



Why we did it

Our purpose in developing the 'My Best Teacher' booklet series was, like Jansen's, to counter negative descriptions of schools and teachers by identifying and paying tribute to good teachers. We wanted to continue his message of hope.

But, more importantly, we wanted to focus our gaze on the Foundation Phase as a critical stage of schooling which, until recently, has received little attention. We therefore felt it important to draw on the voices of our Foundation Phase group of student teachers and invite them to tell their stories. Although we did not restrict students to writing about Foundation Phase teachers, we were heartened to see that a number of students chose a Foundation Phase teacher as their best teacher, and we dedicated a section of the booklet to these stories.

Jansen acknowledges that a limitation of his book was that the advertising campaign used to seek out the stories privileged those of English speakers and people living in urban areas of South Africa. He explains how his team "could not penetrate all the small villages and towns of South Africa outside the reach of the English newspapers" (2011, p. 14). We, on the other hand, are delighted that a number of our stories originate from the distant rural areas to which Jansen refers. The majority of the stories in this booklet come from local schools in the Eastern Cape, and a number from Grahamstown, the geographical location of Rhodes University.

Jansen indicates that another limitation of his book was that the stories chosen were written in English only. The first booklet in our 'My Best Teacher' booklet series is similarly limited. However, like Jansen, we recognise that "powerful, emotional stories of great teachers who changed young lives are often best expressed in the native language" (2011, p. 14). From 2016 onwards, we therefore invited the 1st year students registered for the Education and Professional Studies course to write their best teacher stories in a language of their choice. While this made the marking and editing processes slightly more complex, we are proud of this multi-lingual booklet of best teacher stories.

Finally, we believe that by paying attention to the voices of our students and valuing their contributions, we are modelling good teaching practice. We hope that when our students become qualified Foundation Phase teachers, they, in turn, will value the voices of their learners and encourage them to write about and reflect on their experiences.

The unconventional teacher



A TRIBUTE TO MR S JEFFRIES, VICTORIA GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL, GRAHAMSTOWN, EASTERN CAPE, FROM MICHAELA LACKAY

I remember the long, light green passages and the fresh, waxed floor of Victoria Girls High school. It was the school of Excellence, Integrity and Passion, and these three words were stuck up all around the school, on the green walls. These words had great significance at the school, and for every single teacher.

One specific teacher who embodied these values and morals was Mr Jeffries. He was short and light in complexion, flexible and very fit when it came to athletics, and funny, hard-working and very effective as a teacher. He instilled VG values into our hearts and minds so that we became successful and passed at the end of the year. Mr Jeffries was my Computer Application Technology teacher as well as my class teacher.

Mr Jeffries was supportive towards us all; he made our class very exciting and interesting. He had a dance he did on a Friday; it was called the Friday dance. We gave him a beat and then he used to dance, creating excitement and interest on the day everyone was lazy to work. He did not make us feel stupid, even when our answers were wrong; he did not question our answers. In fact, he helped us excel by leading us to the correct answer. Mr Jeffries was always supportive towards me; he went the extra mile to help me do well in exams and tests.

In my matric year, I felt pregnant and failed my June exams. I was so disappointed and sad, but he said to me, “keri, these marks do not reflect the person that you are, I know for a fact that you will pass matric, because you are a bright, vibrant, smart girl and you don’t give up that easily”. Those words gave me hope and I became determined to do my best.

In the motivation that he gave me, he was a father figure, in a way my own father never was: he told me to never give up on my dreams and to always be optimistic and hard working. He made sure the three values of the school were implanted in our hearts and minds: he always had passion and with passion comes integrity, leading to excellence; one needs to persevere in order to succeed. In the words of one of the school songs: “You have to walk strong to conquer every fear, you have to climb your Kilimanjaro in order to get to the top”.

I am becoming a teacher because I also want to motivate my learners to succeed in life. I also want to keep these three values in mind when teaching, to inspire children never to give up, to keep fighting and to remember that God gives his hardest battles to his strongest soldiers. If you are knocked down in life it is not the end of the world; you should get back up, dust yourself off and try harder.

Thank you so much, Mr Jeffries. No words can describe how grateful I was to have you as my teacher. Thank you for always supporting me and for being there for me. I want to be just like you were: the kind-hearted, supportive, motivational, fatherly teacher. I will never forget you; you will always be my role model and a person that I will look up to.

The ‘Friday dance’ teacher
who **touched**
my life and **made a**
difference

**A TRIBUTE TO MR MANGQINGWANA, SAMUEL NTSIKO
PRIMARY, GRAHAMSTOWN, EASTERN CAPE,
FROM SISANDA DYOSINI**

An unknown author once wrote, "Some people cross your path and change your whole direction". This statement reminds me of Mr Mangqingwana, an outstanding Grade 6 teacher, who sought to make an impact on the lives of young people through education.

Imagine in your mind for a moment a young girl who is shy and quiet. This is who I was at the beginning of Grade 6. Meeting Mr Mangqingwana would change all of that forever. After assembly on 22 January 2007, the day I met him, the principal asked us to walk to our respective classrooms. As I came through the door, I stood amazed. Before me, I saw a neatly dressed man. He had a crisp white shirt on, black trousers and a tie. His hair was clean cut and he was neatly shaven. His countenance had an inviting smile that made you feel safe and loved. As we walked in, he greeted us, '*Molweni bantwana bam!*'. His voice was calm but appealing. It naturally drew you in and made you want to give him your whole attention.

True, he dressed and spoke well, but I quickly noticed other traits about Mr Mangqingwana. He was always on time. For him, it was better to be an hour early than a minute late. He expected us to emulate his example. We were to be timely with class, our assignments or any task that he gave us.

I admired this about him even more when I experienced his unique 'punishment' style. He would make you face the wall, and then come and stand next to you. He would ask you questions like, 'I notice you are late for class today. Is there any trouble at home?' or 'Your assignment was not completed. Did you have trouble understanding and remembering what was asked?'

What moved me about his way of 'punishing' is that it was not simply punishing. It served as an opportunity to get clarity as to the root cause of the behavior. He understood that unless we resolved the cause, no method of addressing the behavior would help change it. He practiced empathy. He was concerned about us, not just our output.

He was an effective teacher. He knew how to demonstrate concepts in a way that our young minds could understand. He brought the stories of Tata Nelson Mandela and the apartheid era to life with posters, pictures of historical sites and, at other times, movies.

One time he made us watch the movie 'Sarafina' with the aim of giving us a quiz. Many of us did well for that task and this led him to continue using visuals in his teaching. He understood that by employing different teaching methods he could cater to every child's needs and thus help them reach their full potential.

Things didn't always go according to plan. Some of us lagged behind. He would stay after hours to help us with the work we struggled with. The attitude and energy he brought to this showed that he did it out of love rather than a sense of duty.

He inspired me to become a teacher through the way he was committed to us, his learners. He inspired me because in him I saw that teaching, although often underrated, will always be a need in the life of a child. He made me see that teaching is more than teaching. It is about coaching, guiding and inspiring. He made me realize that teaching is an opportunity of serving my community and creating a better future for each individual child I meet.

Thank you, Mr Mangqingwana. Your influence on me has been great and now it will be passed on to many generations.



**A man of great
influence:
strong – in so
many ways**



**A TRIBUTE TO MS N GWADISO, LOWER GQUMASHE
PRIMARY SCHOOL, ALICE, EASTERN CAPE, FROM
NONDUMISO NXANTSIYA**

My best teacher was Ms Gwadiso. She taught me in Grade 6 at Lower Gqumashe Primary School, in the small town of Alice. She was my class teacher, and she taught us English and Life Orientation. She was the only teacher who wore high heels and a lady's suit in the entire school; she was light in complexion and had a slim body and long black hair that she always tied back.

She was a strict teacher, very disciplined and punctual, but also very funny and caring in nature. She took the attendance register every morning. She hated late-comers and always lowered her spectacles and gave you a threatening look if you were late. You would feel so uncomfortable that you would never be late for her class again.

She used very accessible and effective teaching strategies. I liked the way she taught us and never missed her class. We did not need to study the work she had taught us at home again because we understood it so well. One of her topics which I remember well was, 'Understanding and Respecting Body Changes,' the changes in our physical appearance as well as in the way we feel about other people and about ourselves. She explained that those changes are a part of the natural development of human beings as they approach sexual maturity. After explaining the topic, she always gave us exercises to do in class as well as for homework. Next day, she would ask questions related to the previous topic and then start a new topic.

