

# Special in session



"Celebrating the legacy of freedom through strengthening the link between Parliament and the people"

Mourning a  
**leader,**  
celebrating a  
**legacy**

Parliament pays tribute to Nelson Mandela



# Hamba Kahle

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela  
Father of the Nation...



Eric Miller

Although he served us for five years as President, we will benefit from his legacy for many more and he will continue to inspire us.

We are privileged to have had Madiba with us.

We shall continue to donate 67 minutes of our time on his birthday, 18 July, to make a difference to the lives of others. Let us exercise our individual power to change the world.

**Let us make every day a Mandela Day!**



Speaker of the National Assembly, Mr Max Sisulu

MESSAGE FROM PARLIAMENT'S

# Presiding Officers



Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Mr Mninwa Mahlangu

*As we bid farewell to Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela let us do more than mourn the loss of that inspiration and guiding light, that illuminated our lives and helped to guide us out of the oppressive, brutal apartheid rule to democracy and freedom.*

As we mark the passing of uMadiba, icon of hope for our country and the world, let us commit ourselves to continuing and building on the legacy of our first democratically elected President. In his first budget vote address, President Mandela urged the newly sworn-in Members of Parliament to be mindful that they would be judged by what they had done to create the basis for improving the lives of all South Africans.

"This is not because the people have some subjective expectations fanned during an election campaign. Neither is it because there is a magic wand that they see in the new government. Millions have suffered deprivation for decades and they have the right to seek redress. They fought and voted for change; and change the people of South Africa must have," he said.

After stepping down as President in 1999, Madiba said in an address to a Joint Sitting of Parliament in May 2004, to mark 10 years of our democracy, that merely observing Parliament inspired national pride and confidence.

"We, the people of South Africa, as the Preamble to our Constitution states, believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity. The make-up of this Parliament confirms that the people of South Africa have spoken, asserting the strength of our unity in diversity."

Parliament is the voice of the people, he said, alerting Parliament's Presiding Officers to their "heavy" responsibility in ensuring the voice of the people was clearly heard in national affairs and that Parliament's role was protected and defended.

To the Members of Parliament in whom the nation had put its trust, Madiba said, their "almost sacred" duty was to ensure government by the people under the Constitution.

"Let us never be unmindful of the terrible past from which we come: [keeping] that memory not as a means to keep us shackled to the past, but rather as a joyous reminder of how far we have come and how much we have achieved. The memory of a history of division and hate, injustice and suffering, inhumanity of person against person should inspire us to celebrate our own demonstration of the capacity of human beings to progress, to go forward, to improve, to do better," he said.

"My wish," Madiba told Parliament, "is that South Africans never give up on the belief in human goodness, that they cherish that faith as a cornerstone of our democracy. The first value of the founding principles of our Constitution is human dignity.

"We accord persons dignity by assuming that they are good, that they share the human qualities we ascribe to ourselves. Historical enemies succeeded in negotiating a peaceful transition from apartheid to democracy exactly because we were prepared to accept the inherent capacity for goodness in the other."

Belief in the common good ultimately translates into a deep concern for those who suffer want and deprivation of any kind, and our democracy has to bring its material fruits to all, particularly the poor, the marginalised and the vulnerable.

As we approach the end of two decades of our democracy and enter the third decade – now without the living presence of Madiba – we must do more than mourn and remember.

Let us continue and further enhance our efforts to improve the quality of life of our people, free the potential of each person and strengthen our democratic institutions and practices.

Let us understand, also, that there is no easy road to freedom and that none of us acting alone can achieve success.

Lala ngoxolo Dalibhunga. Isizwe siyabulela. Setshaba se a leboga. 🙏



Dr Frene Ginwala, Speaker in President Mandela's Parliament and South Africa's first female Speaker

## MESSAGE FROM THE **First Speaker** of our Democratic Parliament



*It is important to remember what Parliament was like under apartheid. We had always been excluded from government and when we were sworn in, it was our first time in Parliament. Before that, the closest I ever came to Parliament was to protest outside its gates. As far as we were concerned, South Africa had never been a democracy. For us, this meant that there had never been a Parliament in South Africa before.*

When the new Members of Parliament came down to Cape Town from all over to be sworn in, we had our photos taken and the Chief Justice explained the procedure. The ANC held a caucus that evening and I was elected Speaker.

After the signing in, Mandela was nominated as President. No one stood against him, and he and the Presiding Officers then went out onto the steps to greet the crowds, the people cheering, clapping and taking photos. At that point it suddenly hit me that this was our Parliament. Change had come, in a very real sense. This new institution had to be changed in its entirety. There were no precedents that we could use: we had to rethink the rules, codes of conduct, even the dress code.

Under apartheid, the staff members were not unionised. The Cape had long had a coloured labour preference policy and there was not one single African person employed at Parliament. In January, before the elections, they quickly appointed 15 or 16 Africans, but only white workers were permanently employed. The rest were dismissed at the end of every session. They could be re-employed but they had no job security. Many of the white staff feared that they were going to lose their jobs in the new Parliament.

We met with staff to tell them their jobs were secure, that the union would be recognised, everything was going to be changing. I had worked closely with Mandela during the negotiation process, and his instruction to me was to run Parliament in the same way, as a fully inclusive body. He was very concerned to secure public buy-in. Negotiations were one thing, but getting the buy-in of the entire population was a different challenge.

This Parliament was going to be televised and for the first time it would be watched by the majority, including people who had never been much interested in it before. The seating arrangement was therefore very significant. The first thing I did was to re-arrange the seating. I asked the first ANC Chief Whip, Arnold Stofile, to please provide front bench seats for all of the political parties. The ANC members were seated on my right, and on the other side were the National Party, the Democratic Party, the Inkatha Freedom Party, and so on. And there was Constand Viljoen of the Freedom Front in a front bench, right beside the PAC. When people viewed Parliament, they could all see their leaders in the front benches.

This was the people's Parliament, and we wanted the people to see that. Kader Asmal would not wear a suit and tie, but Mandela always did. He said it expressed his respect for Parliament. His famous Madiba shirts he wore on public occasions, but never at Parliament. He was very anxious that ANC MPs complied with the rules and if any missed sittings he made sure they were called to account.

As President he was technically not required to be present in Parliament, but he often chose to attend. He was entitled to speak at any time, but he would send a note to me requesting permission to speak, even though I told him he did not need to. He always did so out of respect for Parliament, a respect that he extended to bodies like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which delivered its report at that time.

When the TRC report was officially handed to him by Desmond Tutu, Madiba wanted me to be there. I had just flown in from China at the time, but after changing at the airport, I was on my way, bleary-eyed but at his side to receive the report. He wanted it to be seen that he had not tampered with it in any way, that he had handed it directly to Parliament. Such was the respect Mandela always showed for Parliament. 🌍





Ms Baleka Mbete, Deputy Speaker in President Mandela's Parliament

## MESSAGE FROM THE Deputy Speaker of our Democratic Parliament, 1996 – 2004



**Madiba** *was many things to many people. While popularly known for his leadership and statesman's roles, there are many other facets to this extraordinary man. He was a fighter, a comrade, friend, father, a mentor and the list goes on and on. He was also the first President to be elected by the National Assembly of a free South Africa.*

He opened many doors for thousands of individuals to realise and further maximise their potential. I was among them and I remain deeply grateful. He deployed me as one of the first batch of ambassadors early in the term of the first democratically elected Parliament. I was fortunate that he allowed me to persuade him against it as I valued the constitution - making process I was lucky to be part of.

Under his leadership I was made the chairperson of the African National Congress caucus and a member of the Presidential Commission on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. What came as quite a surprise was when he told me that he wanted me to deputise for Comrade Frene Ginwala who was our first Speaker of the National Assembly.

One day we – Presiding Officers, Ministers and Deputy Ministers of the majority Party – were urgently called to the presidential residence, Mahlabamba Ndlopfu. It turned out that President Mandela had one matter he felt strongly about. The importance of all of us using every possible opportunity to go the extra mile to interact with fellow South Africans from different cultural, social and political backgrounds from ours.

He illustrated the point by sharing how he had hosted various couples and individuals for lunches and dinners. Many of the guests he selected were rightwing Afrikaners whom he disarmed through socialising and dining. He told us that this was a way of breaking barriers between fellow countrymen.

Madiba had an amazing capacity to engage with difference and with new phenomena. I can recall so many difficult but candid discussions in which Madiba was involved. I remember at one of such meetings Tata expressing that he found it intriguing that change and challenge came from the younger women and he embraced this.

