

This exhibition of *Amazwi Abesifazane* is
dedicated to the memory of Florence Mdlolo



My Story—Florence Mdlolo

William Benton Museum of Art
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Storrs, CT 06269
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My Story—Florence Mdlole

I feel privileged and honoured to get this opportunity to write this book. I have always had this dream, since I was young. With this book I intend to give love to those who were never given love at their tender age and to those who still don't get love anywhere, even now. I would also like to meet people who like to experience self development and to go forward in life.

My father died (metaphorically) when I was six months old, inside mother's womb. He had joined TEBA (recruiters for the mining industry) and he went to eGoli (Johannesburg) and never bothered to come back home. I first saw my father in 1984. So, I did not have that privilege of being raised by two loving parents. I know and I saw my mother struggle to raise me, with no man to support her. It was so hard. The hardships were aggravated by the family into which she was married. They did not like her. They called her names and always insulted her. Our family left her alone at the place where they had first built our home, during the times of the Reserves (Homelands). My mother raised money by ploughing melle (corn) fields for other women and they would pay her R2,50 (US\$ 0.42 at approximate 2004 exchange rate of R6/US\$) per day. That money purchased a tin of Lactogen (powdered milk) that would help feed me as my mom could not produce enough milk from her breasts. This was because she was not getting enough food to produce milk.

In 1963 my mother decided to take me off of sucking her breasts as she was preparing to go to the city to look for a job. She left me with my grandmother, Ma Dlamini, who consoled me by allowing me to suck from her breasts. I would weep for my mother, day and night. Even today, I can still feel that pain of crying for my mother. With the arrival of Andries Botha though, at Mbuyeni, Kwa-Shangase Tribal Authority, Ndwedwe, I found a chance of voicing my feelings and I could now tell my story to my dead father. I also forgave my father. I want to also thank the principal of the local school, Mrs. X.P. Sosibo, who is the one who encouraged me to use my talent of writing and to do some craft work. I also want to thank my husband, Eric Mthembu, for his unconditional support.

The sad thing is that my mom, a lady from Mase, Qumbu, Transkei, is dead. She died in 2000. She died of a heart attack and sugar diabetes as she had lived a long and miserable life. My only daughter, who was born with a heart problem, died in 1996. I got this child while I was still suffering from life's hardships. Again I want to thank Andries Botha from Amazwi Abesifazane (a memory retrieval and archival project of Create Africa South, www.cas.org.za) and Pat Horn from SEWU (Self Employed Women's Union) who saw a talent in me and inspired me to go forward. I wish that everything will now go well with me.

Florence Mdlolo died under sad and tragic circumstances

on Sunday, 3rd of March 2002 and was buried on Saturday, 9th of March 2002. It is always difficult to speak about matters that go beyond speaking but since she touched so many people's lives, I feel the need to record this memory. How can we even pretend to believe that her life, this extraordinary force, can now be extinguished in such a particular South African way?

I did not even know that she suffered respiratory difficulties. I was also under the impression that she was the embodiment of health and energy in such abundant form, that I could not imagine her ailing. Who would have imagined that on Sunday night at 9pm she developed breathing problems as a result of an asthmatic attack. The subsequent unfolding events are even more difficult to comprehend. Bearing in mind that Florence lived in the rural area of Ndwedwe, approximately 1 and a half hours by car outside of Durban, it is almost unbearable to imagine that the family struggled for more than four hours to secure the transport to get her to hospital. The anxiety caused by these basic limitations are difficult to contemplate.

I am led to believe that transport was available, but at a cost that the family could not afford. I won't even go into their ransomed emotions under such tragic circumstances. Florence was finally taken to hospital at 1am in the morning and was dead on arrival. This particular South African tragedy reminds us all about the inequalities that still prevail within our traumatized society. If there is anything to be learned from this experience, it is that an incomprehensible legacy of poverty still remains in our country.

Upon my arrival at the funeral I was met by a member of the family who soon showed me a small array of photographs that had been seen by many hands – Florence's wedding. I had not known that she had been married two weeks prior to her death. Apparently it was Florence's wish to be married sooner than the date set in March. In her own words, she had wished to become Mrs. Mthembu before she died. The photographs revealed a radiant and happy couple in a way that was extremely painful to see. The wry ironies attached to this celebratory moment could not be escaped as I looked at picture after picture of this happy moment, stolen by a woman who experienced such enormous personal and political adversity in her life. As I was looking at the photographs I glanced through the opening in the red and white marquee and saw her humble coffin lying in front of an array of white plastic chairs. We were standing on the side of a hill looking over a lush green valley that was filled with the sound of chickens, flies, the occasional goat and the low murmur of voices. This was Africa at its most painfully beautiful.