Her class was well arranged: the desks, seating two learners each, were arranged in neat well-spaced rows to avoid chaos. Chalk dust made her sneeze incessantly, so when the board needed cleaning, she asked us to open the windows, then waited outside for the dust to settle while one of the boys cleaned the board.

She made us laugh by telling lots of jokes while she was teaching. She taught us to share things such as lunch and stationery with one another, and taught us good ethics. She would say to us, "Always follow the right path in life even when you have to face difficult situations. Never think negatively; always think positively, because the way we think influences what happens". Ms Gwadiso was not born great, she grew into greatness through carrying out her belief that "we should never become hopeless in difficult situations, but search for easy ways to get out of them".

I developed a keen interest in my studies and in becoming a teacher because of her personality. I wanted to emulate her qualities: passion for teaching, love of kids, love of the subjects she taught, understanding of the role of a teacher in a child's life, work ethic that doesn't quit and understanding that being a "great teacher" is a constant struggle to improve.

I will never forget Ms Gwadiso. It is a pity that I never saw her again, as she left our school in 2004, when I was doing Grade 6. I don't even know if she is still alive or not as she was not from my village, but from East London.

Wherever you are, Ms Gwadiso, I am grateful to you for the knowledge and behaviour you have instilled in me. You taught me more than just school, and what you taught me had a huge impact on my life. You opened my eyes to what I am capable of. You have taught me that greatness is not born, it is grown, and you were the greatest of all my teachers.

Greatness is not born, it is grown

**A TRIBUTE TO MR MTINTSO OF MEYISI SENIOR
SECONDARY SCHOOL, FLAGSTAFF, EASTERN CAPE,
FROM SIVE NONKONYANA**

Our school in Flagstaff is named after Prince Meyisi Nonkonyana, and my best teacher was like a brother, or even a father, to all the learners in this school. Mr Mtintso, a Life Sciences teacher, is a tall guy who has muscles like most men, but who also has a big belly. When new learners see him, he seems to them to be an ogre: he makes fun of his size and his looks to make new learners scared of him. If they stay with him, however, they find that he is a cool and amazing teacher, a funny guy who does everything with enormous enthusiasm, to motivate you and push the lesson forward.

I first met him when I was in Grade 10. He taught me Life Sciences and did not want to hear of anything which was not concerned with school work. All learners in his class passed with high marks, but to me it felt as if we were playing in Life Sciences. I was used to being beaten with a big stick, but he used a small switch, so to me he was playing.

We usually referred to Mr Mtintso as Mtira, the short version of his surname. Mtira is my best teacher because he was always open to talk about anything. Every learner needs a teacher to talk to, every learner has problems and every learner needs to be understood. Mtira was all this to me. Although I did not like to go to school on a holiday or on Saturdays, if he called us to come to school, we would come in large numbers. I didn't fully understand this at the time, because he was very serious about learning, and serious teachers are not usually the favorites of learners. This, of course, is the reason that many learners fail. I wanted to play while being educated, like Mtira did: even when he was motivating us, we would laugh, but then we would realize that what he was saying could feed us and nourish our minds. Teachers are good not necessarily because they are strict, but because they educate learners and build them in every way. Mtira is my best teacher because he built me into what I am today.

There are many careers to choose from but I have chosen to be a teacher so that learners can build many different careers on the foundation I have laid. Mtira was the brother and teacher who provided everything a learner needed; in schools like mine you seldom get a teacher like that. He has made me interested in becoming a teacher because he showed me how nice it is to teach. I do not want to copy him but I want to use his strategy of playing and educating people at the same time, then combine my own strategies to see whether that will encourage my learners. My parents did little to support my school work: they made sure I went to school with a good uniform and was not hungry, but they never asked what homework I had and how my schoolwork was going. I understand that this is because they are not educated and therefore don't ask about things they do not know about. When I arrived at high school I found somebody who could motivate me and give me ideas. This was the teacher who is the brother, the therapist, and the teacher at the same time.



**My
brother,
my teacher,
my therapist**

Teachers who stood out from the rest of the staff



When we moved from Durban to the Eastern Cape, I enrolled at Nombulelo Secondary School in Grahamstown. This was a completely different environment for me. The school's buildings were in a much poorer condition than those of my Durban school. The windows were damaged, some of the classrooms did not have doors and the walls had drawings all over them. The place reminded me of a homeless person with no hope and no future. The school was short of teachers meaning learners were often free and ended up disrupting those who were in class. Learners were attending school merely for the sake of attending. Young adults attending the school had a bad influence on the learners.

When I was in Grade 10, Mr Nayika was my class teacher. He was a passionate, respectful, funny and dedicated Xhosa-speaking teacher. He was not married and he did not have children, but he treated his learners like his own. He was born and bred in the dusty streets of Grahamstown and grew up playing local football for Eleven Attackers FC, qualifying him to become the school's soccer coach.

He dressed formally every day – even on game day, and I still remember how shiny his shoes were. His hair was always cut and he constantly carried a bag full of marked question papers. He was a very organized person and prepared himself a day before for every class.

Despite the school being in poor condition, Mr Nayika's class was always clean. The floor was always shining and the chairs perfectly arranged each time we entered his class. The walls were decorated with educational posters. His desk was covered with a nicely manufactured cloth and everything on it was arranged neatly. The class even had unbroken window-panes. Mr Nayika had paid from his pocket to make his class suitable for learners. The front board was always full of notes he had written before the class. His passion for education made me see teaching with new eyes.

Mr Nayika taught Geography. Everyone got good marks for the subject because he kept pushing us to achieve our ambitions. He encouraged us to hunger for education and to keep improving. If classes were tense, he would crack a joke just to ease the tension. He spent a lot of his time on his learners, teaching in the morning and offering afternoon classes too. That was a great strategy because it helped to maintain our marks and to improve them. During classes he used to interact with us, trying to find out if we understood what he was trying to teach us. He would ask questions so, to avoid embarrassment, we started preparing ourselves a day before for possible questions he might ask in class.

Mr Nayika gave us homework every day, even on weekends and tested us after completing each section. This was his way of assessing our understanding and keeping tabs on our progress. This strategy made us familiar with the way questions were asked and made it easier when we were writing our exams.

His determination inspired me. I wanted to be like him. I would always imagine myself standing in front of the class teaching. Mr Nayika introduced us to the love of education. He gave everyone hope and ambition to achieve anything we wished to do. He played an influential role in grooming me to be the person I am today. I really appreciate what he has done for us and I hope he will continue to do the same for the next generation. Thank you, sir!

A passionate teacher who never gave up

A TRIBUTE TO MR NAYIKA OF NOMBULELO SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL, JOZA LOCATION, MAKHANDA (GRAHAMSTOWN), EASTERN CAPE, FROM ANDISILE BEBETO

**A TRIBUTE TO MRS IRMA MOLLER OF MARY WATERS
SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL, GRAHAMSTOWN, EASTERN
CAPE, FROM LUSHCA DE VOS**

Mary Waters Senior Secondary school had limited resources and broken windows and toilets. It was a school where teachers gave up on their learners, sending them on to the next grade even when they couldn't read or write. In such an environment, it was refreshing to have a teacher such as Mrs Irma Moller.

Mrs Irma Moller, a short woman who always wore jeans, a t-shirt and a pair of pumps, was one of the most hated teachers at Mary Waters. When most teachers didn't care enough to check for homework, Mrs Moller did. When most teachers let it slide if you were not at school, Mrs Moller didn't. When most teachers didn't check books to see if you had been taking notes, Mrs Moller did. And when most teachers accepted your being late for class, Mrs Moller didn't. She would put you out of her class, whether it was sunny and hot or cold and raining. This is why most learners didn't like her.

Mrs Moller was very direct: if she felt that you were going down the path of failure, she would tell you so. She would also do as much as you would allow to help you back onto the right path. That was what she did for me.

Mrs Moller started teaching me when I was in Grade 12, when she became my Mathematics Literacy and History teacher. I had always hated History and found it boring, but Mrs Moller changed all that. I still see her pacing up and down, book in hand (though she never looked at the book). I still remember the hand gestures she used and the passion in her eyes when she taught us. She taught History as if it was a story, making us picture what happened and see it as if we were there.