I was surprised to get a call from him one day when he was away on a State visit. He had heard that my father had passed on. On his return he went to visit my father's grave to honour him, *ukubeka ilitye*. When some of my teenage kids were going through difficult patches, Madiba would step in to give soothing words and wise counsel.

I remember how traumatised we were when he first told us - at the National Executive Committee – that he intended to step down as President. We could not believe he could do that. Now with hindsight, his approach was and remains correct. He gave us a chance to prepare ourselves and come to terms with reality. In the process we were able to prepare to deal with the moment of his departure.

Parliament must be grateful that he opened the doors of a democratic South Africa and strode the corridors of the institution as he taught and led us in becoming better South Africans. We must cherish his great example and strive always to live by it. 🇿🇦

Baleka Mbete

**Former Deputy Speaker and Speaker of the National Assembly. She is currently ANC National Chairperson.**



Mr Mosiuoa Lekota, first Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces



MESSAGE FROM THE  
**First  
Chairperson**  
of the National Council of Provinces

**I regarded** *Madiba as a mentor to me from the time I first met him on Robben Island, to when I was the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces [NCOP] from 1997 to 1999, during his presidency. He was a very patient person and that made him a good educator.*

One outstanding element of his character was his serious observance of the provisions of the Constitution. As a lawyer, and having been so close to the process of its creation, Madiba had an intimate knowledge of our democracy's founding document and was able to foreshadow the further development of many of its provisions. In discussions he would often enquire whether something was consistent with the Constitution. He understood that it was a fragile process to nurture democracy.

I recall an occasion when I was still chairperson of the NCOP when I was dealing with Cabinet Ministers who disregarded their responsibility with regards to the NCOP. I took exception to this and Madiba was one of the people who supported me in this. He reminded Ministers that their role was to serve Parliament as a whole and not just the National Assembly. He told Ministers that the NCOP was a relevant institution and urged them to actively serve in it. He told them that they were not doing the NCOP a favour by serving in it. I learnt a lot from him, and still continue to learn through his writings, and I will always have fond memories of him. 🙏

MESSAGE FROM THE  
**Secretary to  
Parliament**

**We** *are mourning a leader, and celebrating a legacy. InSession, Parliament's monthly magazine, publishes this Special Edition to mark the significance of a life that has been lost, and a legacy that has been inherited. With Nelson Mandela's passing, we are reminded of what he lived for, stood for and declared himself ready to die for.*

We in South Africa's democratic Parliament, including some of those colleagues who have since left the institution but who remain very much a part of it, take this opportunity to record our memories of the man who for us was more than just a legend. For those of us who encountered him in the Chambers and passages of Parliament he was a down-to-earth and humble person, who acknowledged the common humanity in all of us.

Everyone he encountered in those days will have their own tales to tell and stories to cherish. We wish we could include every one, but no magazine could contain them all. We have had to content ourselves with selecting a representative a collection from across the political and professional spectrum within the Parliament of 1994 to 1999.

We have lost a great leader, but gained something that will last forever, his legacy. Parliament pays tribute to Nelson Mandela for his role in bringing democracy to Parliament, to stay. 🙏

**Mr Michael Coetzee**  
SECRETARY TO PARLIAMENT





## Members of Parliament look back

### Rev Arnold Makhenkesi Stofile, first ANC Chief Whip

When Nelson Mandela was President I was his Treasurer General. In government he was the Head of State and government and I was the Chief Whip of the majority party. In both areas he impressed all of us as a humble, strong man, as well as someone with an unparalleled fixity of purpose.

Within the ANC, we worked closely in fund-raising strategies and deciding on how the "discretionary" funds should be distributed to allied organisations (the South African Communist Party, the Council of SA Trade Unions, the ANC Women's League, the ANC Youth League and the SA National Civics Organisation). Madiba was briefed regularly about how much we had received from overseas funders. Once, he instructed the Treasurer General to return four million US dollars to the Head of State of a donor country.

"Tell him," he said, "we will accept an appropriate donation when the financial situation in his country has improved". Within two weeks the Head of State had increased the four million to 20 million US dollars.

President Mandela attended as many ANC Caucus meetings as he could. Usually he gave a short speech to motivate MPs, and he briefed us on key issues. He seldom participated in debates but listened very attentively. Our first term in Parliament saw the ANC represented by some of our most senior members. As one of them, President Mandela set the pace in disciplined behaviour, especially when we debated very serious issues in the House. This was his style in Parliament, the National Executive Committee and the National Working Committee.

We did not always agree on issues. But he always reminded us of our historical mandate both as the ANC and as government, and the attainment of freedom in the South Africa of our dreams. This approach to arguments easily found resonance with our political consciousness. So he kept us united in purpose and in action.

*Rev Stofile is the current South African Ambassador to Germany.*

START OF A NEW ERA: Entering the parliamentary chamber for the adoption of the new Constitution in 1996

*I am fundamentally an optimist. Part of being optimistic is keeping one's head pointed toward the sun, one's feet moving forward. There were many dark moments when my faith in humanity was sorely tested, but I would not and could not give myself up to despair. That way lays defeat and death.*

Nelson Mandela

### Andrew Mlangeni, ANC member and fellow Robben Island prisoner

I remember the way in which he delivered his speeches. He commanded respect in the delivery of his speeches and he always had good speeches. It was difficult to find fault with them. I remember one instance when he was responding to a debate around the Presidency Budget Vote and he only took 10 minutes to respond, which was shocking because normally people take more than that to respond to their budget votes.

What stands out about Madiba was that he showed the country that he didn't struggle for himself, but to better the lives of South Africans. He was even reluctant to take up the presidential post, which showed that he wasn't struggling for positions but to defeat apartheid. He only served for one term, even though he could have stood for more. He said he had to set the tone and standard for those who would follow after him.

He set high standards and he wanted to lead without favouring anybody. When delivering his speeches in Parliament, he emphasised working together and reconciliation. In every House sitting that he addressed, he emphasised this.

He had one weakness though, and that was to make quick character judgements. For him a person was a good person until proven otherwise. He was an affectionate person who always referred to me by my clan name and vice versa, which shows his humility.

### The late Dr Kader Asmal, former Minister in the Mandela Cabinet

I met Mandela in mid-1990, when he at last received the freedom of the city of Dublin, an award that was made while he was still in jail in 1988. We met him at the airport at two in the morning. Also there to greet him in force was the Irish press, including a young journalist from one of the daily papers, who thrust a microphone in Madiba's face and demanded to know what he thought of the IRA [Irish Republican Army].

Mandela's response was typical of him. "You must talk to them," was his reply. Well, not only the tabloids turned this into headline news; even the BBC led with the story. I had organised the trip and it was left to me to do some damage control.

I visited Mandela's hotel early the following morning, to find him still in bed. "Madiba," I said, "we have a problem." He invited me to sit down. There was no seat in the hotel room so I had no option but to perch at the foot of his bed. "Kader, why are you so uncomfortable?" he said, shifting to make room for me. I explained why I was really uncomfortable. "Madiba, we have a problem. It's like a ton of bricks falling on our heads." I explained that the British and US governments didn't talk to the IRA. We were in something of a quandary. While we didn't want him to repudiate his words, the British Anti-Apartheid Movement was seriously perturbed.

In the end we came up with a simple solution. He was due to speak at a dinner that night with the Irish Prime

Minister, so we inserted a sentence into his speech. "It is not my job to prescribe to anyone else how to behave in their own countries," said Mandela. "But all my life I have believed that it is important to talk to people, to negotiate, You don't negotiate with friends. You negotiate with your enemies."

A few years later, of course, the Good Friday agreement was signed in Northern Ireland. That day my secretary put through a call. She was taken aback. "It's from the President." It was indeed Madiba, and he was chuckling. "Hey Kader," he said, "is there a ton of bricks falling on your head?" He was as delighted as I was that negotiations had taken place in Northern Ireland and that they had ended in an agreement.

*An extract from his posthumously published autobiography*

### Pro Ben Turok, ANC member and an MP

I remember the dignity he brought to the office. Everyone had a sense that this was no ordinary person and his reputation created an amazing atmosphere in Parliament. His dignified presence was dominant in the House. It was not only in the way he conducted himself but was also about the way he delivered his speeches. He delivered them with maturity, wisdom and judgement. He was never noisy in the deliverance of his speeches; he was the epitome of what a president should be. No one could treat him with disrespect and the House was awed by his presence.

