion, I must state that the stories are amazing, interesting, heartfelt and written simply for all to read to and understand. Hopefully, this is just the beginning of many more volumes to come. Dr. Claudine Anita Hingston is a Sierra Leonean and is married with children. She was born and bred in Sierra Leone where she worked and studied till she left for the United Kingdom in 2004. In the United Kingdom, she actively involved in raising funds for the education of girls in Sierra Leone. In 2010, She relocated to Durban, South Africa with her family and enrolled for a PhD in Gender Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in 2011. She worked as a Gender Studies lecturer. After graduating with her PhD in 2015, Dr Hingston started working at the Management College of Southern Africa where she currently heads the Centre for Women Leadership and also serves as an

academic lecturer. Dr Hingston is actively engaged in research work and has written and published a number of articles on women, leadership and gender issues. She has also participated in various speaking engagements in a number of events and activities. Dr Hingston's areas of interest and expertise are women in leadership, gender and migration, gender and the media, gender and culture and African and Standpoint Feminism. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree, a Postgraduate diploma in Cultural Studies, a Postgraduate diploma in Mass Communications, a Masters in Gender Studies and a PhD in Gender Studies. She is passionate about advocating for female empowerment and the rights of women and she loves reading, cooking, relaxing with her family and travelling.



2018. Mr Ntuthuko Khuzwayo.
Glen Ashley OHASA Secretariat

Adv Zandile Qono-Reddy: This tribute to women of the world transcends socio-economic, cultural, racial, educational and territorial boundaries. The feature that stands out is that so many of the contributions are narrated by the daughters of these remarkable women. This fact gives one the assurance that in our communities, exist a generation of women who are compassionate and courageous; and are capable of leading our peers and the generations that follow into

a state of self-awareness and consciousness. Self-awareness and consciousness are integral tools in fighting against sexism and racism. The significance of this work is not merely to capture the history of our mothers. It does more than that.

The young Canadian poet and writer, Rupi Kuar, wrote *"we all move forward when we recognise how resilient and striking the women around us are."* **Intimate details of the resilience of our Mothers are captured in this tribute.** Being given a glimpse into the lives of the women upon whose shoulders we stand, propels us into moving forward with much distinction, courage and conviction. Advocate Zandile Qono-Reddy was born in Senegal to her exiled parents Akkie Qono (The Chief Representative of the ANC, Western Africa) and Dr. Sinthi Qono. She returned to South Africa with her parents after the unbanning of the ANC and once negotiations around the new political dispensation were underway. Presently, she takes the shared responsibility of raising her four children, three of whom are boys, very seriously in a society filled with gender and racial stereotypes. Zandile is an Advocate of the High Court of South Africa and a member of the Durban Bar. She serves as Chairperson of the Advisory Board to the UKZN Gandhi-Luthuli Documentation Centre. Zandile ventured into the world of business and co-founded GQ Publishing. The primary objective was to publish a magazine titled "Shift". The magazine's focus was to "empower, enlighten and entertain" the young entrepreneur and professional. This experience was invaluable as she had the opportunity to engage with provincial government, municipalities, the private sector and various NGO's. In her capacity as an advocate, her competencies lie in Commercial Litigation, intellectual Property Law (Africa) and Insurance Law amongst other aspects. Zandile is a member of the Black Lawyers Association, Maritime Law Association of South Africa and other bodies as well.

REVIEWS: VOLUME 2, 2019.

Luthando Ngazile Ngema: She is 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



2018. Dr Kogie Archary, Adv Zandile Qono Reddy and Dr Hlongwane. Tongaat, KZN



2018. Dr Kogie Archary, Adv Zandile Qono Reddy and Dr Hlongwane. Tongaat, KZN

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.



**2019. 10 – year- old writer
Abigail Govender, Kogie Archary and
Kareema Brown. Merebank, KZN**

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 motherhood, to name a few issues. To be a woman in South African society, means existing in the zone of non-being, 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.