My friends and I sat at the back of the classroom; we almost never did our work and we bunked classes regularly. It wasn't up until the morning of 7th March 2014, when Mrs Moller called me to her class during break time and told me that I was "setting myself up for failure" that I realized what I was doing. It was on that hot Friday morning, with no wind to take away the heat of the day, after my talk with Mrs Moller, that I finally realized how dire the consequences of my behaviour could be. That was the day I changed my ways.

From that day onwards, Mrs Moller always checked to see if I understood my work. She always made time to explain, checked to see whether I was studying and checked to see if I was okay. She asked me questions that were relevant not only to school but also to my home life. She was one of the few teachers whom I felt actually cared and to whom I felt I could talk, if I had a problem.

It is because of Mrs Moller that I decided to become a teacher. I want to be that teacher who helps learners and talks sense into them when they need it. I want to be that teacher whom learners come to when they need to talk. I want to be that teacher who cares whether learners do their work and attend class. I want to be this kind of teacher because of Mrs Irma Moller.

Thank you, Mrs Moller for being there when I needed you, for caring enough to check and for being willing to be hated to ensure that your learners pass. You are the best teacher who ever taught me.



**My inspiration:
the teacher who
held me
accountable**



A TRIBUTE TO MRS IRMA MOLLER, MARY WATERS HIGH SCHOOL, GRAHAMSTOWN, EASTERN CAPE, FROM ERRON GOLIATH

For my entire schooling career, I attended public schools and for years I thought that this would define my life. Going to public schools gives you a certain idea about yourself; it makes you think less of yourself than of people who attend private schools. I never had confidence in myself; I never thought that I could move beyond my situation.

When I think about my high school, Mary Waters, I remember seeing the goats and stray dogs being chased out every morning, these animals having come in through the same hole in the fence that the learners escaped through when they skipped class. I remember smelling the heavy cleaning fluids used in our flooding bathrooms, and the nasty messages written on the walls of the bathroom stalls. I remember the peeling paint where learners, bundled up around the corner, took their early morning smokes. This was my reality, this was what I had gotten used to. Every Wednesday at our weekly assembly we would listen to the same people tell us that we were doing wrong and needed to change, though they had no understanding of the situations that most learners were going through.

The only thing that I would look forward to was my daily History lesson, by Mrs Moller, the most feared and respected teacher in the entire school. Every morning, waiting outside of her classroom before her lesson, you would hear the learners discussing the History homework and how afraid they were of her reaction. This was indeed ironic as Mrs Moller had a very small body: she was shorter than everyone she was teaching, yet feared by them all. I remember sitting in the front of the classroom, looking at this teacher's orange hair and smelling the mint bubblegum that she used to cover up the smell of her smoke. She always started her lessons off with a light joke, making the whole class laugh, only to cut our laughter short by telling us that we were laughing too much. But she had motherhood in her; she was caring and concerned about us.

One Monday afternoon, we had to hand in an essay. I had not completed the essay due to procrastination – all my own fault. On the Thursday morning of that week, Mrs Moller called me to her classroom and instead of crucifying me, she comforted me. She told me that the world treats you the way you look at it; our attitudes influence more than our social lives, but every other aspect of our lives too. After that talk, she gave me until the following Monday to hand my essay in. What surprised me was how caring she was. She was honest with me, and that's all that I needed at that moment of my life.

Mrs Moller touched the life of every single person in that classroom; she was not only our teacher but our mother as well. She even helped many to get bursaries to go to university. Her lessons helped me get away from my reality of broken windows and walls full of scribbled "art"; she helped me to dream.

She helped me realize that we have already made it too far to just give up half-way or before we reach the end. We need to see beyond our current situations to be able to make the future better than the present. I want to be what that teacher was to me; I want to be able to create a safe and conducive learning space for everyone, not making anyone feel less than who they truly are, reminding people that success is not limited to people from a certain category, but can include everyone. The only difference is that some people need to work harder than others to be successful.

My teacher was small but she helped me to dream big

**A TRIBUTE TO MR RUPERT JACKSON, STIRLING HIGH SCHOOL, EAST LONDON, EASTERN CAPE,
FROM JAIMEY LEE HARRISS**

Mr Jackson was a middle-aged married man, relatively short and a little plump, with grey hair, brown eyes and a heart the size of a lion. He taught me from Grade 10 until the end of Matric at Stirling High School, initially as my class teacher and then for two years as my biology teacher.

Our school motto is “Semper Fidelis”, meaning “Always Faithful”. I have always striven to be faithful and was always a learner that teachers enjoyed, because I completed my homework, never spoke unless spoken to and contributed extensively whenever it was deemed appropriate. However, I had never formed a significant bond with a teacher until Mr Jackson arrived at my school. Memories of his classroom are some of those I will always cherish. Three years after matriculating I still keep in contact with this incredible man, keeping him updated with my life while he keeps me updated with his.

In Mr Jackson's biology classroom, I always excelled. I did well in Biology in Grade 10, but the workload became increasingly difficult in Grade 11, making me think I was terrible at Biology. Mr Jackson told me that I could achieve anything if I just tried hard enough. He believed I had the potential to be anything I dreamed I could be. I listened to and absorbed his advice, and this led me to excel in just about anything I put my mind to when it came to my schooling.

I will never forget sitting in the classroom with him when both of us had a free period. We would converse about what we had been through in our lives and about our dreams, hopes and plans for the future. He was always extremely interested in what I had to say and proud of what I had accomplished on my own.

He was there for me when my father tragically and unexpectedly passed away at the end of my Grade 11 year. He comforted me more than, my peers ever could, as he too had experienced grief in his life and could relate to me in a way nobody else could. He was one of the few people I spoke to about my inner turmoil because I trusted him and felt as if I needed his guidance. For me, one of the hardest parts about leaving high school was the thought that I might not ever see Mr J again.

He made me realize that a teacher can be more than just an authority figure in your life; a teacher can also become your friend and advisor for your future endeavours. He was the ear that was there when I needed to speak and the speaker when I needed to listen. I still remember deciding that I wanted to become a teacher just like him some day. I wanted to make a change in the lives of the youth and give them the help they need and deserve to get them through tough times. I wanted to show them that they can achieve any goal which they set for themselves, if they just work hard enough.

I will always remember the impact Mr Jackson made on my life; he will forever remain my best teacher. Many people say that there is no such thing as a perfect teacher, but I am fortunate enough to say that Mr Jackson was definitely a perfect teacher to me and for that I will be forever grateful.



He was the ear
that was there
when I
needed to speak
and the voice
when I needed
to listen



***A TRIBUTE TO MR MAQANDA OF NOMBULELO
SECONDARY SCHOOL, GRAHAMSTOWN, EASTERN CAPE,
FROM LWAZI MANCAM***

Nombulelo Secondary School is a smelly, dirty, under-resourced public school. When it is cold or raining, you do not even think of going to school, as the water and the cold can come through its broken windows. Computers which have not been stolen by thieves from the community have no internet. Shared text books make learning more difficult.

The teacher who stands out for me more than any teacher at the school was Mr Maqanda, my History teacher from Grade 10 to Grade 12. He was a highly experienced teacher, short and dark in colour and always dressed in clean clothes and shiny shoes. Learners respected him as he was strict when it came to school work.

Mr Maqanda worked hard to make learning fun. He was worried about the success of his learners and was able to work with anyone who had trouble learning. He never segregated his learners on the basis of smartness or participation in class, but gave us equal attention and loved us all. This was important for me as I struggled with History and he took a special interest in me. He gave us homework every day. If, for instance, he was teaching the coming of democracy in South Africa then the next day he would want every learner to tell the whole story. Failure to do so would result in a kick in the leg from his shining Crockett and Jones shoes. We saw this as a motivation to study and do well at school and a sign that he was worried about our future.

I generally got good marks in History because of his help and encouragement. He would build my confidence and say that I could do the work, especially when I thought I could not. What made me pass History well was that he made everyone participate. We discussed history and debated each topic in class because we did not all have text books and also because he wanted to see how much we understood so that he could explain to us in more depth.

Mr Maqanda was very creative. He did not just stand in front of us and teach in a boring way; on a day when most students did not seem to understand the topic he explained in numerous ways and made jokes about it so we could remember it. He also gave real life examples showing how history repeats itself, in order to make it more interesting. Through his techniques and instructions in class, I became better at this subject and passed it well.