The first Parliament was a phenomenal period and many of us had a sense



*For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.*

Nelson Mandela

that this was a huge historical moment and we behaved accordingly. It made us proud and conscious of the huge responsibilities we had. Mandela's leadership style was never narrow and he did everything to show that he represented a new country and there was a feeling of a new birth.

Even though his criticism of racism was very strong he did very little finger-pointing. He wanted everyone to rise above racism and created a rainbow nation where he asked people to overcome their prejudices. He would encourage everybody to be part of the new South Africa. I was proud to work with him, despite disagreements on certain economic policies.

On one occasion I was walking down the passage in Parliament and Mandela was coming in the opposite passage with his bodyguards. They asked me to stand aside so he could pass. When he saw me, he came to me and whispered: "They don't know that you are a veteran." Then he laughed. He was modest and was willing to talk to me as a backbencher. He was not elitist, nor a snob and he recognised the importance of talking to everyone.

### **Dr Mangosuthu Buthelezi, leader of the Inkatha Freedom Party**

By the time I entered President Mandela's Cabinet as Minister of Home Affairs, in 1994, we already had a long relationship based on a family friendship and the struggle for the liberation of our country. He was my elder by 10 years, but we were of the same generation who gave our lives to the vision of a free South Africa.



Photograph supplied by Dr Mangosuthu Buthelezi

The Interim Constitution's Government of National Unity secured the IFP seats in Cabinet. But President Mandela knew the value of our participation, for we had sought reconciliation between our parties' supporters for many years. Despite the animosity between our parties, we had remained on good terms. I received letters from Mr Mandela while he was in prison, right up to 1989, just before his release. I rallied for his release, rejecting bilateral negotiations with the nationalist government, urging that everyone be able to come to the negotiating table.

I admired President Mandela's leadership of a newly liberated South Africa. He was, I believe, the right man for that period in our history. He had the charisma and the stature to embody the hope of a nation, and his story was one of forgiveness and healing.

President Mandela understood the

value of remaining above the daily political spats and scandals, to represent our country as a whole, rather than representing merely the ruling party. In Cabinet, he handed the reins to Deputy President Mbeki, whom he called the *de facto* president.

In this way he maintained the balance between party politics and national leadership, which enabled every South African of any extraction to claim him as "our President". President Mandela had a unique capacity to unite our nation, which has never since been replicated.

The Mandela I knew in Cabinet was the same Mandela I had known for decades before 1994. He had a sharp wit and a warm sense of humour. Despite every challenge we faced from our country's past and its future, we could always share a good laugh. I am honoured to have called him a friend.



**TEN YEAR MARK:** A Joint Sitting of Parliament on 10 May 2004 was addressed by former Presidents FW de Klerk and Nelson Mandela

### **Mninwa Mahlangu, Chairperson of the NCOP**

For me, as we slowly and painfully grow accustomed to the thought of a South Africa without its lodestar, the following things will always mark the memory of our former President.

His love for children is one. At a meeting a girl hugged his leg. "I love you," she said. "And I love you" was his response. "And I want you to tell all the children that I love them."

Children instinctively trusted him, even though they gave as good as they got. A little girl in Soweto asked him if it was true that he had been to prison? Had he done something bad? "No," he said. But other people thought he had, and they sent him away. "Then you must have been very stupid," she said, as she jumped from his lap, to a roar of laughter from him.

He inspired the nation to see that a non-racial, non-sexist and just society was possible. He summarised his leadership as follows:

"A leader is ... like a shepherd. He stays behind the flock, letting the most nimble go out ahead; whereupon the others follow, not realising that all along they are being directed from behind".

On the world stage, we will see in years to come how important his impact was. Not bad for a young boy from Qunu. Go softly, O Captain our Captain.

### **Bantu Holomisa, leader of the United Democratic Movement**

I worked with Tat' uMandela from 1994 to 1996 when I was a Deputy Minister in his cabinet. He was a very punctual person. We used to have early planning meetings as Cabinet Ministers and he was never late. He would start off with a joke and he had a joke for every one of us, and would ask us about our families.

I worked with him as a Minister as well as someone who was setting up appointments for him with the

private sector, as we were looking for funds to build schools.

There was a time when the South African government decided to send humanitarian aid to Angola and instead of sending the aid to the capital, Luanda, we sent it to Unita, which was seen as supporting the rebels. This infuriated the Angolan president, and I was sent to apologise on Madiba's behalf.

As expected, Dos Santos was spitting fire and complaining that since Madiba became president he had never been invited to our country or visited ours. A few weeks later, Madiba fixed this and went on a state visit to Angola.

Working with Madiba was like working with your father. You didn't get to ask many questions, you had to listen to him, and this is what I enjoyed about working with him.

In Parliament he was a disciplined President who focused on his job. It was a joy to work with him as he liked calling me a dictator. He maintained a good standard as President, as he





Photograph supplied by Koos van der Merwe

frequented Parliament even when he was not answering questions. He had an open-door policy and was a down-to-earth person.

He consulted across the board and didn't feel threatened by anyone. He even consulted the opposition. With him, the opposition knew that there were limits and they respected the boundaries that he had set. We had an understanding

with him. When we met, it wasn't as ANC vs UDM – he wanted our input as members of society.

### **Koos van der Merwe, spokesperson for the Inkatha Freedom Party**

In Parliament, Madiba did not act like a party politician and the president of the African National Congress, but

rather as a statesman. His responses were always responsible in the House. I will also remember him as a very kind person who always laughed and greeted, and waved at everyone with love.

My first encounter with him in Parliament was when I was walking past the presidential parking lot and he called me to talk to me. He told me that when he was in trouble it was Afrikaners who helped him and he made reference to a police captain who arranged for his court cases during his treason trial to be heard on Saturdays, for which he was always grateful.

Madiba was a very friendly person, who would go beyond asking how you are and ask you about your family. He once asked me how many grandchildren I had, to which I responded "six, with one on the way." He laughed and called me a bad bull, telling me that he had 17 grandchildren.

He was one of the few people who really understood South African





politics from the point of view of the Afrikaners, Xhosas and Vendas. He had an intellectual grip on South Africa and he always spoke to me in Afrikaans in that strong voice of his.

### **Dr Pieter Mulder: Leader of the Freedom Front Plus and Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries**

I first met Mr Mandela during the Codesa [Convention for a Democratic South Africa] negotiations. What I remember most about Mr Mandela in Parliament was that he was not one to stick to protocol and that sometimes made people nervous about what he might do. I remember in one of the State of the Nation addresses he broke protocol and stepped aside from the red carpet to greet individuals lining the side of the carpet.

At one time a popular American president came to visit Tuynhuys and Mr Mandela took him to the fence leading to the Gardens and introduced him to the public, which of course incensed his security personnel. When he used to deliver his speeches in the National Assembly, I used to watch the tension that his deputy and officials felt as he deviated from prepared speeches.

I wrote a book called *Kan Afrikaners Toyi-Toyi?* and the title of the book came from Mr Mandela. I was telling him how the Afrikaans speakers were feeling neglected in the SABC programmes at that time and he said: "I often see a lot of people toyi-toying in Parliament when they are not pleased, but I have never seen Afrikaners toyi-toyi. Can Afrikaners toyi-toyi?"

I admire his being able to make his dreams a reality. Very few people get to see their dreams become a reality in their lifetime but he is one of them.

### **Mluleki George, member of the Congress of the People**

I first met Mr Mandela on Robben Island in the mid-1970s. He was staying in B section and I was in G section. Our cells were not that far from each other and I remember him as a fitness fanatic. Every morning he would get up to jog and we would get up early to watch him from our cells.

I was there at the first meetings before democracy, where Madiba was giving us the full story on negotiations and compromises that they had to make to ensure that the country didn't fall into a racial war. I remember how he handled the issue of the armed struggle, as we wanted to fight but he used his strong influence to dissuade us from that.

I remember the words in his first speech where he stated, "Never again in South Africa will we allow one race to be oppressed by another."





**CODESA GROUP FINAL:** At the signing of the final Constitution on 10 December 1996, outside the National Assembly, from left are Deputy President FW de Klerk, the head of the ANC negotiating team, Cyril Ramaphosa, President Nelson Mandela, the Deputy Chairperson of the Constitutional Assembly, Leon Wessels, Deputy President Thabo Mbeki and President of the Senate, Kobie Coetsee

and Madiba was in Barcelona at that time. We went to his hotel room so that he could assist us with persuading them to let us participate. He was older than us, yet he made us breakfast which showed his good heart.