Zandile DJ Zeal Dladla:

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,



2019. Ms. Marcelle Abrahams, Dr Kogie Archary, Dr Claudine Hingston and Prof Kiveshnee Naidoo. Mancosa Durban



From left to right: Key Note speaker Vice Chancellor UNISA, Prof Thenjiwe Meyiwa; Organic speaker Mrs Maseko; Hon MMC for Arts Culture and Recreation in Steve Tshwete Local Municipality J Mashiane; Prof S Mokgoatšana, President of OHASA; Mayor of Thembisile Hani Local Municipality Hon N Mtsweni; Mayor of Steve Tshwete Local Municipality Hon Z Tolo; Honourable Deputy Minister DSAC Ms NN Mafu; Dr Kogie Archary, Editor of Coffee Table Publication tell Your Mother's Story

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 storyteller, 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. Non-white 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.**



2019. Ms. DD Mashego, Prof Rothney Tshaka, Prof Landman, Gogo Sarah Mahlangu, Prof Sekgothe Mokgoatšana, Adv Dennis Maake, and seated Andries Motau.
Mpumalanga Province

VOLUME 3, 2020.

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A Call for Articles: Tell Your Mother's Story

Friday, 11 September, 2020

A Tribute to Women of the World... *Telling your Mother's Stories, Moving Ahead... 2021, Volume 4, Dr Kogie Archary.*

The Oral History Association of South Africa (OHASA) invites you to write for the 2021 Volume 4 of the Coffee Table Publication Series: Tell Your Mother's Story. 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 a story, poem etc. that Tells Your Story (if you are a woman) OR Your Mother's (or any other female that has influenced you) Story. The +/- 900 - word article should be written in Arial Font, Size 10 and 1.15 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. You may even use a combination of the options. You can base your story on various themes and reflect on love, sadness, friendship, hope, accidents, ambition, cruelty, gender based violence, childhood pregnancy, abortion, illness, spirituality, ancestral lineage, child-headed households, COVID 19, trauma, environmental impact etc. We look forward to receiving your story.

DATE OF SUBMISSION: BY 28 FEBRUARY 2021 FOR RELEASE: MAY 2021 AFRICA MONTH (Date to be confirmed)

nocawem@dsac.gov.za (External)

**Virtual Launch: 18th July 2021; Deputy Minister Ms. NN Mafu,
National Department of Sport, Arts and Culture**



**2020. Volume 3 Launch. Program
Director Dr Mxolisi Dlamuka**



2020. Zama Mbonambi, a Volume 3 writer. Pinetown, Kwa- Zulu Natal

Lindiwe (Malindi) Nqobile Kunene writes..., this publication is extremely important in promoting a decolonised socialisation framework for an African child and society. The stories shared are both diverse and informative. They are based on the unique tapestries that define what it means to be a woman and a mother in the SADEC region of Africa. It does not shy away from topics that are painful, of rape, race, abuse and abject poverty. It does not pretend there are no economic inequalities. Instead it finds solutions, motivation and inspiration from different voices within Africa, both positive and negative. I was particularly drawn to the narrative of socialisation impacting the future of the children. The importance of Mothers in society and in a family is reverberated as they become mother to their children, transcending beyond blood relations, extending to their communities. In my field, of entrepreneurship development the role of parent influence is vital as we explore the meaning and effects of Entrepreneurship Intention. Often, it is always emphasised from a euro-centric perspective and assumed for the rest of the world to be the same. Never before has there been an account showing a direct