Mr Maqanda contributed to my decision to become a teacher. I wanted to be like Mr Maqanda – to motivate learners and make academics easy for learners. I also wanted to ensure that I treated my learners the same, regardless of whether they were smart or not, as unequal treatment causes some children to drop out from school.

I thank you, Mr Maqanda, for all you have done to keep me motivated when I needed it the most, for the creative ways you helped us to understand History and for making sure you treated learners the same. I will make sure that I become a teacher who focuses on learner success and avails myself to them for their academics.

**My motivator
he worked hard
to make
learning fun**

A TRIBUTE TO MRS K ANDERSON, ST JOHN'S DIOCESAN SCHOOL FOR GIRLS, PIETERMARITZBURG, KWAZULU-NATAL, FROM KELSEY SWAN

I have never been really good at academics. My average in junior school was around 50%. Achieving these marks took a huge toll on my confidence, as I thought I was never good enough or smart enough to get the marks that I wanted. From a young age I have always been shy and reserved. I was always too afraid to put up my hand in class to ask or answer questions, because I was terrified that the other learners would judge me or think that I was stupid when I got the answer wrong.

I was in Mrs Anderson's class for Grade 7, the last year of junior school, at an all-girls school. Mrs Anderson stood out from the other teachers; she was a cheerful and bubbly person who always made her lessons fun and interesting. She was also very calm and helpful, always there for her learners when we needed help. She had posters up on the wall on the various topics we were learning about. I was still not achieving the marks that I wanted to achieve, which really made me feel worthless. In the last term of Grade 7, Mrs Anderson called me aside to go over some of my work. She realised that I was not a very confident learner. She suggested that I should go to a psychologist to work on my confidence. The psychologist had me setting goals for my upcoming exams. Seeing the psychologist and having extra lessons for my subjects made me feel more prepared for my exams. When my marked papers were returned to me, I was stunned at how well I had actually done. Instead of my usual 50%, I was getting 60% to 70%. I remember clearly the day I got my History paper back. Mrs Anderson put the exam paper on my desk and said, "Well done". These words made me feel so proud of myself.

Mrs Anderson was my best teacher, because she believed in me. She believed that I could achieve the marks I wanted if I worked hard and believed in myself. She taught me to believe in my abilities, which made me feel more confident with my work and more confident in myself. Mrs Anderson is an inspiration to me and others for all the hard work she did. She put others first and managed to make time for her learners and still have time with her family.

Teachers have a huge impact on their learners' lives. If Mrs Anderson had not believed in me or helped me to build my confidence, I would not have set goals and achieved those marks, or believed in myself. I would not have been confident in my academic abilities. There are many reasons why I wanted to become a teacher, but Mrs Anderson was one of them. I want to teach children to believe in themselves, not to be afraid of being judged for getting the wrong answer, but instead take that mistake and learn from it. I want to help learners who were like me to know that they are not alone and help them to build their confidence.

Often, teachers are taken for granted and not appreciated for all the work that they do. I would like to thank all the great teachers I've had for all their hard work, as they have had a huge impact on my life. I will always remember them, especially Mrs Anderson, for inspiring me to become a teacher and making me the confident young lady I am today.



**A teacher
who gave me the
confidence
to succeed**



There is beauty in all sadness

A TRIBUTE TO MS JOY PREISS OF ST ANNE'S DIOCESAN COLLEGE, HILTON, KWAZULU-NATAL, FROM TATE SMITH

Just like her name, she was pure JOY that filled the room. Along with this, her obsession with the colour pink and her love for Scotty dogs made me long for her lessons even more. Her hair, glasses and shoes always matched and were always pink and she accessorized with Scotty dogs on her bags, shirts and always a brooch. I admired such boldness as it stood out so much from the regiment of the school I attended. We were all to be young ladies who would all leave the school with the same qualities making none of us unique, but Ms Preiss gave me the hope that being the black sheep of the school was okay. The environment I found myself in led me to a spiralling downfall. The prestigious girls' only boarding school, with its demand that we all be the best at everything, instilled only pressure and anxiety in me. This led me into my place of darkness, where I hit rock bottom, from which I would not return for many years.

Ms Preiss was my art teacher and was certainly my favourite. Art was something I was told I was incapable of doing yet I loved the release it provided. I got lost in colours, patterns and textures and felt that I lived in it rather than just produced it. At the time of her arrival at the school I attended, I was terribly depressed, bulimic and suicidal. I had just come out of my first psychiatric hospital visit and it was she who helped me turn the embarrassment and anguish I felt towards this into an artwork – something beautiful.

She had given us the topic of 'self-identity' to base our artworks around, and quite frankly I did not know who I was. I only saw myself as the labels I had received: depressed, anxious, anorexic, bulimic and sick. So how could something like this become a piece of art, something beautiful? She sat with me and encouraged me to pour out my inner-most feelings onto the pages of my visual journal and all of a sudden I found myself expressing things I never knew how to before. Ms Preiss had a meeting with me to discuss all the things I had decided to process and identify myself as. I was so nervous... I would have to sit in front of this new teacher, whom I admired from a distance, and bring all my darkness to light.

But the meeting took a completely different turn. She supported the feelings I had expressed and used them as a kind of springboard to create art – something I never knew was possible. This is when I realised that I could use my hurt, shame and anguish and turn it into something beautifully sad and unique. Not once during our meeting did she try and talk about the things I had written about, which was the last thing I wanted to do, but instead she showed me how I could represent each thing in a different and tangible way. By the end of the meeting we had come up with exactly what I was going to create and I had never felt more motivated to do something in my life before. I proceeded to spend the next few weeks creating my very first unique artwork which made me feel so empowered and actually proud of the past I had and the journey of healing I had begun.

In hindsight, it was Ms Preiss in that first meeting who changed my perception of my life. I all of a sudden found a purpose and tapped into my god given gift of creating art. From then on I used each art project as a new opportunity to process my inner turmoil and tap into my deepest anguish. By the time I had matriculated two years later, I was very close to being in complete remission of my eating disorder and had close to all control of myself. It is this memory that makes me realize how much of an impact a teacher can have on a learner's life.

I aspire to be the Joy Preiss to all of my learners in the future. I aspire to be a teacher in whom learners may find comfort and acceptance. I strive to be able to show children that there is beauty in all sadness and that through doing what you love most, any sadness can be healed. It was this moment in time that I settled on becoming a teacher and I realized how much change I can bring into a young one's life.

Thank you Ms Preiss for teaching me that being myself was okay and that from my sadness I could create beauty and in turn, become beautiful myself through my transformation and healing.

Special attributes

It is quite challenging for me, an ordinary person, to tell you about an extraordinary woman, Mrs Penny Keulder. The words that come to my mind are too simple to describe this woman. While she is indeed a caring, loving, wonderful person, I intend to dig deeper in my vocabulary to tell you about this not-so-simple woman.

Mrs Keulder was my Grade 6 teacher at a small school named Grahamstown Primary School, located in Makhanda (previously known as Grahamstown). The school is situated in a rural area, which is not the best educational environment. It is not a fancy school, nor did we have the best educators in town. I can easily list the negative aspects of my school, but Mrs Penny Keulder made me blind to them. She was exactly what I needed, as a shy little girl, to survive my journey through primary school.

Ambitious. There was fire in her eyes and strength in her soul as she taught. It could not have been easy to educate a class of ± 35 learners, but she had the desire to succeed in what she was required to do. There were days when it was difficult to be strong, but she was selfless enough to put a poker face on.

Amiable. I experienced a lot of cold rainy days at school, but the moment Mrs Keulder entered the class, her presence warmed me. She made me feel safe and loved. Most importantly, she is the reason why I still believe I matter and so does everybody else. There is a limited number of people who can leave footprints in one's heart. She left enormous prints in my soul; maybe because she had quite chubby feet!

Empathetic. As a human, it is not always easy to understand other people's behaviour or their personality. As a teacher, it must almost be impossible to understand every single learner in your classroom. But Mrs Keulder managed. Unreasonable and difficult learners may have been, but she managed and understood them.

There were times I felt hopeless and invisible, but Mrs Keulder noticed me; she became my wonder woman when she made me visible. She was much more than just a Grade 6 teacher to me. Because whenever I reached out to her, she held out her hand and did all she could to help me. I was her learner, but she was not my teacher. She was and still is my wonder woman. She is and always will be one of my role models. The power of her love makes me want to become the woman she is: a successful teacher and an inspiration to hopeless souls.