I also remember that he was someone who knew most Ministers by their first names, and would often ask us about our families. He was also a very animated, funny character who used to make a lot of jokes.

### Dene Smuts, Shadow Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development for the Democratic Alliance

Presidents are not MPs and therefore our acquaintance with President Mandela was largely limited to enjoying his performances at the podium of the National Assembly. Never forget that he was the politician supreme and could play to his audiences like no other. In that sense he was a cross between a movie star and a president: if that sounds like President Reagan, the Great Communicator, it is not far wrong, except for the policy differences. But he was in truth more like a cross between a rock star and a king. He could reach deeper into an audience than even an actor can, and he was literally regal, with the requisite touch of *noblesse oblige*.

This made him perfect for the role the ANC chose at the start of the transition: assuaging white fears while recognising black aspirations. ANC leaders who later followed him were at pains to say that he was so celebrated simply for carrying out a reconciliatory ANC policy. All I can say is that the rock star made reconciliation sound like his own music. I'll bet he called the shots on the reconciliation policy inside the

ANC anyway. He was the consummate politician who kept the ruling party on track for transition.

Off campus, I remember two meetings: I once attended a multiparty meeting at the presidential residence on the Groote Schuur estate. When a tray of tea was served, I declined to pour – the position of women in society and in politics was far more tenuous than women in politics today even begin to understand – and I had the impression that Mr Mandela did not particularly like this. Who knows why? For all I know he may have thought I felt this was the duty of the presidential staff and thereby fed into some white stereotype very far from my own existence. Who knows whether my impression was correct, anyway?

The other meeting I remember was, later, at a party at the parliamentary estate at Fernwood in Newlands in Cape Town. "Good God, how are you?" he exclaimed, and pressed me to a by then somewhat bony breast. If I may be honest, I was not convinced he may not have mistaken me for any other Afrikaner *meisie* – Betsie Verwoerd, perhaps? But he was made for reconciliation and for the transition. Or he made it, whichever.

### Leon Wessels, Deputy Chairperson of the Constitutional Assembly

Fulfilling the role of deputy chairman of the Constitutional Assembly was the highlight of my political career. Madiba made me feel special – as if my presiding over the proceedings was the reason why the CA had completed its work in good time: "Leon, your performance today was a *kragtoer* (tour de force)," Madiba said to me.

I cannot imagine the negotiating process and South Africa's transition to democracy without him. What a giant! If I had not rubbed shoulders with this legend, I would have been poorer.

Thus he was a very decisive person who always knew what he wanted. I remember when Cosatu [the Congress of South African Trade Unions] and the SACP [South African Communist Party] came up with the idea of approaching the International Monetary Fund for funding.

Madiba responded with the idea of "tightening our belts", which gave us financial independence and we had money for social grants.

Madiba was of royal blood and had that element of being a chief, so sometimes he did not discuss things – he issued instructions. But what I liked about him was that he took full responsibility for his actions.

He was a kind-hearted person. I remember meeting him in Switzerland during my tenure on the National Sports Council. The International Olympic Committee had banned South Africa from participation in all sports,





**VINTAGE MADIBA:** Arriving at Parliament for a tour of the Parliamentary Millennium Project's exhibition, "Perspectives on and of Africa", with (from left) the former Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Naledi Pandor, the former National Assembly Speaker, Frene Ginwala and the current Chairperson of the NCOP, Mninwa Mahlangu.

### Kenneth Meshoe, Leader of the African Christian Democratic Party

After the 1999 election, he called me at home, and the phone was answered by my daughter who couldn't believe it was the President who was calling me personally, and he was calling me to say well done on the election results. Thus he had a special way of encouraging everyone.

When we were in the National Assembly we would look forward to his speeches, he treated the opposition

with respect showing that they are valuable in the democratic process.

Whenever heads of state would visit South Africa he would invite all political leaders and introduce them individually to the visiting heads of state.

When the Pope was visiting the country, we stood in a queue and when my turn came he introduced me to the Pope, and the Pope and I had a little conversation in which the Pope wished blessings upon me. That was a very special moment. Very few

people had the opportunity to talk to the Pope and Mr Mandela made that interaction possible for me. He had a special way of making every South African feel appreciated, valued and wanted.

We were blessed to have him as the first democratic President; he laid a solid foundation for the future. He was very strong in his message of reconciliation and nation-building. After the terrible past we had if he didn't focus on reconciliation there would have been serious trouble. He taught MPs to focus on the future and





Photograph of President Mandela and Mrs Farieda Omar

Benny Gool

### **Farieda Omar, widow of Mr Mandela's first Minister of Justice**

I used to have a fruit and vegetable stall at the Salt River market. During all the years Mandela was on Robben Island I sent a bag of fruit every time a lawyer visited him on Robben Island. Only once did the guards let that through. Mandela sent a personal thank you. He said it was the first time in 19 years that he'd seen a banana!

### **Ms Patricia de Lille, former executive member of the Pan Africanist Congress**

Comrade President we will never be able to say farewell to you, because your legacy will be with us for many more years to come. This is just a formality, but we can never say farewell to you.

Your hard work and dedication have inspired all of us. There were many

days when I felt tired and depressed, and I said to myself: Must I continue? But then one thinks about your programme at 80 years old, and how hard you work. One would then ask: Who am I, half your age, to say I am tired? That has always given me strength, Mr President, when I think of your commitment.

When I had to go to one of your projects sponsored by the Nelson Mandela Children Fund, I realised again how wonderful this idea of the Nelson Mandela Children Fund is and what it brings to so many suffering children in this country.

We are all going to miss you. We all love you, but I think the ANC is really going to miss you, because you have spoiled them, you have done too much, you have worked overtime all your life. Really, we think you deserve a good rest. 🙏

*Extract from Ms de Lille's speech during Mandela's farewell debate in Parliament on 26 March 1999.*

work together in building the nation. During his presidency there were only two of us representing the African Christian Democratic Party. He used to call me personally to ask for an opinion. He valued the opinion of every leader of the opposition and had a way of making everyone feel important and he used to say that everyone can contribute and must contribute. He showed this by consulting all leaders, calling the opposition party leaders to Tuynhuys to ask what they thought. He did not mind constructive criticism and he never treated you like an enemy.





# Through the lens

Photographs by George Hallett and Benny Gool



**MEMORIES:** Above: President Mandela delivers his first State of the Nation Address in Parliament on 24 May 1994; Below: Singing the national anthem at the opening of the first democratic Parliament on 10 May 1994, President Mandela is flanked by Deputy President Thabo Mbeki and Deputy President FW de Klerk; Opposite, clockwise from top left: in his Johannesburg office; with one of his grandchildren; hand-written note from Mandela's speech delivered from the dock during the Rivonia treason trial; relaxing at home in Houghton, Johannesburg; 1994; before the 1994 election, outside a Cape Town synagogue; at work on his cellphone.







\*\* It is an ideal for which I have lived;  
 it is an ideal for which I still hope to  
 live and see realised. But if I ~~should~~<sup>NEEDS</sup>  
~~be so, I am prepared to die for it~~ it is  
 an ideal for which I am prepared  
 to die.







Shaun Harris/iAfrica Photos



Independent Newspapers/Trace

**GIANTS MEET:** During his five years as President, Nelson Mandela met leaders from almost every country in the world, as South Africa was welcomed back into the international community after the apartheid years in the political wilderness.

# We pledge to keep your legacy alive

**Mr** *Nelson Mandela will always be remembered as one of the world's foremost statesmen of the 21st century. He rose above party politics and racial and other divisions to become one of the most revered political icons of all times. By Abel Mputing.*

A quote first famously used to describe Albert Einstein has since been applied many times to Mr Mandela: "Every century produces men and women who, through their exceptional achievements, leave an indelible mark on the universe."

Mr Mandela's career is summed up in the title of his famous book, *Long Walk To Freedom*. His was indeed a long, audacious walk to self-determination. Born on 18 July 1918 at Mvezo to a royal family, he grew up as a typical village boy. In 1939, he enrolled for a BA degree at Fort Hare University, but was expelled in 1940 because of his political activities.

Having cut his political teeth at Fort Hare, it was in Johannesburg that his political activism crystallised. He joined the African National Congress (ANC) in

1942, the same year that he enrolled for an LLB at Wits University. In 1944, he co-founded the ANC Youth League, and eight years later, in 1952, after being restricted by the apartheid regime to Johannesburg, he wrote the attorneys' admission examination and was admitted to the legal profession. He joined forces with the late Oliver Tambo to open one of the first black law practices in the country at the time.

