

A TRIBUTE TO NOMZAMO “MANGUTYANA” MADIKIZELA-MANDELA

Dear Mangutyana

I write this letter to express my sincerest and humble appreciation to you.

This I do on behalf of all those, including myself, who saw you, who heard you, who touched you, who felt your embrace and even from a distance. Whose faces you cupped in your hands- wiping their tears and taking away their sorrows. All those unequivocally confirm that you are a phenomenal human being.

I will remember you!

Your name will be in the annals of history for time immemorial for your invaluable contribution to social justice. But more pointedly for your everlasting commitment to the liberation of the downtrodden from all the ills of society - Liberation in all its facets.

I will remember you ! Your fighting of these ills was unique and could not be ignored.

Your voice resonates in all corners of our beloved country, throughout the hills and valleys of our rich but-impooverished Africa.

The latter being a legacy of Colonialism. That voice transcended the borders of Africa through to the Diaspora and the world.

How can I not remember You ?

Your uniqueness is in that you were way ahead of your time, a visionary in your own right. Consequently you spoke to your peers in a language they would understand (*sometimes they did not*).

You spoke to my generation in our language; you spoke to the “Fees Must fall Brigade in a language that they could relate to because you could relate to their struggles as voices of the poor-Post Democracy. I was witness to that. The youth today is carrying and implementing your mandate zealously.

I will also remember you as a Realist and as such you understood that the ushering-in of democracy did not mean “UHURU” to you. You knew that it was the beginning of a progressive programme that would change the lives of the people- for the better - BUT the Realist in you realised that this would be another phase of the struggle perhaps the most difficult that would have to be waged by the people of Mzantsi Afrika with you among them but at the Lead carrying the torch.

Who cannot remember you? You will always be a point of reference on such matters of socio-political and economic transformation.

The enemy will remember you with trepidation and awe.

Trepidation as they would recall the fearlessness of the Lioness in you. But in awe of your achievements as you together with your fellow comrades from the broader Liberation Movement led by the African National Congress - succeeded to liberate us against all odds.

I salute you !!!!!

Those who tortured you physically and emotionally should swallow their pride and apologise to the nation. In fact, we all owe you gratitude because, instead of you demanding a repeat of the “Gautemala Nuremberg trial” for South Africa. You contributed to peaceful engagements saving the country from a “Civil war ”.

That for me was a display of your appreciation for Human Rights! Your post-democracy comments on the land issue bears testimony to the above assertion. As you categorically denounced an approach on expropriation of land that would cause anarchy and lead to a “blood bath”.

Everybody friend and foe know you, they all remember and are writing about you rightfully so. You led and you will continue to lead for generations to come. How can we not remember you?

Your spirited and relentless fight against any form of injustice has earned you many names—gallant fighter, freedom fighter, community leader, human rights activist and the list is endless.

What I like, all of these are qualities that you earned as you made your hands dirty in pursuit of a better life for your people.

Nobody can claim that your approach was flawed. The struggle for liberation was to a certain extent a trial and error a hit and miss but we got where we are. Thank you for your Leadership.

Your beauty was unique because it embodied a beautiful spirit, a Big heart and a deep genuine love for your people, regardless.

And you did love us regardless and unconditionally.

You have felt, seen and touched pain. You have been condemned and demonised.

You have been accused and became the accused with a number yet you took all those in a stride even forgiving those who persecuted you. Because you understood the dynamics of being a leader of your calibre.

For me only One word comes close to defining you – Colossus.

But I will also remember You for your invaluable contribution in helping the country to fight corruption. Typical of you, you committed and delivered. You left us with a clearly defined programme which includes inter-alia ; poverty alleviation, land restitution, dealing with corruption, gender mainstreaming and empowerment of women e.t.c

I will remember you as my Hero and not as a Heroin as you were an equal amongst equals.

I want to let go yet still clinging on. I know it is time to let go, allow you to rest. I am caught between wanting to celebrate You. But instead held back by wanting to grieve for you.

Reluctantly, I accept that this is our Maker's deed. You or me could not fight this one because Death is the necessary end and it will strike to all of us.

Rest in peace Mangutyana! Ugqatso ulufezile.

I know that despite your courage! You went gentle into that good night.

I am happy that we were the chosen nation in the geographic space to have hosted you. I touched you,you cupped my face in your hands. You kissed both my chicks.

You “cackled’ in laughter hiding perfectly your deep scars

Go well Mangutyana – I will Remember You!!!!

I stand on your bold shoulders.

Buyelwa Sonjica

Former Minister

Republic of South Africa

10 April 2018