Mrs Penny Keulder is the reason that I want to become a teacher. She opened my eyes and made me see that I could make a change in a person's life. That I can inspire hope in my learners someday and teach them how to inspire hope in the coming generations.

In this journey we call life, we meet many people, some by destiny and some by coincidence. As we grow, we tend to outgrow some people as well. But there are people who really matter, people who cannot be erased from our memory, because they touched our souls and stole a piece of our hearts. From the infinite number of people we have met throughout life, we will not even be able to recall half of them in our last memories. But those who matter, will be part of that memory. And she mattered; Mrs Keulder matters. Because she made me believe that I matter; therefore I know she will always be part of my memories.



Real life Wonder Woman

**A TRIBUTE TO MRS PENELOPE KEULDER OF
GRAHAMSTOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL, MAKHANDA,
EASTERN CAPE, FROM ALLISON ADRIAANS**



A TRIBUTE TO MISS V SOTYATO (VOVO), NGANGELIZWE HIGH SCHOOL, MTHATHA, EASTERN CAPE, FROM NOMVELISO DIPHU

I was a boarder at Ngangelizwe High School, situated in the Mthatha location. The school and the hostel were a five minutes' walk apart. It was a school with good facilities and enough space for everyone. The subject that I enjoyed the most was Tourism, which Miss Sotyato was teaching. She was also my class teacher from Grade 10 to Grade 12 and our boarding mistress and house mother.

I never knew love and kindness from a teacher until I met Miss Sotyato. She was tall and dark-skinned, with dreadlocks, always well-dressed and scented with fragrant perfume. The way she would walk from the staffroom to the classroom, you could tell that she was born to be a teacher. She was passionate, sincere, honest, kind, loving and also caring, treating everyone equally as if we were her own children. She even treated us as friends, but there were boundaries; we could not disrespect her. She wore a smile on her face each and every day; you would never see her angry or sad. Her goal was for the learners in her class to be happy and to be like brothers and sisters. My friends and I used to call her Vovo, when she was not around.

'Vovo' was very focused and made sure that whatever she was telling us would be well assimilated and understood, so that we could put it into practise and move forward. She would help those who were struggling with some aspect of her subject and push them to work hard. She would give us extra classes so that we could master areas we were struggling with and do practice exercises. I was one of her best learners and passed her subject very well. She encouraged me to believe in myself and in my abilities, told me to take pride in my work and always to give of my best and be kind to people. She told us that in life there would be many ups and downs, but, "remember, never give up on what you believe in, because life is too short to be playing around".

Mrs Sotyato did not like to see learners in need, especially those in the hostel. I remember when we had a hostel meeting and she was addressing issues of theft, she said "I am a mother, I do not have much, but when someone needs anything from me, they must come. And I will be pleased to help them whenever I can". That was when I saw that she was not only a teacher but also a mother to all. Even when some of the hostel mates were doing bad things like stealing, she would give them a second chance and talk and show them a better way. She did not judge and she was loved by all.

At first, I did not want to be a teacher, but when I saw how passionate Miss Sotyato was about teaching, I was inspired. I wanted to be like her. Her character, the way she was teaching, solving problems and encouraging us to work hard was the best. Being a good teacher is not only about giving the best information, it is also about showing love to the learners, treating them equally, being their role model and not giving them a reason to doubt you, as a teacher. That is the reason I have decided to become a teacher.

The things she has done for us will always be in my heart. I was blessed to have a teacher, mother, mentor, friend and role model like you, Miss Sotyato. You have shown me the love of a kind woman.

The love of a kind woman

**TRIBUTE TO MR MAKHAKA AT QHAYIYA SENIOR
SECONDARY SCHOOL, HERMANUS, WESTERN CAPE,
FROM YOMELELA DUBASE**

My best teacher, Mr Makhaka, taught me throughout my high school life and was principal of Qhayiya Secondary School during that time. The year that I met him (my Grade 8 year) was his first year at the school. Two years later, he became my Life Sciences teacher.

He was an inspiration to me, passionate about teaching and continually looking for new ways of teaching the same content. At first, I didn't like life sciences; for me it was just too difficult to understand. One day, he called me to his office because my marks were very low and I was in danger of failing. When I told him of my difficulties in understanding the subject, he encouraged me to find different ways of dealing with my difficulties; I must not give up just because it was hard.

Mr Makhaka was always patient with me, making time to fit me into his schedule. In his spare time he would call me to his office to go over the parts that I did not understand and that was very helpful to me. When faced with a problem, big or small, he would look at different ways to tackle it and would always find a way to solve it.

Mr Makhaka made a valuable contribution to my life, especially in relation to my decision to be a teacher. At the time when I was applying to different universities, I went to his office and asked him, 'What profession do you think suits me?' He laughed said, 'Teaching, my child'. I was shocked; it was an unexpected answer. I had not thought, even in my wildest dreams, of becoming a teacher. But his comment made me question myself about the profession that I really wanted. I asked him why teaching, out of all the careers out there. He told me that he had been with me for the past four years and in that short time he had taught me a lot of things. He reminded me of the good work I had done at the school, showing me that it had all been a success. I had been helping learners in lower grades with subjects they had difficulties with and in my class I was helping learners successfully with History. It was then that I decided that I did want to become a teacher. I would set a good example to the children coming after me - the nation of the future, who need to know the importance of being educated. Being a teacher and leaving a mark on every mind and soul that I come across will help the young generation to realize their dreams of a better future.

Mr Makhaka, you have been a great anchor in my life and for that I am very thankful. You were there when I needed you most; your encouragement to work hard really helped in the end and made my schooling much easier. I wish that you have the strength to help other learners to become motivated and to progress. So many need a helping hand that guides to the best way of living.



**An anchor
and a man with a
generous
heart**



***A TRIBUTE TO MR M. NAYIKA OF NOMBULELO
SECONDARY SCHOOL, JOZA LOCATION, MAKHANDA
(GRAHAMSTOWN), EASTERN CAPE, FROM MAQOLO
UBENAM***

Indeed, the Boss was an obedient, selfless, servant teacher, carrying himself with pride and confidence, knowing full well that he stood by his motto.

Nombulelo Secondary School, the biggest school in Makhandla, is a township school of over one thousand learners, surrounded by people living in poverty. The school has been vandalised: it has burnt toilets and broken windows through which the cold winter wind blows. There is graffiti on the walls, litter all over the school grounds, green chalk boards from which the lines have faded. It is a school where most of its teachers are present and teaching only when a superior person from the Department of Education visits. Local people see the school as their source of income; every week, a break-in is reported.

In spite of this, the school has a few teachers that sincerely care for its poor community. In 2015, I was in Mr Nayika's Geography class and he was also my Grade 11 class teacher. Mr Nayika spoke life into all of us; he motivated and built us. Every lesson was filled with humour and life lessons. We could not wait for Geography classes. When we first came into his class, the first thing I noticed was the fresh smell of lavender polish that had done an astonishing job on the shining floor. The learners' desks, in rows of sevens, were all the same size, as were the chairs, blue in colour. The boss had a vintage bottle green leather chair. It stood behind his neat and tidy table, which was covered with a checked green cloth and decorated with a red-petalled flower, complementing the cloth's design.

On that day he told us that we were going far in life because we had triumphantly pulled through all the trials that the school had required us to face. He said, "You all have different strengths and weaknesses. This should not demotivate you in your work ethic; you should all work on your strengths daily and have companions that will help you with your weaknesses." He then started distributing text books and before we knew it, school was out.

Mr Nayika inspired me in many ways. He was a man of order and had a sickening work ethic. He was always punctual, arriving at school at 7am every day. There was never a day that Mr Nayika was absent from school. I remember our class begging him not to teach because it was extremely hot, and everyone was tired from the day's work. He said, "If I do not teach you, that will mean I have not complied with my orders. I am paid to do this job. I am not a thief. I will not take the government's money knowing I have not done my work. I am here to teach." We were proud and mesmerized and could not help cheering and clapping for him. I knew from that very moment that I wanted to become a school teacher like him. I wanted to inspire our future leaders. I wanted to be the reason behind a child's success story. I knew that to be such an extraordinary teacher I would have to follow in the Boss's footsteps.