A turning point in his political career came with the ANC's departure from its policy of non-violence in 1961, which led to the formation of uMkhonto we Sizwe and the beginning of the armed struggle. In an interview he explained: "At the beginning of June 1961, after long and anxious assessment of the South African situation, I and some colleagues came to the conclusion

that as violence in this country was inevitable, it would be wrong and unrealistic for African leaders to continue preaching peace and non-violence at a time when the government met our peaceful demands with force. It was only when all else had failed, when all channels of peaceful protest had been barred to us, that the decision was made to embark on violent forms of political struggle, and to form uMkhonto we Sizwe ... the Government had left us no other choice."

Thereafter permanently on the radar of the regime, he needed to operate underground. In 1962 he adopted the undercover name of David Motsamayi and used it to skip the country. During his years in exile he met African leaders across the continent to seek their moral and material support for the South African cause.

Upon his covert return to the country in August 1962, he was caught at a roadblock in Howick, KwaZulu-Natal. Later, many more ANC leaders were





AFP/Touchline Photos



Benny Gool/Trace Images

**ABOVE, FROM FAR LEFT:** With former Mozambique president, Joachim Chissano; Mandela presents a gift to Queen Elizabeth II on the first visit by a British monarch since South Africa was expelled from the Commonwealth; greeting the late Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat; and Fidel Castro received a warm welcome in South Africa for the role Cuba played in the struggle to defeat apartheid.

arrested and joined him in prison. All were accused of treason and found guilty during the infamous Rivonia Trial in 1964.

His speech from the dock in his own defence to the packed court in Johannesburg remains one of history's greatest quotes. "During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."

In full traditional Xhosa attire he appeared as a symbol of defiance; it was an announcement denouncing black subjectivity, a proclamation of sovereignty and a declaration of self-determination. He and seven other ANC leaders were condemned to life imprisonment. A ban was imposed on publishing his picture in any form as an act of treason, but during the course of his imprisonment, his image grew in international stature as a symbol of freedom, political liberty and social justice. Ironically, during

what the apartheid regime intended to be the lowest moment of his life, his international reputation soared.

His release on 11 February 1991 marked South Africa's new political era. On that day the country came to a standstill. Indeed, at the moment of his release it is likely the majority of the world's population stood in awe before their television screens, except for those waiting in Cape Town to greet him and hear his first speech in South Africa in almost 30 years.

For his tireless humanitarian efforts he won the Nobel Peace Prize Award in 1993. He displayed true statesmanship in his role as a chief negotiator in the complex talks that carved out a path to a new democratic order, and the first democratic elections on 27 April 1994. His stamp can be seen in the compromises and resolutions that characterised the time. Minority representation was secured by proportional representation, a Constitution was created that was committed to citizen participation, a dispensation was built that respected and protected South Africa's diversity, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was formed in 1995 to heal the wounds of the turbulent past.

Few know of the complexity of the political negotiations that marked the years of drawing up a new Constitution, with Mr Mandela consistently driving an agenda of reconciliation and inclusivity, in the face of sometimes virulent hostility on the part of many of his opponents and even some doubt within his own party.

On 10 May 1994, when he became the first democratically elected President of the country, South Africans found refuge in his guiding light. Under his stewardship, a new democratic South Africa was conceived and actualised. Under him a democratic Parliament took shape that became a model for countries all over the world. Mandela's political history has galvanised popular memory and political morality to ensure that our future, irrespective of race, colour or creed, will always be a shared one. His imprint will always serve as the conscience of the world.

He will always be an iconic figure, one whose memory will continue to be honoured annually on 18 July, International Mandela Day, an initiative that celebrates his humility, service and sacrifice to humanity and has to be the highest recognition bestowed on an individual by the United Nations. 🌟

# People of Parliament remember

## **Mahomed Farouk Cassim, Member of Parliament from 1994 to 2004**

The year 1994 was unlike any other in our political history. It was the dawn of democracy graced by the majestic leadership of Nelson Mandela. Twice, after the ringing of the bells when the doors of the National Assembly were opened and the early comers stood inside in clusters discussing something or other, we saw, to our amazement and delight, a relaxed Nelson Mandela strolling over to us with his affable but quite regal: "How are you?" He would offer his hand and smile and as we shook hands with him he would leave us nonplussed but feeling so proud to be a South African.

I was then an Inkatha Freedom Party MP and fierce though the tension was between us and the African National Congress [ANC], we stood when he entered, or was about to speak, or when he left, in keeping with the respect shown to him by the ANC.



This was the time when the exuberant singing of "Nelson Mandela" would fill the chamber to the rafters with the kind of energy I was never to see again. He was our President, everyone's President, because he transcended narrow political confines and knew how to be inclusive while being astute and assertive. He was tough but lovable, aristocratic but humble, single-minded but open to reason.

While he was President, the interpellation or mini debates that took place each Wednesday when the House was in session filled the visitors' gallery to the brim. He encouraged debate and supported transparency and accountability. There was genuine cut and thrust in the political debates of the day.

An accidental encounter with him in the passage was another unexpected surprise. Although his minders would require us to stand aside and let the President pass, he would notice you standing aside, pause, greet, shake hands, say something positive, and then move on. It was a privilege to be a Member of Parliament. For his sake you wanted to serve South Africa with everything you had.

He was so presidential in his own right that he easily and routinely affirmed everyone else without needing the same affirmation for himself, which in any case would have been superfluous. The genius of leadership was his and his alone.

Everyone will attest to that without fear of contradiction.

## **Kamal Mansura, former Secretary to the National Assembly**

The occasion I remember most involving Nelson Mandela was during the first sitting of the National Assembly in 1994. I was in the House as a returning officer, who assists the Electoral Officer (the Chief Justice) with the election of the President, the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker.

I was on the floor for the swearing in of the 400 new members of the National Assembly and for the nomination of the President.

The nomination occasion sticks in my mind because when the nomination came through to elect him as President and when it was seconded, the time, the feeling and atmosphere in the House is something I'll never forget.

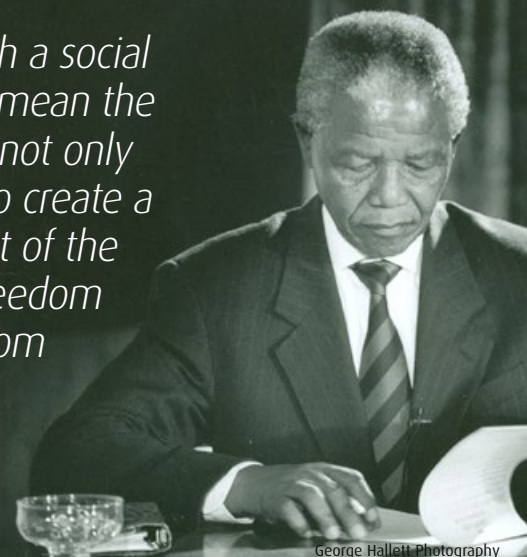
There was laughter, joy, tears, clapping, dancing, hugging and congratulating each other. There was euphoria in the House. The fact that this euphoria took place in the House of Parliament, which was usually very sombre, very strict and procedurally ruled is the unusual thing. In the same setting where that was a norm, everything, everyone, even in the galleries, went wild.

Chief Justice Chaskalson and we returning officers sat quietly observing. Chief Justice Chaskalson just sat back and let everyone enjoy the moment. In my 28 years in Parliament, that was my most memorable occasion.



*Our single most important challenge is to help establish a social order in which the freedom of the individual will truly mean the freedom of the individual. This requires that we speak not only of political freedoms. My government's commitment to create a people-centred society of liberty binds us to the pursuit of the goals of freedom from want, freedom from hunger, freedom from deprivation, freedom from ignorance, freedom from suppression and freedom from fear.*

From Nelson Mandela's first address to the nation as President.



George Hallett Photography



photograph supplied by Solomzi Tonyela (back row far left)

### Sumayah Fortune, Communications Projects Office Manager

The most memorable encounter I had with Madiba was during the State of the Nation Address one year. The encounter happened after the ceremony and activities of the day had taken place. The theme for that year was about disability. We took the disabled guests after the occasion to Tuynhuys to meet Madiba.

When we arrived there as staff members, we all stood together to one side trying to be out of the way, waiting for our guests to speak to Madiba. We were going to take them back to Parliament afterwards.

Madiba was enjoying himself and after speaking to the guests, he came

over to us, staff members, and asked us whether we would mind terribly if he could take a picture with us. I think almost all of us were shocked and surprised. It took us a moment to respond. We never forgot it.