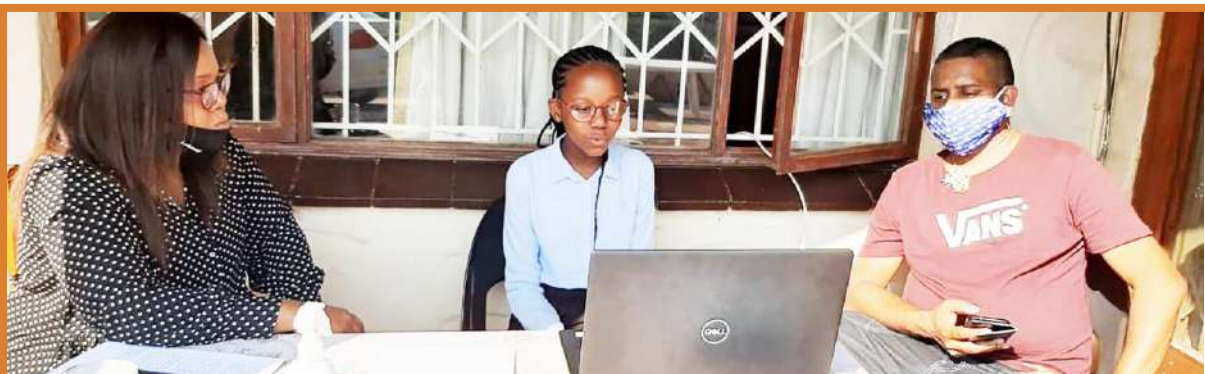
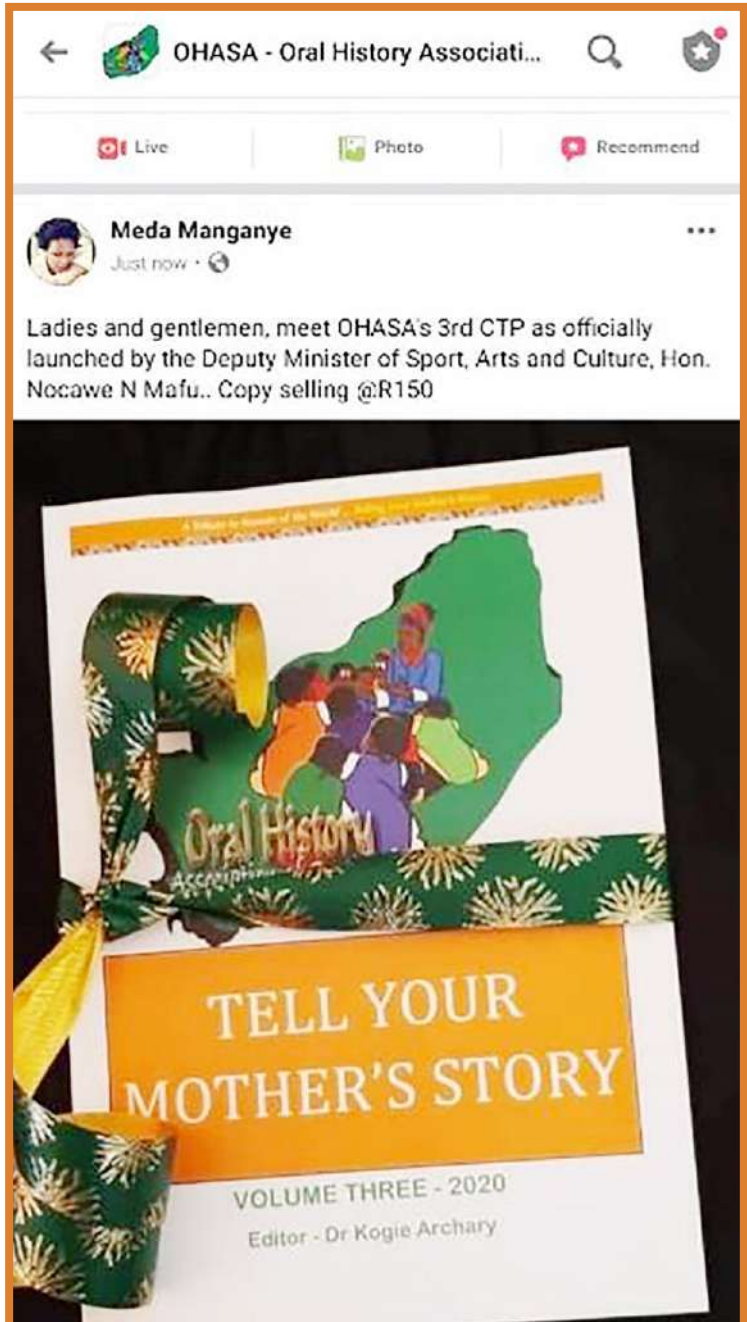
2020. Ms. Tinyiko Sempe and Dr Kogie Archary. North - West Province, OHASA Colloquium

link African mothers have in moulding *Intention* development for their children. The female role in our communities as manifested by the stories in this book is also one of a spiritual leader.