I do believe that God exists and that Mr Nayika was God-sent. He was a Christian and on top of it all he was a parent whom I was blessed to have. I believe that he was sent to guide me to my calling. I thank you Mr M Nayika for your love of teaching. I was inspired and therefore aspire to become a great teacher.

BOSS:
Be an
obedient,
selfless
servant

**A TRIBUTE TO MRS FIKILE MASANGO OF RETHABISENG
PRIMARY SCHOOL, BRONKHORSTSPRUIT, GAUTENG,
FROM INNOCENTIA MASINGA**

Rethabiseng primary school (Grades 1 to 9) was situated in the location of Bronkhorstspuit in Gauteng, in a community that was exposed to drugs. Chances of making it in that school were very slim. Mrs Masango came to Rethabiseng school when I was in Grade 7 and taught me Social Science. She always dressed professionally and wore her hair tied up. She was a very strict teacher; you could see by the way she walked that she did not tolerate nonsense. At first I did not like her because I thought she was rude! What I did not know was that she was the best thing that would ever happen to me; she inspired and built the young woman I am today.

At the time of her arrival, my school did not care if you come to school or not. Mrs Masango, on the other hand, encouraged us to come to school and never tolerated absenteeism in her class; she believed that children of our age needed encouragement and guidance. She pushed us to be better human beings, to chase our dreams and be passionate about our school work, telling us that without education, life would be tough. Laziness would never take us anywhere; all it would bring was anger and bitterness. We needed to work hard for a better life, not only for ourselves, but for our children. Most importantly, we needed to strive for a worry-free life. Life would only be fun if we made good decisions when we were young, so that we would not regret anything when we were old.

Mrs Masango would tell us stories about her past and how education changed her life and the situation of her family. She made it clear to us that working extra hard would bring us better results and improve our self-esteem, but it would not be easy. She seemed to know what she was doing, so we gave it a try. This was new to us and it required dedication. But results soon showed arriving early for classes helped; we began to get used to it. They helped not only with our marks but also with the way we viewed life. They opened our eyes to the importance of education and showed how things get better when you work hard for a better life.

Mrs Masango showed me that being a teacher is not about coming early in the morning and standing in front of the learners talking non-stop. It is not about saying, "At least I get paid at the end of the month". It is about passion and wanting to impact on someone's life. It is about going to bed at night knowing that you have given someone purpose; you have given them hope. I chose to become a teacher because I have seen the impact that a teacher like Mrs Masango can make. Mrs Masango also made me understand that being a teacher is a state of mind: a desire to transfer knowledge into young minds so that they become successful and better people in the future. I want to inspire young children. I want them to look up to me and say, "I want to be like her when I grow up".

I do not have the right words to describe you, Mrs Masango: all I can say is that you were and still are the greatest teacher I have ever had. I feel privileged to carry a report that has your signature on it. Your words still guide me into becoming a better person, a person who has a purpose in life and is willing to help build young minds. Thank you so much, Mrs Masango.



**Work extra
hard and
chase
your
dreams**



**A TRIBUTE TO MR MACHEMENDZE OF DALIWONGA
SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL, COFIMVABA, EASTERN
CAPE, FROM AYABULELA MDUMA**

I liked all my teachers, but Mr Machemendze was the best teacher whom I had ever met. He taught me at Daliwonga Senior Secondary School, a public secondary school located in Woodhouse village, an urban Cofimvaba suburb.

Mr Machemendze is from Zimbabwe; he taught me History from Grade 10 to Grade 12. He was a very smart, well-dressed teacher and he was also courageous, hardworking, kind, patient, dedicated, understanding and humorous. He was a guide to and an influence on us, taking an interest in every learner. In short, he was my role model: a mentor and an inspiration.

My main reason for considering him my best teacher is that he believed in me and he was a friend to us as learners. He would encourage every learner to work hard, not only in his subject, but in all subjects. All learners liked him and as a result, we passed his subject with flying colours. His classes were the ones I never wanted to leave; he taught from the heart and not from his books. I used to call him "Mr Missiles", because of the Cuban missile crisis that he taught us about.

Mr Machemendze represented to me an ideal character: he did not only teach me, he motivated and inspired me. I loved History because of him. I have no words to explain how he taught: you would swear he was a magician when it came to teaching. Unlike other teachers, he never judged you on your marks; instead he would encourage you. He was a teacher who would comfort us when we were not at our best, giving every learner more respect than we gave him. He knew how to communicate with his learners, to build their confidence, to make learning fun. He engaged us in many things: for instance, he awakened our interest in, and understanding of, politics. His influence on us was immense; I chose to be a teacher because I wanted to be just like him.

When I was in Grade 11, my performance in History dropped because Mr Machemendze was transferred to another school. When I got my report card and found I had code 5 in History I was so disappointed. I had never before had such a mark. Our principal then arranged for us to have weekend classes with Mr Machemendze. My marks were soon back to normal. Just before my Final Matric examination, instructions changed for the writing of History essays. Mr Machemendze and I were both worried because we were not used to the new format. I lost confidence in myself but he encouraged me, guided me and told me that I would make it and that he believed in me. He made me realize that good things take time; all you have to do is to work hard. Final exams came and my results showed code 7 for History - a distinction.

Thank you, Mr Machemendze, for believing in me. To the world you may be just a teacher, but to me you are a hero and a star. I may forget what you said but I will never forget how amazing you were. Thanks once again for your knowledge and expertise and also for cultivating my dreams.

The influence
of a
good
teacher
can never be
erased

**A TRIBUTE TO MISS ANN MBAMBISA OF DAMBUZA PUBLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOL, PORT ALFRED, EASTERN CAPE, FROM
NOSITHEMBISO MJACU**

Thinking back over the 15 years I spent at school preparing myself for tertiary education, I would pick Miss Ann Mbambisa as my best teacher. She taught me in Grade 6 at Dambuza Public Primary, a beautiful building situated in a small town called Port Alfred. Miss Mbambisa was a passionate young woman who adored young children and loved her work. I consider myself lucky to have known someone like her. Her meaningful work and valuable teachings have improved my life.

Miss Mbambisa was a person with great communication skills. You could talk comfortably with her about anything without being afraid or hesitant, whether you had a problem with schoolwork, your life or other things. She was always tolerant and eager to help when something was bothering us, less of a teacher and more of a mother when that is what we needed. She had a vast wealth of experience in facing challenges and could make quick decisions in very hostile situations. With her help, we were able to overcome some, if not all, of our difficulties.

She also had a good sense of humour and that made learning so easy. English was our first additional language and whenever a person was asked to solve an English problem on the board and then made a mistake, she would make a joke about it, rather than shouting and embarrassing the learner. As a result, all her learners were able to express themselves freely without the fear of rejection. That boosted our confidence and we were able to achieve high marks.

One thing I adored about her was her intelligence. She knew what she was teaching and never carried a book when writing notes on the board, yet when we checked what was on the board with the text book, the two agreed. And when she taught, she accommodated all her learners and knew how to reach out to them. If her way of teaching did not work on a particular chapter, she would come back the next day with a new plan, and when we began to master the topic, she always let us know how proud she was of what we had accomplished. When we had assignments from other classes, she was always eager to help and there was not a single subject that she could not teach. She was really committed to the success of her learners. If it were up to me I would have loved to stay in her class then she could have taught me all the subjects.

She was a true leader and a role model to many, always leading by example. She used to say, "It is better to teach a child to walk by getting down on the floor in front of the child and offer encouragement than it is to stay behind the child and tell it what to do next".

Lastly, I appreciate her as a teacher for going the extra mile to ensure that children in her school were having fun, by creating sports and other activities for children to participate in. Every child looked forward to going to school every day because of her.

Indeed, her exceptional qualities have inspired me in many ways.

Education is one thing, but she gave to me so much more.

With inspiration beyond limits, she helped me rise and soar.

When I was still young, I decided to become a teacher because of her. "Thank you" is the least I can say to you, Miss Mbambisa, to show my appreciation for everything you have done for me.