### Solomzi Tonyela, Librarian

I met Madiba when I was still working in what was then called the Senate as a microphone operator between 1994 and 1995. Microphones were still operated manually then. I also used to operate the Members' register in the Senate.

The first time I met Madiba, it was just after a sitting of the Senate had adjourned. He was talking outside the Senate with the late Mr Dullah Omar. I was on my way to lock up the microphones.

While walking downstairs, I heard Madiba calling me. He said, "Good afternoon, son." I responded with a greeting and he asked me if I knew a man called Themba Tonyela. Then, before I could respond, he asked me if I knew a Douglas Tonyela.

He went on and asked if I knew a Thomas Tonyela. I finally responded and said those are my father's names. And he said, "Ewe, sasingamafafa amade kwedini, oluhlobo lwakho." (Yes, we used to be very tall young men, your father and I, just like you.)

He never told me where they met and my father had never talked about him. I later found out that they went to school together before Madiba entered active politics. He recognised me because he said I am the spitting image of my father.

After that he would greet me every time he saw me around Parliament. I also remember an occasion of the visit by the Prime Minister of Singapore. I sing in the choir and the choir was performing at that event. When he saw us performing, Madiba came to join us, despite his bodyguards trying to caution him.

He greeted everyone in the choir with a nod but when he saw me he said, "Mfondini, ukho kuyo yonke indawo, ukhona nalapha?" (Man, you are everywhere, you sing in the choir too?).

He then joined us in the choir, doing his famous Mandela jive. Afterwards, he asked if we had been given food. He always insisted that everyone be catered for and everyone be treated equally.

*“Hold the President to account; hold the Deputy President to account; hold the Ministers, the provincial and local executives to account. Judge this government by its ability to meet the objectives it has set out. If it is not building on the foundation that has been laid then you can challenge its right to govern.”*

From Nelson Mandela's reply to the 1997 State of the Nation Address



Photograph supplied by Mbuyisazwe Hector Tshabalala (second from the front)

### **Mbuyisazwe Hector Tshabalala, former Usher of the Black Rod**

The date is 20 March, 1995. Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain will be addressing a Joint Sitting of Parliament. She is accompanied by her consort, Prince Philip. The question is where will the Prince be seated?

The Speaker, Dr Frene Ginwala, is dead set against him sitting inside the National Assembly [NA] Chamber because when Madiba visited England, he was not allowed to enter the House of Commons. No ex-prisoners are allowed to address the House of Commons or the House of Lords.

The Speaker wants the chair that has been specially erected for the Prince, inside the NA Chamber, to be removed. He must sit in the

gallery. He is not a Member of Parliament. The two majesties, Inkosi Dalibhunga [Nelson Mandela] and Queen Elizabeth II, will be led into the Chamber by the first black gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, Mr Mbuyisazwe Hector Tshabalala and the Serjeant-at-Arms, Mr Godfrey Cleinwerck.

Because this is a Joint Sitting, the procession will commence at the steps of the New Wing, down Parliament Street, up the steps of Senate Building (now the National Council of Provinces Building), past the library, past the Old Assembly Chamber into the New Wing and, finally, into the NA Chamber.

Why is this day so memorable to me? It is because I was carrying the Black Rod. The difference between the Mace of the NA and the Black Rod is that the Mace is carried on

one's shoulder while the rod is held in front in the right hand. The distance from the office of the President of the Senate and the Senate Chamber was very short. The outstretched arm that carries the rod hardly gets tired. However, this round-about route taken by the procession was rather long. My right arm felt it.

The situation was compounded by the fact that the African monarch, Madiba, Ah, Dalibhunga! In his own inimitable manner, he would leave the procession and go and greet people in the guard of honour, "Hello! How are you?" shaking their hands. The procession had to stop while this was going on. It happened quite a few times between the steps and the doors of the NA Chamber.

My poor outstretched arm was aching by the time we reached the library foyer. I had to watch, and suffer privately, as the procession kept stopping for Madiba to greet people.

### **Bubbles Chetty, Researcher**

The most memorable encounter I had with Madiba was in 1997. I was walking in a passage in the Old Assembly. After turning a corner, I saw Madiba, who was on his way to Caucus. I was so surprised to see him that I shouted, "Madiba!"

He looked up and said, "Hello, my child." He gave me a hug and thanked me for all the work we do in supporting Members of Parliament. He said, "It's so wonderful to have parliamentary staff like you supporting MPs."



*“I have the majority in this Parliament. I can get through any measure I want, but I do not want to rely on authority, power or any form of coercion. My strongest weapon which I put across to the leaders of this country is one of criticism and persuasion. That is the strongest weapon we have, and I will continue to work on that strategy.”*

From Nelson Mandela's 1995 Budget Policy debate

### Razia Kafaar, Web Editor

When I started working at Parliament there were no tour guides. Tour guiding was done by the staff of Parliament who volunteered to do so. A highlight for tour groups was meeting Nelson Mandela on his way to an engagement within the parliamentary buildings. Madiba would always stop and take a few minutes to shake the hands of as many people as possible.

Based on people's reactions, I am sure that many people did not wash their hands for a while after they had shaken hands with him!

That was the highlight of the tour for many people. I am not sure whether they absorbed much of what the tour guides shared with them after that.

### Millicent Joseph, Switchboard operator

The year 1994 was the most interesting year for the country and for the staff of Parliament. After the 1994 elections and the opening of the first democratic Parliament, the new President, Mr Mandela, and the first woman Speaker, Dr Ginwala, had a meeting with all staff of Parliament in the National Assembly Chamber.

This was the first meeting of its kind, and the last. It was the first and only time that we have had the President address the staff of Parliament.

Staff members posed a lot of questions to the President, about the daily things that concerned us.



Mandela takes leave of Parliament's catering staff by greeting each one in turn during the last few days of his presidency

We told him that prior to 1994, staff had to wear uniforms. That was the cleaners, service offices and security officials, who are now known as the protection service.

There were two uniforms, one for the morning and a suit and tie for men and a dress for the women for the afternoons.

The President's response was clear. He said it is not the clothes we wear that do the job. It is the individual who performs the job, and we may wear whatever we like that is appropriate and comfortable.

I also remember him saying that the management of Parliament needed change and we should concentrate on affirmative action, which meant black management in senior and managerial positions.

### Tebogo Tsheole, Public Relations Specialist

The one encounter I had with Madiba was after he was elected President. When he came to Parliament, he would come to our office to greet us.

One day, while I was working he came to our office. He said to me, "Young man, how are you?" After exchanging pleasantries, he asked me a few questions and after a brief chat, he left. He was always so humble. It was surprising every time to see his humility.

### Hein Bezuidenhout, part of Mandela's protection team

On a 1995 visit to a small Boland town, Mandela immediately deviated from the programme by insisting on first walking through the hospital where a huge and rowdy crowd had gathered.

*“I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.”*

Nelson Mandela



Photograph supplied by Joyce Tshongoyi (centre)

Mandela called me to the stage, indicating his wish to walk through the middle of the crowd. I was concerned and tried to tactfully decline but the President insisted.

Needless to say, Mandela's gesture took the wind out of the crowd's sails and they were dignified and well behaved as he passed by. The walk went without incident.

### Nokuzola Mabhija, Public Relations

I remember the day I was walking with a friend along one of the ground floor passages connecting the New Wing [of Parliament] and the Old Assembly.

In the middle of the passage we met Mr Mandela and his bodyguards. We were so excited meeting him closely for the first time [that] we were unable to move back against the wall to let him pass. His bodyguards ordered us to do so and we

eventually submitted to the order. But Mr Mandela disregarded his bodyguards and instead came over to us, as we were standing against the wall. He shook our hands and initiated a small conversation with us.

In the conversation he thanked us for supporting Members of Parliament. I was very excited by that encounter with Mr Nelson Mandela. It impacted on my patriotism and boosted my work spirit.

### Joyce Tshongoyi, Parliamentary Protocol

I worked with Madiba in the Protocol Office. My job mainly involved organising the visits of international dignitaries. Members from the diplomatic embassies always wanted to meet him, especially towards the end of his term of office. By then it got hectic. I was organising official visits about twice a week.

I had encountered Mr Mandela

even before I started working at Parliament. I used to be a teacher and I would see him on a number of occasions on my way to work, because I had to walk past his house in Orlando West. He would always greet me. It was fate that brought me back to him when in 1995 I got a new job in the presidency. Later I got to work closer to him in [the] protocol [department].