These women are able to create a new world where their religion and traditional practices are not discarded but rather embedded into the Eurocentric environment most of Africa's setting is based on, due to colonisation.

It is important to acknowledge this uniqueness, it speaks to an Africa of the future where mothers are one of the key stakeholders of development whose influence moulds the future of society. Lindiwe is an academic at the University of KwaZulu - Natal (UKZN) in the discipline of Management & Entrepreneurship. She holds a Masters in Commerce from UKZN and is currently reading for her PhD. She has published her research both nationally and internationally. Most of her publications relate her field to development economics context of Africa. She serves on various Boards and Committees.

Nokubonga Mazibuko-Ngidi is an Emerging scholar at the Social Sciences Department - Sol Plaatje University. In seTswana they say '*Mmangwana o tshwara thipa ka fa bogaleng*' loosely translated, a mother holds the knife by the blade. This idiom tells us that a mother will do anything in her ability and would go to any length to protect her children. From this we learn that mothers/women are amazing human beings who would do everything in their power and strength to protect their loved ones even if it means putting their own lives in harm's way. This message is carried in the powerful stories written by women in this book. The book tells wonderful stories of incredible women from different backgrounds, age groups and ethnicities who are all defined by greatness. The stories and poetry contained herein portrays them as strong, resilient, loving, caring and God fearing heroines who have survived different storms of life. Women who couldn't let patriarchy, loss, gender based violence, rape, forced and premature marriages, sickness and unfavourable living conditions stop them from reaching self-realization and finding their purpose in life, becoming great mothers, leaders in different spheres including their families, government, business, the religious sectors and trailblazers who paved the way to a great future for those around them. These are phenomenal women whose circumstances forced them out of their comfort zone. They now



18 July 2021. Mum - Sindisiwe Msimang, Youth writer for Volume 3 - Olwami Shangase and IT support Trevorlin Gulzar @ the 1st Virtual Launch of OHASA. Glen Anil, Durban North, KZN

use their experiences to inspire and help other young women in their communities. What makes this book unique is that the stories are told in the simplest language by ordinary voices who relate to them. Noku-bonga works as a lecturer in the Anthropology discipline at Sol Plaatje University, a post-apartheid university in the Northern Cape province of South Africa. Her research interests include gender, culture, sexuality, health and reproductive rights. She is a staunch feminist and gender activist.

Thandeka (nee Mbambo) Dlamini is an academic at MANCOSA and is reading for her doctorate at UKZN. As a woman raised in a strong matrichial family this book felt like home. The compilation of these stories highlights the importance of womanhood and showcase the various roles that women play in our families, communities and other spaces. These are remarkable and insightful stories that give readers a glimpse into the realities and challenges that these women have faced behind the scenes. Hardworking, amazing, loving, caring, strong, independent, self-made, supportive and charismatic are some of the common terms that are used by the authors to outline and tell the stories of their loved ones. The authors' notions of motherhood, womanhood, wifehood, individualism and maternal strength induce a strong emotional bond and sense of pride

and reverence in the manner in which they depict their loved ones throughout the book. These narratives display how woman are silent yet resilient leaders in their homes, communities and arenas of interest hence they need to be recognised and honoured for their tireless efforts. The writers enable readers to clearly understand the significant good and bad memories which now serve as lessons for the readers. Furthermore, readers will see how some stories are biographies where the authors reiterate their lives which gives us a glimpse into their personal thoughts and experiences. Whilst others are written to pay homage to mothers, grandmothers, daughters, sisters and friends who have made an impact in the lives of the writers. The culmination of these stories successfully portrays authentic narratives that transcend race, religion, culture, socio-economic circumstances they successfully connect these diverse women from different contexts and highlight the zeal and strength of woman globally. Thandeka aspires to make her mark in life through hard work. She believes that modern women need to adopt a sense of 'sisterhood' to uplift each other. She is passionate about the development of woman in rural areas through entrepreneurship. Her mantra in life is "feel the fear through you and do it anyway" by Susan Jeffers. Women are more than what they appear to be, they are warriors.