**With inspiration
beyond limits
she helped me
rise and
soar**



A TRIBUTE TO MS G PETERSEN OF KENSINGTON HIGH SCHOOL, CAPE TOWN, WESTERN CAPE, FROM BRITNEY VON MEYER

Ms Petersen has served as a beacon to me throughout my education. She always taught with complete commitment, passion and love. She was more than a teacher to me; she was a driving force that would encourage, motivate and push us to do well and achieve more in life. She gave us hope and direction and instilled within me the power to push boundaries. She instilled a belief in each of her learners and shaped the way I thought and lived for the rest of my life.

Once I had met her, I no longer saw Life Orientation as a compulsory subject but as a guideline to life's journey. It was what lifted me out of my bad days - and there were a lot of them in high school. In LO classes, you felt comfortable enough to express yourself; your opinions and ideas were valued and heard. Through the years I was with Ms Petersen (Grades 10-12), I came to know what a true teacher should embody. She should not live for a salary, but to inspire and mould the lives of those around her into better versions of what they had envisaged for themselves.

Ms Petersen appeared soft on the outside, but it was a mistake to take her softness for weakness. Behind the soft smile and colour-coordinated clothing was a woman who knew her worth, her responsibility and her duties. She was not a walk-over and could not be shouted down. She commanded respect and made her presence felt in every room which she entered. She always emphasized principles of respect, obedience and equality, having no favourites and respecting all equally.

At the beginning of our Grade 10 year, she spoke of a career assignment we would be doing the following year. It was the one thing everyone wanted to know about, perhaps because we were allowed to miss three days of school in order to carry it out. To me it would be what would determine my future career path. My mind had always been set on becoming a teacher and her presence in my life confirmed that decision.

Ms. Petersen, you are one of the best:

T is for **Trusting**. I could always confide in you; you believed in my potential to succeed and guided me fearlessly throughout my last three years of high school.

E is for **Enthusiastic**. Your classroom had a warm and appreciative atmosphere. You always made your subject fun, interesting and eye-opening.

A is for **Amazing**. Regardless of our shortcomings, you remained positive and believed in us. You never grew tired and always kept your cool.

C is for **Charisma**. You were charismatic and could keep us engaged for hours as you shared your teaching adventures.

H is for **Hope**. You never wavered in your encouragements to us no matter how complicated or difficult the situation. Thank you for believing in me.

E is for **Extraordinary**. I will always be in awe of your passionate spirit and your absolute commitment and dedication to your career.

R is for **Resonate**. Your methods of teaching always resonated with us. You believed in the power of education and in people's abilities to rise above circumstances and achieve greatness.

Your amazing qualities and attributes will inspire me no matter where and in what situation I find myself.

"What the teacher is, is more important than what he teaches."

Karl A. Menninger

Teachers affect
eternity:
no one can tell
where their
influence
stops

Mother & father figures

A TRIBUTE TO MRS BRILL OF QUEENSTOWN GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL, KOMANI, EASTERN CAPE, FROM PAULA BRILL

I had heard about Mrs Brill's History teaching since I was in junior school. High school girls would tell me that she was the best teacher they had ever had. They would say she had made them love History and that she was the reason they passed at the end of the year.

Before I started at high school, I was very nervous. I was nervous to be going to Queenstown Girls' High School, because it was so well-known for its academic standards. I was nervous to meet Mrs Brill as a teacher because of her reputation, but most of all because this "amazing" Mrs Brill was also my mother.

She taught me History from Grade 9 until matric, and those girls were not lying when they said that she was the best History teacher ever. Because of her, I learned to love History. Mrs Brill was passionate about her subject; it was clear that she loved what she did. She had been teaching History for so long that she knew much more than our text books did. She was a fair teacher and was always willing to help us whenever we needed her. She never judged people, she hated racism and unfairness, and she loved History so much that everyone else loved it too. She would never advise a learner to change subjects due to poor performance; she would work with them until they were doing the best that they could.

I think that teaching your daughter must be tough, but my mom handled it very well. She was very strict towards me, wary of accusations of favouritism, even though people at the school saw her as one of the most honest and fair people that they knew. My mom said that if she had to wonder whether my answer was right or wrong she was going to mark it wrong; my answers had to be 100% correct so that if people ever made any accusations they would be able to look at my test papers and see that my answers were correct. In matric, my mom did not mark any of my work, because she did not want to cause problems for either of us. I found that mom's strictness made me learn extra hard. Thanks to her support, I got 100% for History at the end of matric. I will be forever grateful to her for what she has done for me. She taught me about life and how to avoid the mistakes that people have made in the past.

Mrs Brill influenced my decision to become a teacher because she showed me that you can change a person's life and make a difference in the world through teaching. I hope that I can become a teacher like her: a teacher who has everyone's trust and a teacher who is known to be fair and kind; a teacher so passionate about what they do that it makes an impact on the learners' love for the subject and on their future lives. My mom said that she had seen all my classmates grow up with me, so she loved them like they were her children too. We all loved her very much and wanted to thank her for everything she had done for us. We did that with our final exam marks: at the end of the year, my matric class earned 41 As, 13 Bs and 3 Cs for History.

Thank you, mom, for making me love History, and for teaching me to work to my full potential. You taught me that whatever I choose to do when I'm older, I must make sure that I'm passionate about it. I can only hope to be half the teacher that you are.



History is past, present and future



A TRIBUTE TO MISS JIZANA, COLANE SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL, MOUNT FRERE, EASTERN CAPE, FROM SIMLINDILE MTHOKOZISI DLEPHU

I do not have the words to describe the appreciation, admiration and love I have for my best teacher Mrs Jizana, also known as Ma-Jay. Her words are with me, motivating me when I lose hope, helping me when I am failing to cope. Mrs Jizana, a mature lady in her fifties, black and beautiful, was teaching me History and Life Orientation at high school. She was a very cultural, religious and self-aware person, always emphasizing the importance of values and self-respect.

Unlike many learners, I was very committed to education when I arrived at Colane Senior Secondary School in 2014. Miss Jizana noticed me when we were debating, perhaps because of my commitment, but also because of my personality and religion. She saw my potential, but knew that there was a lot to be done, as I had come from a disadvantaged primary school. She called me privately, told me that she appreciated how I debated and suggested that I should work harder on my grammar. Her words did not disappoint me, but reinforced me.

I worked really hard on my grammar, doing a lot of writing on my own, and showing it to Miss Jizana, so that she could give me feedback. She became more than a History and Life Orientation teacher, because she helped me with English grammar for debates and presentations. I studied very hard and did my best for the trial examination. I studied all my subjects, but won an award for History. She congratulated me, but I told her that it was she who had walked an extra mile for me. I could see in her face that she felt honoured.

I passed my Grade 10 final examination with an eighty-one percent average. A bond had grown between me and Mrs Jizana and she made it clear the following year that she was expecting a lot from me academically. She was a caring and kindly person and asked me a lot about my family and my dreams. That happened at the right time, because my late brother, whom I loved a lot and who used to help me with everything, passed away on 9 August 2015. I felt as if my life was over too. One day, Miss Jizana asked to meet me after school in her office. I was astonished, out of words to thank her and crying tears of joy when she showed me what she had bought for me. It was a school uniform: the jersey, socks and shoes. She said she want to help my parents, not because they were unable, but simply because she was willing. She had told no-one, not wanting recognition.

Her presence in my life intensified my commitment towards my books. She motivated me when I had lost hope, lifted me up when I fell down, comforted me when I cried, laughed with me during fun times, but above all, she guided me as a parent. I am a young male student but my role model was and forever will be Miss Jizana.

In class she would tell us to close our books and then she would just talk to us: motivating us, speaking to our consciences and socially educating us. Being with her every day for the past three years made me choose teaching too. One day I found myself imagining myself as a teacher, spreading to other children the love and care that I got from Miss Jizana. I took a decision that I want to take children's hands, open their minds and touch their hearts. Ma-Jay has proved to me that "over and above biological parents, I have another parent". I am looking forward to making my promises to her come true.

Over and above
my parents
I have
another
parent

**A TRIBUTE TO MR HEINE SMIT, ADELAIDE GYMNASIUM
TECHNICAL/ ACADEMIC HIGH SCHOOL, ADELAIDE,
EASTERN CAPE, FROM MALIBONGWE GQASANA**

Have you ever had a home away from home? That is exactly what I received from Mr Heine Smit at a time when confusion and anxiety seemed to take over my life and breaking down was almost an option.

I was nervous and at the same time excited on my first day of high school at Adelaide Gym. It introduced me to a new world full of unknown adventures and what appeared to be a pool full of sharks. I had held leadership positions in primary school, but in high school I became small again and all my primary school achievements had to be left behind.