Mr. Eric Mithembu, Florence's new husband, approached me in a manner that suggested that his body and his soul were in deep conflict. Somehow he wanted to be in another place that was not dealing with the practicalities of burying his wife under a cloud of such economic uncertainty. The funeral policy that he was led to believe that he had paid for was now under question as a result of some administrative technicality and he had to raise an additional R1500 in order to secure the burial plot to bury Florence. The worse case scenario would mean that the undertakers would once again reclaim the body until unpaid debts had been settled. I could not imagine what indignity he might be suffering as he spoke to me. I tried to assure him but I could see the humiliation brimming in his eyes as he spoke to me.

We moved into the early stifling interior of the tent. The sun was already rising. Slowly the tent filled with an array of loved-ones (mostly women) who had arrived respectfully but humbly attired to pay their respects to this extraordinary force that had now departed from our lives. We tried to speak of as many things as possible that would not drive us to the brink of having to deal with the memory of her body which lay before us in such a casual way.

The service was delayed as many of the invited guests were still struggling with the usual complexities of transport and the basic rural South African logistics. Speaker after speaker at the funeral eulogized a complex, combative, compassionate South African woman. Words such as: rose, lion, soldier, devoted committee member, leader, artist, are but a few of the accolades that came forth to describe this complex and compelling spirit.

Towards the close of the ceremony her memory was also claimed back by the political party that she had so passionately devoted her South African vision to. It reminded me that in South Africa, politics, struggle and identity are virtually synonymous with body, desire and life. As I sat to the right of the coffin glancing over Florence I saw a woman walking up the hill away from the tent. Her beautiful large African body appeared as if it was merged into the land. This discrete African metaphor reminded me, once again, of the primal binary linkage between woman and the land. It was as if they were such a philosophical certainty that I could not imagine how it was possible that the politics of the future could still manage to ignore this reality with such stupidity. I realized at that moment, as I looked around me at the gathering of all these powerful women, that Florence had not died but that she continued to live in that sure, simple relationship between woman and soil. It was in the simplicity of this understanding that I could accept the inevitability of the cycle of life and death and the many emotional realities that define our lives.

I know that we will all remember with great fondness the extraordinary symbol of her life and I trust that we will not forget what she stood for, the country she loved and the issues that her life represented. This book is her final legacy. We are all honoured to have played a small role in its realization.

Andries Botha





*With Lots Of Love
From
Mieha & Family*



*Happy 60th Birthday
Sybil*

*Our latter years are called
The golden, harvest years,
For Gold is very precious
Whenever it appears.*

*And whether owned by kings
Or workmen earning wages,
Gold always seems to grow
In beauty as it ages.*

*Our springtime years are
sweet,
And bright in summertime,
But only golden years
With autumn splendor shine.*



An invitation

RSVP

Ruth Carneson

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Mobile: 0722 413267

ruth.island@telkomsa.net

.....Kathie & Barbara.....

We invite you to join us in celebration of

Sarah Carneson's
ninetieth birthday



Please join us for dinner at

The Silvertree Restaurant
Kirstenbosch

at 6:30 for 7:00pm

Saturday 17th June 2006

Mediix Audiology Prize – for the student with the best academic mark in Audiology

Ange Holland

Norman Nossel Music Prize – to the most promising and deserving student in the School of Music

Yonela Mnana

Percy Tucker Prize – for the best director in the School of Dramatic Art

Steven Feinstein

Phyllis Lewsen Prize – for distinguished achievement in third year History

Paul Holden

Pierre de V. Pienaar Prize – to the best graduand in the degree of Speech and Hearing Therapy

Clinical Academic
Lara Berigson
Kerry-Lee Baker

Phonak Audiology Prize – for the best student in clinical Audiology

Zaheerah Bham

Ruth First Prize – for the best third year research project in Sociology

Tracey Leigh Pienaar

Sibusiso Mabena Memorial Prize – for the best Honours research report (African Literature)

Not awarded in 2003

Standard Bank Group Foundation of African Art Book Prize – for the best undergraduate essay on a topic from African Art Studies
Awarded jointly to:

Eben Strydom

Mitchell Said

Standard Bank Group Foundation of African Art Honours Essay Prize – for the best Honours essay on a topic from African Art Studies

Georgina Hooper-Box

Higher Diploma in Education Senior Primary

MAHLANGU, Winnie Nomsa

MSIBI, Wilson Mhleisi

Higher Diploma in Education Secondary Home Economics

O'DONOGHUE, Caro

Higher Diploma in Education Foundation Phase

GOTSHELO, Tshilo Linah*
HOLLANDER, Hayzel Rebecca
MAGQWASHI, Pinda Purnla

MOLEFE, Mpelegeng Brenda
MSEZELI, Bukela Mavis

Higher Diploma in Education Intermediate Phase

HLAKA, Pule Marcus
JANTJIE, Landiwe Elizabeth
KHONZA, Shakespear
MAADIBODU, Mashibe Melba
MALEFANE, Motsisi Julia
MOGWASE, Mpho
MOKOENNA, Prudence Lily Kalebogile*