Most of all I was touched by his humility. He was always very humble, easy to work with, fatherly. This picture [left] was taken during the visit to Tuynhuys by the President of Botswana. I was seeing Madiba to his seat when he stopped to greet the National Assembly Speaker, Dr Frene Ginwala.

### Albert Ntunja, manager of the parliamentary library

I remember on a certain Saturday morning when Mr Mandela was the President. He came to the parliamentary library. I was alone in the library on that day and the library was closed - the parliamentary library closes on a Saturday. I was surprised to see the President. He asked me for information on the Premiers of the nine South African provinces. My response was that the library was closed but I promised him to try my level best to assist him. When I said the library was closed he accepted that and told me not to worry about the information he wanted. I could not believe that the President came to the library himself to look for information instead of asking an aide to do so in the first place, especially given his extraordinary status in the country. 🇿🇦



*“It is in the Legislatures that the instruments have been fashioned to create a better life for all. It is here that oversight of government has been exercised. It is here that our society with all its formations has had an opportunity to influence policy and its implementation.”*

Nelson Mandela



Benny Gool

President Mandela hosted a farewell party for all his staff, including domestic and gardening staff, at the Green Dolphin restaurant at the V & A Waterfront in Cape Town when he retired. The photograph above was taken at the party. There was much excitement around the venue before the great man arrived. Security personnel were everywhere. A tired-looking old man in oil-stained, torn overalls was walking past the venue and security officers shooed him away just as the big metallic blue Mercedes Benz came to a halt next to him. When Madiba got out of the car, he went straight to the man in dirty overalls. “How are you?” he asked, shaking the man’s hand.

# Life changed in Parliament for media

## Theuns van der Westhuizen, Die Burger, Chairperson of the Press Gallery Association of Parliament

When Chris Hani was assassinated in Benoni at Easter in 1991, Mr de Klerk did the only thing he could in the circumstances: SABC's TV News Productions were informed that Mandela would be the one addressing the nation that night on TV news. Mandela called for the nation to be calm, noting that there had been an arrest thanks to the help of a neighbour, "an Afrikaner woman". Tragedy was averted. Effectively, the crown was handed over to Mandela that night, I think. Long before the announcement of the election, the die had been cast.

I recall that a large number of journalists had to be accommodated in offices in our two corridors near the Old Assembly Chamber in 1994. Freelancers and staffers from the community radio stations as well as newspapers, who were allowed into the hallowed chambers of Parliament for the first time, had swelled the ranks of the PGA. I sent a message to the President that I would like to introduce them to him at an upcoming function for the PGA. He seized on the event and asked for details of each one's career.

## Jovial Rantao, The Star

Nelson Mandela was a man of many strengths and talents. One that stood out was his humility – that uncanny and disarming ability to make you, and not himself, feel like the hero and the legend. In his interaction with the media in Parliament, Mandela always made it clear that he, the ANC and the government wanted a strong and independent media.

Mandela stressed that he did not want the media to be lapdogs. A

critical and investigative press is the lifeblood of any democracy, he often said. The media should be free of State interference, have the economic strength to stand up to the blandishments of government officials and enjoy the protection of the Constitution, so that it could protect the rights of citizens. His attitude and approach underscored the reality that the post-apartheid national legislature was truly a people's Parliament.

The media held a mirror to society. "If you don't like the image in the mirror, don't break it. Fix the image," he once told me.

My own sense was that Mandela appreciated members of the Press Gallery Association for the special role they played in covering Parliament. He spent an extra minute or two with PGA members, explaining himself to them. He knew that they served millions who relied on the media for information.

His memory was his other strength. At your first meeting with Mandela his best way to get you to relax was to ask about your family and then to chat to you about some of your work. The next time you met the great man, not only would he defy security to reach out and greet you as if you were the important one, he would ask, by name, how your children were.

This was simply amazing for a man who met hundreds of people in a week, to remember as small a detail as a child's name, but that was Madiba. The most humane President. The media's President. The greatest South African of all times.

## Wyndham Hartley, Business Day correspondent

When Mandela was visited by Chancellor Helmut Kohl, the President

took the leader of a reunified Germany for a walk through the Tuynhuys garden. A photographer, Jean du Plessis, was walking backwards ahead of them to get a good shot of the two when he fell into the pond. Quick as a flash, Mandela moved to help him out, but fortunately some security guards got there first. "And that," Mr Mandela informed the German leader, "is our pool photographer!"

## Ossie Gibson, SABC reporter and community radio freelancer

A visit by Palestinian Liberation Organisation leader Yasser Arafat took Tuynhuys a bit by surprise. Mandela gave Arafat the usual tour of the garden area adjoining Tuynhuys. As they passed the fence at the bridge between Tuynhuys and the Gardens, the President noted a group of about 30 schoolchildren who had run over to the fence when they spotted him, whispering "Mandela, Mandela". They were determined to have a closer look at the big man.

"Ah," Mandela said, as they neared the line of little faces peering through the fence, "thank you for coming to visit us!" The group of dignitaries waited while he linked arms with a bemused looking Palestinian Liberation Leader President Yasser Arafat, and they went closer to the kids.

"This is Uncle Yasser," he informed the grade 2s. "He was an engineer and a great leader in his youth, even at school. And do you know, even way before that when he was your age, he always did his homework." He paused slightly: "I hope you also do your homework?" Through the bars, 30 or so eager heads could be seen nodding up at him. Yes, they did.

"Good," he said, "then you will also be a big leader, like him." 🇿🇦





# Tribute from a friend

**Former** *Robben Island prisoner Ahmed Kathrada was elected Member of Parliament in the first democratically elected government in 1994. In September 1994, he was appointed as political advisor to Mr Mandela in the newly created post of Parliamentary Counsellor. He left parliamentary politics in June 1999.*

In order to pay tribute to Madiba it is important to take note of his political involvement since the 1940s when he joined the ANC and later the ANC Youth League. But before that, we need to know something about Madiba, the man, and the qualities that made him one of the most admired, respected and loved leaders in the world.

I knew Nelson Mandela since 1945 or 1946, when I was in high school and he was at the University of the Witwatersrand. One can write many paragraphs, even pages, about his various qualities.

His outstanding qualities were courage, compassion, tolerance, care, calmness, thoroughness, patience, charm, generosity, charisma, magnanimity, discipline, punctuality, devotion to justice and fair play. It is not easy to fit him into the category of a next-door-neighbour.

He was an uncommon amalgam of the peasant and royalty; the democrat par excellence, but not without the required tenacity to win; at once proud and simple, soft and strong-willed; obstinate and flexible; cool and impatient. He was an outstanding example of the spirit of volunteerism, something that is sadly at a premium these days.

He was a world statesman, forgiver and reconciler, a renowned lover of children, one who harboured no bitterness, no feelings of hate or desire for revenge.

Saint-like qualities he had in abundance, but he himself wrote: "One issue that deeply worried me in prison was the false image that I unwittingly projected to the outside world; of being regarded as a saint. I never was one, even on the basis of an earthly definition of a saint as a sinner who keeps on trying."

And elsewhere he said: "The impression that you are a demi-god worried me. I wanted to be like an ordinary human being with virtues and vices."

His active involvement in political activities led to police harassment, bannings, court cases and imprisonment. In 1952, the ANC and the South African Indian Congress jointly launched the Campaign for the Defiance of Unjust Laws.

Six unjust laws were identified, and volunteers were called upon to defy these laws and be imprisoned. Madiba was the national volunteer-in-chief. Although this was not supposed to be a full-time position, it took away a considerable amount of time from his recently established law practice. His deputy was Maulvi Cachalia of the Indian Congress. About 9 000 volunteers were imprisoned.

The campaign resulted in the arrest of Mandela and 19 leaders of the ANC, the South African Indian Congress [SAIC], the ANC Youth League and Indian Youth Congress, who were sentenced to nine



George Hallett Photography

**INSPIRING:** On the election trail at Athlone Stadium in Cape Town in 1994.

months imprisonment, suspended for two years. Soon after that Madiba was banned from attending gatherings, and participating in the activities of the ANC and all liberation organisations.

At the beginning of December 1956, he and 155 leaders and activists of the four Congresses from all over South Africa were arrested and charged with high treason. The prosecution set out to prove that the first 30 of the remaining 90 accused were guilty of attempting to use violent means to overthrow the government.

At the end of the four and half years that the trial lasted, in March of 1961, the Special Court of three judges found Mandela and the 29 accused not guilty of treason. In 1960, after the Sharpeville massacre, the ANC and PAC were banned.