NATIONAL ORAL HISTORY COLLOQUIUM 2020



Oral History
Association of South Africa

18 & 19 November 2020

THEME: The future of Oral Traditions/Histories in times of technological revolution and pandemic in society.

#OHASACOLLOQUIUM2020 #OralHistory

⏮️ The event will be live streamed on social media platforms

 @SportArtsCultureRSA
@North West Department of Arts, Culture, Sport and Recreation

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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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Department of Arts, Culture, Sports and Recreation
North West Provincial Government
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



STRAY SAFE
PROTECT SOUTH AFRICA
PARTNER OF LIFE-SAVE INITIATIVES



STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING in CLARENS, FREE STATE 2021 CONFERENCE and LAUNCH OF VOLUME 5



2021. Back row: Prof Christina Landman, Prince Jongisilo Pokwana, Dr Kogie Archary, Prof Sekgothe Mokgoatšana, **Khanyi Ndlovu**. Front row: Boitsheko Thwane, Maite Manganye, Sipho Zulu. Clarens Free State

BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

Dr. Kogie Archary

As our country South Africa moved into a new political dispensation post 1990, higher education institutions of study had to embrace that change and lead the way in terms of knowledge, curriculum, study options and so much more. This move to embrace change, saw many universities, including the Natal University, (now University of KwaZulu Natal - UKZN)) altering their academic offering and thereby allowing students from the 1991 cohort to smoothly articulate from any Honours degree to a Master of Arts. One of our Volume 4 Reviewers, Prof Thenjiwe Meyiwa and I graduated with the master's degree from the class of 1992/ 1993 - Department of Orality Literacy Studies - under the tutelage of Professor Edgard Sienaert and other esteemed visiting lecturers. This class was exposed to oral history, a global knowledge context and an interdisciplinary study content. The Coffee Table Publication Tell Your Mother's Story began as a fundraising project however it has now transitioned to an awareness outlook to include various themes that include, nation

building, social cohesion, therapeutic healing, Covid related stories, political dynamism and so much more. This has been an interesting project as OHASA has received a multitude of stories, diverse in scope as well as interesting in output. Volume 1 (2018) was a 48- pager, Volume 2 (2019) increased to 56 pages and Volume 3 (2020) was a *grand dame* at 96 pages! Volume 4 consists of 110 pages. We invite you to write for Volume 5...

MOVING AHEAD...2022 Volume 5

The ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA (OHASA) invites you to write for the 2021 Volume 5 of the Coffee Table Publication Series: Tell Your Mother's Story_ 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. The +/- 900 – 1200-word article should be written in Arial Font, Size 10 and 1.15 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. You may even use a combination of the options.

OPTION 1

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 histories 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 2

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/family life	Share experiences. Economic difficulties? Social issues? Political strife?	Did you work? Were you protected at the workplace? Remuneration? Uniforms? Travelling? The environment?
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 3

Writers are also encouraged to tell community stories. These stories could revolve around the women that played the pivotal role during the formative years.

In Conclusion, remember to be creative. You can write as a 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. Should you require any further information, please email Dr. Kogie Archary on **ohasafundraising@gmail.com** or visit the **OHASA website** on www.ohasa.org.za. As we conclude and move onto Volume 5 in 2022, let's focus on the Youth and the mothers that shape them.

VOLUME 4 ...launched in Clarens, Free State, October 2021. Treasurer Khanyi Ngcobo in Clarens, Free State, Border Control Post earlier this year for an OHASA Strategic Planning meeting...



The Mothers that Shape African Youth

Boitsheko Thwane

May 25th 2021 marked 58 years since the founding of the Organisation of African Unity, now known as the African Union.

This day commemorates the coming together of Africans all over the world, for the advancement and celebration of who we are as a people; what we have historically triumphed over and the battles we continue to live through and conquer daily.