NI OBELE, Louisa
NGWENYA, Kedibone Elizabeth
RAMAANO, Oletswwe David
RIKHOTSO, Hanyeleni Virginia
SATHKEOE, Traith Leah
SIBEKO, Cecil Thuthula*
TSHAKANE, Botshwaralo Hilary

*Amina Cecilia biography from
WITS honorary doctorate booklet*

**HONORARY DEGREE
AMINA CACHALIA**

Amina Cachhal (nee Asval) was born on 28 June 1930 in Vereeniging, the youngest daughter of Ebrahim and Fatima Asval. The family's tradition of political activism dates back to her father's close association with Mahatma Gandhi and the first passive resistance campaign of 1907. Amina's sister Zainab, was an early activist and Amina's subsequent political activism and championing of women's rights was almost preordained.

Amina ensured that she was sent to school in Durban in the mid-1940s because she was aware (partly through the leading role played by her sister) that the women's passive resistance campaign would be launched from that city and she wanted to be part of it. The organising committee, however, decided she was too young, slight and frail to go to jail and, much to her chagrin, she was prevented from participating actively at that stage.

She returned to Johannesburg towards the end of 1947 when the campaign drew to a close and, because of the parlous state of the family finances, she took up a number of jobs, eventually settling into permanent employment as a secretary in a garment factory. Her experience as a woman in the workplace underlined for her the importance of financial independence and the need to amass skills and she founded the Women's Progressive Union (WPU) to foster training, skills development and the financial independence of women. The response to the WPU was enthusiastic and the union grew and flourished for four years under Amma's mentorship, until she went to jail in 1952 during the Defiance Campaign.

In the 1950s she was an active member of the Peace Council and was politically active in the Indian Youth Congress, of which she was an executive member, the Indian Congress, and the Federation of South African Women (Fedasaw), of which she was national treasurer. She was involved in organising the protest campaign against passes for women and was one of the leaders of the 20 000-strong march of women on the Union Buildings in Pretoria in August 1956. As part of her ongoing political activism she helped organise the Congress of the People in 1955 and attended as a delegate. During the Treason Trial she was involved in looking after the dependants of the trialists.

As the political struggle against apartheid gained momentum in the late 1950s Amma Cachaalia's active leadership role in Fedasw and the Youth Congress as well as her participation in the structures of the Transvaal Indian Congress brought her into close contact and cooperation with the Congress of Democrats, the Coloured People's Organisation and the African National Congress. Her political activism and her involvement in the organisation of protests and campaigns continued until the government's crackdown on opposition organisations in 1960.

Thereafter, Anna pursued her political activities clandestinely and, as a result, was served with a restrictive banning order in 1963 while she was recuperating from a serious heart operation. During that year she played a key role in planning and executing the escape of Arthur Goldreich, Harold Wolpe, Mosie Moolla and Abduhai.

Joyce Barker Memorial Award – for the most promising student in an operatic production in the School of Music
Awarded jointly to:

Sibongile Chamane

Sello Motau

J S Marais Prize – for distinguished achievement in History Honours

Not awarded for 2003

Kirby Medal – for the best student in Music

Lisa Willcocks

Leon Gluckman Award – for the best piece of creative work in the School of Dramatic Art

Leigh Nudelman

Liberty Life Prize – for the best AELS final year student with the highest mark across four modules at the end of the third year

Nicholas Parkes

Liberty Life Prize – for the best Honours student in Applied Linguistics awarded to the student with the highest final mark, including the research report, at the end of the honours course

Lesley Masterson

MCCO'Dowd Medal – for excellence in Social Work Practice

Jennifer Mamabolo

Maestel Award – for the best all-round student for the Master of Arts in Translation degree

Not awarded for 2003

Martienssen Prize – for the finest independent art work produced by a student in the second, third and fourth year of the Bachelor of Arts (Fine Arts)

Lester Adams

Reshma Chhibba

Max Pollak Memorial Prize – to the best student in the final year Bachelor of Arts (Social Work)

Dawn Bailey-McEwan

Friends of the Johannesburg Art Gallery Prize – for the best student in History of Art III

Lara Koseff

German Embassy Book Prize – for outstanding work in German studies
Awarded jointly to:

Stephanie Nurse

Johannes Cronje

I J Kriel Prize – for the best student in English III

To be announced

ISMA Maurice Flior Award – for the best essay by a second or third year student in African Literature

Not awarded for 2003

Italian Consulate General Prize – for the best student majoring in Italian in the final undergraduate course

Sonia Famucchi

James Grievé Prize – for the best third-year student in Philosophy

Kira Schlesinger

Jan Smuts Prize – to the best student in International Relations
Awarded jointly to:

David Fowkes

Moirá König

John Gray Medal – awarded to the BA (Social Work) graduate who has performed the best in Social Work over the period of study for the degree

Ayanda Mabuyakhulu

Johannesburg Operatic and Dramatic Society (JODS) – for the student who in the opinion of the judge has made the most distinguished contribution on stage in a current JODS School of Music production

Ruari Wad Petersen

Joosub H S Ebrahim Prize – for honours in Political Studies

Alex McNamara

Jessat from the prison in Marshall Square. Her underground activities continued throughout the period of her banning, which lasted from 1963 to 1980. Her late husband, Yusuf, too, was banned and, for 10 years, house arrested.

In the 1980s Amina Cachalia served as patron of the Federation of Transvaal Women (Fedtraw) and was active in organising women in the liberation struggle. During this period she participated in bodies, including the United Democratic Front, which were actively opposed to the Tricameral Parliament. When the ANC Women's League was resuscitated in the 1990s, she served on the committee of the PWV region.

She was elected a Member of Parliament for the National Assembly in the first democratic elections and was offered an ambassadorial posting but was unable to accept because of family commitments.

Amina continues to serve in organisations and groups that focus on the upliftment of women, the nurturing and protection of children, and the rehabilitation of the disadvantaged. She is a trustee of the Mandela Children's Fund, Ububele (a psychotherapeutic rehabilitation centre in Alexandra), and Operation Hunger. She currently serves on the Finance Committee of the National Women's League and continues to raise funds for various projects.

It is with great pride and pleasure that the University confers on Amina Cachalia the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.

GRADUATION AWARDS

FACULTIES OF HUMANITIES AND SCIENCE

(not presented at the Graduation ceremony – presented at the Faculty of Arts prize-giving which will be held on 5 May 2004)

John Wellington Medal – for outstanding work in the final course in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies

Joanne Gelling

Stanley Jackson Medal – for outstanding work in Geography Honours

Caryn Abrahams

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

(not presented at the Graduation ceremony – to be presented at the Faculty prize-giving to be held on 5 May 2004)

Gold Medal – to the student with the most distinguished record in the Bachelor of Arts degree

To be announced

Dean's Medal – for the most distinguished performance in a professional degree

To be announced

Silver Proxime Accessit Medal – for outstanding meritorious achievement in the Bachelor of Arts degree

To be announced

Silver Medal – for meritorious academic achievement in the Bachelor of Arts degree

To be announced

A B Clemens Award – for the best student research project for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Speech and Hearing Therapy

Katherine Gautschi

Amanda Holmes Prize for Movement Studies – for the student who in the final practical examination presents the most creative work

Daniella Jacob

Anglo Alpha Medal – for excellence in Industrial Social Work Practice

Not awarded for 2003

Austrian Embassy Book Prize – for the best third-year German student proceeding to Honours

Sarah Meisch

Belone Medal and Book Prize – to the most outstanding graduand in Speech and Hearing Therapy

Katherine Gautschi

David Hammond-Tooke Prize – for excellence in Anthropological Studies in the third year

Joanne Gouveia

David Murray Medal – for excellence in Child and Family Welfare Practice

Dudzile Shikwambana

David Webster Memorial Prize – for consistent improvement over all three undergraduate courses in Social Anthropology
Awarded jointly to:

Soon-Jong Kim

Shantel Vivekanandan

Deon Hofmeyr Prize – awarded for creative writing

Shelley Raebuch

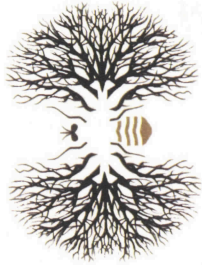
Edgar Bold Prize – to the student who has achieved the best results in the fields of Film and Television
Awarded jointly to:

Stephen Abbott
Richard Mayes

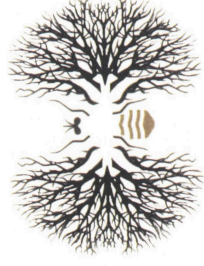
James Barber
Iva Paneyva

French Consulate Prize – for the best student in third-year French and French Honours

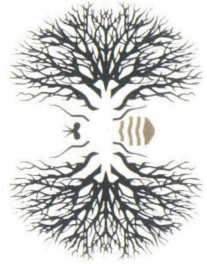
Christophe David



INVICTUS



FUNERAL SERVICE FOR THE LATE



HYMNS

258 - JERUSALEM IKHAYA
LAM

Jerusalem ikhaya lam
Endlithandayo;
Wofezwa nini umzamo
wam?

259 NDINIKA AMEHLO
NDIKHANGELE

Ndinik' amehlo
Ndikhangele
Phezulu ezulwini
Ndibone khona