Soon after the acquittal of the Treason Trial accused in 1961, the ANC asked Madiba to go underground and continue ANC work. This meant closing down his law practice, saying goodbye to his wife, Winnie, and two little daughters, and living the life of an outlaw. In order to continue with his risky political work he had to disguise himself as a farm labourer, and later as a chauffeur. While underground, he initiated the decision to launch the armed

struggle under MK. He was appointed Commander-in-Chief. Also, while underground he was smuggled out of the country and toured African countries to mobilise support for MK. While abroad he received military training.

On his return in August 1962, he was arrested and sentenced to five years imprisonment. His arrest on 5 August 1962 and his unbroken imprisonment until his release on 11 February 1990 made him the longest-serving political prisoner in South Africa. While he was serving his five-year sentence, the police raid in Rivonia took place on 11 July 1963, and Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, Raymond Mhlaba, Denis Goldberg, Rusty Bernstein, myself and others were arrested.

We were detained under the 90-day law, in which those detained were allowed no lawyers or visitors, nor newspapers or books.

At the end of the 90 days we saw our lawyers and Mandela, for the first time. They told us to prepare for the worst. With the knowledge and concurrence of our lawyers, it was decided to conduct the trial as a political trial, not a criminal trial. This meant that if you gave evidence, or spoke from the dock, you did not

apologise, you did not ask for mercy; you proclaimed your political beliefs and, even if you were sentenced to death, you did not appeal.

Mandela set the tone of the defence case during his four-hour address to court, which he ended with the words:

"I have fought against white domination and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."

Until the very last day when sentence was to be passed, the expectation among our lawyers and the accused was the death sentence. Madiba had once again prepared a defiant speech in the face of a death sentence. But there was no need for that. The judge said there would be no death sentence. With a collective sigh of relief, the accused heard the sentence of life imprisonment.

That very night after the sentence the seven of us were suddenly woken up, handcuffed and with leg irons they took us to the military airport, and we were flown to Robben Island. Our eighth colleague, Denis Goldberg, was kept



in Pretoria with other white political prisoners. Among the seven of us were four members of the National Executive Committee of the ANC – Madiba, Walter, Govan and Raymond.

Prison brings out the best and the worst in human beings. The political prisoners, in the face of adversity, with very few exceptions, carried themselves with dignity and the best values of the struggle.

When we arrived on Robben Island, Madiba said to us. “We are no longer leaders, we are ordinary prisoners. Chief Luthuli and our leaders in exile, Oliver Tambo, and others are our leaders. They make policy, they give instructions.” Except for medical reasons, throughout our imprisonment they carried out all the prison chores, like the rest of us. For 13 years we worked at the lime

quarry with pick and shovels. Because of his age and health, Comrade Govan was told by Madiba and the other leaders not to come to the quarry. Quarry work was very difficult at first and it left us with bleeding hands and blisters. We endured this, and after a little while we got used to it.

One thing was made very clear to our warders. “We will not tolerate anything that impinges on our dignity as human beings. We will not say ‘Baas’. We will not tolerate being called ‘Kaffers, Koelies or Boesmans.’ We will work as much as we are able to, not as much as ordered to. We will not tolerate vulgar language...”

Our leaders did not accept preferential treatment. When we resorted to hunger strikes, with the exception of those who were not well, all the others took part.

For 14 years we did not have beds. We slept on two mats. For 10 years we had only cold water for bathing, shaving, showering and washing our clothes.

In 1977, 13 years after our sentence, Madiba was offered a release if he went to the Transkei. Madiba’s response was: “The whole of South Africa belongs to both blacks and whites.” He refused to settle in any Bantustan.

In 1982, after 18 years, five of the seven Rivonia trialists – Madiba, Walter, Mhlaba, Mlangeni and myself – were transferred to Pollsmoor Prison in Cape Town. Comrades Govan Mbeki and Elias Motsoaledi were left on the Island.

On 31st January 1985, President Botha offered to release Madiba and all political prisoners, on certain conditions. The offer was conveyed personally to

**MEDIA FRENZY:** The election press conference at the Carlton Hotel in Johannesburg in April 1994. On Mandela’s right is Pallo Jordan, then the ANC Director of Information and Communication, and Alfred Nzo, the former Secretary-General of the ANC.



George Hallett Photography

Madiba by the prison authorities. Typical of him, he returned from the office, cool and calm, and went straight to his newspapers.

A little later he told us: "Oh, by the way, President PW Botha has offered to release all political prisoners on conditions." We did not spend any time debating the matter. We asked Madiba to draw up a letter, which we all signed, rejecting the offer.

In 1985, after three years with us, Madiba was taken away from us but kept at Pollsmoor completely isolated from us. His new accommodation consisted of three cells, of which Madiba said "by prison standards, this was palatial." (*Long Walk to Freedom*, pg 625).

He often said that what he missed most about prison was the time to think. In isolation that was exactly what he did. In his autobiography Madiba says after a few weeks he came to the realisation that the change was not a liability but an opportunity.

"My solitude gave me a certain liberty, and I resolved to use it to begin discussions ... It was clear to me that a military victory was a distant if not impossible dream ... I chose to tell no one what I was about to do, not my colleagues upstairs, nor those in Lusaka. There are times when a leader must move out ahead of the flock ... confident that he is leading his people the right way." (*Long Walk to Freedom*, pgs 626-627).

In considering Madiba's isolation at Pollsmoor Prison and his initiative on talks with the government, it is important to recall the strategy of the ANC, which was to take the combined strength of the three main

arms of the struggle, and with the support and solidarity of international anti-apartheid movement and some governments, force the National Party government to the negotiating table.

An armed victory on the battlefield was not envisaged. The various arms included, most importantly, the political struggle in the country and underground activity in the country; the armed struggle; and the solidarity of the international community.

At the very outset, he made it clear that as a prisoner he had no power, nor mandate to negotiate. Convinced that sooner or later the ANC was going to win, his aim was to persuade the government to talk to the leadership of the ANC in exile. However, in order to facilitate and hasten the talks, the government should unban all political organisations, release all political prisoners and allow the exiles to return to South Africa.

The talks began with senior prison officials, then members of the Intelligence, then the Minister of Justice, and eventually a Cabinet Committee. In between, there were meetings with President Botha and later, President de Klerk. After lengthy talks, the government acceded to all of the above conditions of the ANC, by 1990. Of the Rivonia Seven, Govan was released in 1987 on grounds of health; Walter, Raymond, Elias, Andrew and I were released in October 1989; and finally Madiba on 11 February 1990.

In May 1990 the first discussion between the Cabinet and an ANC delegation took place. In December 1990, after 30 years in exile, Oliver Tambo returned to South Africa. In December 1991 the Convention for a Democratic South Africa [Codesa] talks began. In a referendum, initiated

by President de Klerk, 69% of white voters gave their support to negotiations.

On 10th April 1993, the assassination of Chris Hani almost plunged the country into a violent conflagration such as South Africa had never experienced before. The situation was so serious that even the government forces would not have been able to deal with it. The only intervention that saved the country from imminent bloodshed was Madiba's appearance on national television. A number of media commentators and politicians commented that that was the night when Mandela became President.

Participants at Codesa included the government, the ANC and about 18 political and other organisations. On 3rd June 1993, the Codesa delegates decided on 27th April 1994 for the first non-racial, one-person-one-vote elections. The ANC won with 62.6% of the votes cast.

On 10th May, 1994, Madiba was inaugurated as the first President of the new South Africa. First were the top echelons of the Police Service and the National Defence Force saluting the new President and pledging their loyalty to him as their Commander-in-Chief.

Moments later the tens of thousands of citizens, and world leaders, looked up into the sky, and loudly cheered the spectacular fly-past of jets and other planes, leaving behind a smoke trail in the colours of South Africa's new flag.

At that moment we were able to proclaim: "This is our President, our army, our police force; this is our flag proudly representing all the people of South Africa, laying the foundation of our new non-racial, non-sexist, democratic South Africa." 🇿🇦





President Mandela waves goodbye at the end of the last session of the first democratic Parliament.





#### **OUR SOUTH AFRICA – THE SUN**

The sun heals the divisions of the past, improves the quality of life of all South Africans, frees the potential of each person and builds a united and democratic South Africa, taking its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.



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#### **OUR PARLIAMENT – THE DRUM**

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#### **OUR CONSTITUTION – THE BOOK**

Our Constitution lays the foundation for a democratic and open society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights. It is the supreme law of our country, and ensures government by the people.

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Produced by the Parliamentary Communication Services

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