In celebrating Africa's growth and move towards social and economic liberation, Tell Your Mother's Story celebrates not only the mothers but the youth that play such a vital role in nation-building through their varied causes and gifts. These young people are making great strides in flying the African flag high by defying the odds and standing boldly on the shoulders of the great women and Africans that have gone before them. 18-year-old Zulaikha Patel is an Anti-racism activist and ambassador for the Charlotte Maxeke foundation. Zulaikha was propelled into the public space at the tender age of 13, where her resoluteness and self-assuredness about her identity moved her to challenge her school's hair policy which labelled her Afro as unkempt. The school had not accounted for cultural diversity in their creation of the policy which led to discriminatory practices towards some students. Zulaikha boldly spoke truth to power and challenged schools and the media to have progressive conversations about hair and identity. As a Charlotte Maxeke foundation ambassador, she encourages young people to stand tall and take charge and make their mark in their communities. Furthermore, she is also a published author who writes about identity and encourages conversations on representation in the media through her writing and activism.

Thuso Mbedu is a young South African actor who is the lead character in Barry Jenkins' *The underground railroad* series. She portrays the character of Cora, an enslaved woman in Georgia whose journey takes us through a journey of an enslaved woman trying to escape captivity. Thuso describes



the process of preparing for this role as having woken her up to a realisation that, for her, changed the narrative from "being an African American story, to being a story about Africans in America". Through this character, Thuso has managed to unify Africans in the diaspora to Africans living on the continent. She portrays and draws light to multiple shared experiences by Africans that transcend time and space. It is befitting that the premiere of the show coincided with Africa month. Through her acting, she tells a mother's story, a story of our mothers in diaspora and mothers left behind and stories of mothers birthed from those mothers.

These are just two of the young Africans making history and rewriting their own stories and I hope that this inspires many others to tell their stories and tell their mothers' stories and their mothers before them, so that we embrace and bring to light the role that every African mother has played in making us a great nation.

Notes....Reflections from 2021

[illegible]

Notes....Reflections from 2021

Lined area for notes and reflections.



Oral History Association of South Africa

Membership Renewal – 1 Nov 2020 to 31 Oct 2021

OHASA Membership is open to any person, Institution or corporation interested in the objectives of the Association. This includes all heritage professionals, trustees, technicians, students, corporate bodies and interested members of the public.

OHASA Office

Tel: 012 441 3200

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**P/Bag X 236
Pretoria
0001**

Institutional Membership

☐

Individual Membership

☐

Province:

Gauteng

☐

KwaZulu Natal

☐

Western Cape

☐

Northern Cape

☐

Eastern Cape

☐

Free State

☐

Mpumalanga

☐

Limpopo

☐

Western Cape

☐

International

☐

BANKING DETAILS:

OHASA, ABSA Bank,
Pretoria,

Account No:
4067826673

PLEASE NOTE:

Payment references
MUST reflect "Your
Name" or "Institution".
Unidentified payments
will be put into a
suspense account
and will result in the
suspension on your
subscription.

**Membership is valid
from
1 November 2020 to
31 October 2021**

Contact Information:

Title: First Name:

Surname:

Job Title:

Institution:

Postal Address:

Postal Code: Tel: Cell:

Fax: E-mail:

I agree to subscribe to the aims, objectives, and Code of Ethics of the Oral History Association of South Africa. Visit, www.ohasa.org.za to view the Code of Ethics and constitution.

Signature: Date:

Category of Membership

☐

Individual

R550 per year

☐

Institution

R3000 per year (for 5 ppl)



OHASA FEE STRUCTURE 2021/22

MEMBERSHIP FEES – 2021/22

	2021/22
Individual membership fees	R 550
Institutional membership fees (<i>up to 5 members</i>)	R 3 000 (<i>5ppl</i>)

CONFERENCE FEES – 2021/22

	2021/22
Registered membership (Physical)	R 1 050 (<i>with a bag</i>)
Registered membership (Virtual)	R 850 (<i>with a bag</i>) <i>excl courier fees</i> R 650 (<i>without a bag</i>)
Non-members (Physical)	R 2 700 (<i>with a bag</i>)
Non-members (Virtual)	R 2 400 (<i>with a bag</i>) <i>excl courier fees</i> R 2 200 (<i>without a bag</i>)