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I Remember Nelson Mandela

EDITED BY VIMLA NAIDOO & SAHM VENTER

The idea to gather the memories of those who served Madiba into a book came from an understanding that most people in South Africa, and those around the world, knew him as an icon; as a public figure. It was important to me that the stories of those close to him be published so that fifty years from now, even a hundred years from now, when future generations want to know who Nelson Mandela was, they would not only be told the story of the head of state, but they would be able to read the story of a human being with a caring heart and generous soul. – Mrs Graça Machel

I Remember Nelson Mandela is a collection of remembrances from those who worked with, for and beside Mandela. More than one hundred individuals, from household staff to bodyguards and presidential advisors, have offered their memories, which provide warm, poignant and often humorous insights into what it was like behind the scenes with one of the most revered and beloved political figures the world has seen.

'Nothing is more important than to be loved by your colleagues.'
– Nelson Mandela, 5 August 2008, addressing the staff of the Nelson Mandela Foundation at a private celebration for his 90th birthday

The collection is the dream-child of Mrs Graça Machel who, some months after Nelson Mandela's passing on 5 December 2013, met with former members of his staff to thank them for their service. Listening to their stories inspired the creation of this, the perfect gift book, providing readers with a glimpse into the man behind the title.

ABOUT THE EDITORS

Sahn Venter is the senior researcher at the Nelson Mandela Foundation in Johannesburg where she has worked since 2006. She previously reported on the last years of the struggle against apartheid for South African and the international media.

As a correspondent for the international news agency, The Associated Press, she covered the release from prison of Nelson Mandela, his presidency, as well as various news events on the African continent. In 2013 she and Swati Dlamini-Mandela co-edited Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's book *491 Days: Prisoner Number 1323/69*.

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Vimla Naidoo was a protocol officer in the Office of President Nelson Mandela where she helped to set up events, including receiving ceremonies for visiting heads of state and the opening of parliament. She worked with President Mandela's Advisory Council for National Orders to design a new set of state honours. She remained in Protocol throughout President Mandela's term of office and for the first half of President Mbeki's term. In 2001 she moved to the Nelson Mandela Foundation as a personal assistant to Nelson Mandela and Mrs Graça Machel, to whom she provided personal support and logistics.