Mr Smit was my English and Life Orientation teacher in Grades 8 and 9. He was an old, wrinkled man with a warm and loving smile. He had four professions: a teacher, a pastor, the school's counselor and a father to many. As busy as he was, he fulfilled all his duties. When I was overwhelmed with high school, he was there. When I went through a tough time at home, he was there.

My first memorable encounter with Mr Smit was when I was in Grade 8. He told me, "The first time I spoke to you, Malibongwe, I heard character in your voice." Those words meant and still mean a lot to me. They gave me a sense of confidence, a belief that I am not just an average human being, but a person of character. Those words keep me moving when the going gets tough; they give me hope and strength when things are not looking so good.

A second important encounter occurred when I was in Grade 9, when things were not pleasant at home. I lived with my sister, a drug addict, who would steal things from home, including my cellphone. My nature was not to vent to anyone about it, but somehow Mr Smit could get through to me and I could be transparent with him. He invited me to the UCSA camp, a church camp in Jeffreys Bay. I had nothing, but he convinced me to go along. When we got to the camp site, he gave me R550 pocket money and lent me a cellphone for the duration of the camp. In the camp we were brought closer to God and built a relationship and fellowship with Him, which is something I have carried with me ever since. The theme for the camp that year was Matthew 11:28, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest". That camp gave me great strength and made an incredible change to my life and the way I see things.

The role that Mr Smit played in my life has inspired me to become a teacher. He has shown me that a teacher can be many things to a child over and above giving lessons in class. And that is exactly the kind of teacher whom I aspire to be one day. A teacher who makes a positive difference in a child's life, one who makes children want to wake up every day and go to school, one who inspires them to become better people that believe in their abilities and help them unleash their full potential. I honestly think there shouldn't be any other kind of teacher.

Having been brought up by my mother and grandmother, with no relevant and permanent father-figure in the house, Mr Smit came in and filled that gap in my life. I am grateful to have had such a person as my teacher. He played a father's role in my life; he is indeed the father that I never had.



The **teacher**
who became the
father
I never had.
Arigato,
sensei!



**A TRIBUTE TO MR MTSHALI OF KWA-FUZOKUHLE
PRIMARY SCHOOL, VRYHEID, KWAZULU-NATAL,
FROM HYCENT SHABANGU**

Memories of Kwa-Fuzokuhle Primary School are accompanied by the taste of the dust that would be blown towards us during break times. My school in the small town of Vryheid was built next to a gravel road; every time a car passed, the dust would happily oblige and cover us. With parent politics and windows smashed by drunk people passing by at night, schooling was hard, but our dedicated teachers looked beyond that. Among them, the late Mr Mtshali stood out for me.

Mr Mtshali was my Grade 5 Maths teacher. He was a smiley person and had lots of interesting stories, which he would tell with pride. For some unknown reason, Mr Mtshali would pull his pants all the way up to his waist, and we learners ended up copying that style. Mr Mtshali was the only male teacher in the school and played a huge role in everyone's life, but most importantly in mine. He encouraged me to play soccer though I thought I was not good at it, insisting that everyone was good at sport; you just had to keep trying till you found your position. This helped build confidence in me. I kept trying and ended up one of the strongest players in the School's A team.

As the only male in the school, Mr Mtshali also had to fill the role of policeman. This made him our go-to person when there were threats of fights, bullying or things going missing. Learners who were caught stealing stuff were made to return the goods and apologize. I found it really amazing that Mr Mtshali always tried to teach us not to ill-treat them; he would say that treating them like thieves would be a prophecy. We should rather forget that it had ever happened. This helped us to respect one another regardless of our differences.

There was a time in my school when representing the school in maths, spelling and writing competitions would diminish your chances of competing in athletics, soccer and cricket to less than zero. Each teacher would want learners to focus exclusively on the activity they were responsible for. Mr Mtshali made it possible for us to do both, allowing us to practise for academic events on sport practice days and then coming to school for sport practice on Fridays and weekends. As coach of three different sports, he helped keep us off the streets, gave us something to believe in, and built trust between us as teammates and brothers.

Mr Mtshali played a father's role to us, teaching us the pros and cons of dating and how we should behave as boys. He inspired us to follow his example of dressing formally every day. This meant every boy in the school had his shirt tucked in, a tie and shiny shoes. Mr Mtshali not only made us love sport, but also made us love Maths, a love which stuck with us as we moved to high school. Each day's class work was added up until the end of the week when the one with the most marks would get a prize and a star on the Wall of Fame. Everyone would see the star and aspire to be on the list of people with most stars.

Mr Mtshali encouraged me to be a teacher and carry on his legacy of helping learners in their studies, sport and personal lives. I never got a chance to thank you, Mr Mtshali, as your passing was sudden. I appreciate every word of encouragement and every caution which you gave me. Thank you for being our best teacher when we needed one.

He was
father,
coach and
policeman
of the school

A TRIBUTE TO MRS MABENA, H.B NYATHI SECONDARY SCHOOL, DAVEYTON, GAUTENG, FROM NOMBULELO THUSI

Mrs Mabena was my Life Sciences teacher in Matric, a teacher who understood that being a great teacher involves a constant struggle to improve. She went the extra mile to be a mother figure, a shoulder to cry on and an advising 'machine', who never ran out of thoughts and advice. She was a petite, good-looking, middle-aged woman with a brown skin-tone and closely-cropped, dyed hair. What a wonderful soul she presented to us learners!

My school was a public school, dependent on the government for infrastructure, sanitation, electricity and all other needs. We did not pay school fees, since a quarter of the learners had unemployed parents, so the school was totally dependent on the government. A feeding scheme provided a meal on the school premises for every learner. The matriculants' classrooms were reasonably comfortable and better learning environments than other classrooms, which had broken windows and insufficient furniture. There was a shortage of science teachers, which meant science classes were so overpopulated that learners could not pay attention.

Mrs Mabena was a teacher I turned to whenever I needed help, advice or support. She was not only a teacher but a hugely-important mother figure to me. She built a warm environment in the classroom and the beautiful smile on her pretty face radiated warmth and love. She was a light in my life, especially in 2017, when family issues were overwhelming me and bringing my academic studies down to the level of failure. She was by my side, bringing sunshine when I had no hope, and helping me to overcome by following her brilliant advice. I still cannot believe that a person who does not share blood with you can do such things to help you, gaining nothing in return. She made me realise that anyone can play the part of an extended family, supporting you through strains and hardships.

Matric is the crucial and most imperative grade. Mrs Mabena offered me a comfortable and warm shelter to stay in as I prepared for my examinations, as she believed that this would enable me to obtain good marks in the end. The Department of Education had initiated camps to assist learners as they prepared for their preliminary and final examinations. Learners who were at risk of failing certain important subjects and learners whom the teachers believed were going to obtain distinctions judging from their mid-year results, were selected to go to the camp, so that they could be helped as they prepared for their examination. Luckily enough, I was chosen as one of the learners who had done well in their June examinations. Mrs Mabena bought me pyjamas, cosmetics and food and gave me pocket money for the camp. She did the same for some other classmates. That alone portrayed her as a mother to me and I will forever be grateful to her for playing that parent role.

All the beautiful and amazing things she did in my life made me ask myself, "Why can't I give back to the community?" I have passion for teaching and can say she is a reason why I chose this career path. It is said that the majority of the households in South Africa are not financially stable due to poverty, unemployment and other difficulties. Teachers like Mrs Mabena are needed, since they are prepared to play a parent role, even providing food and clothes to needy learners.

The influence of a great teacher can never be erased. I want to thank you, Mrs Mabena, for being a part of my life. Without you I wouldn't be where I am today. Continue being a mother to everyone and may the Good Lord bless you abundantly.



She was not only
a **teacher**
but a **mother**
figure to me



A TRIBUTE TO MR MONGEZI BOKO, NDLAMBE PRIMARY SCHOOL, KING WILLIAM'S TOWN. EASTERN CAPE, FROM AVIWE TYALA

My best teacher was Mr Mongezi Boko, my Grade 7 class teacher at Ndlambe Primary School. He had relocated to King William's Town from Port Elizabeth. He was a very nice, kind, caring teacher, the kind of person you could open up to and who would sit down and talk to you. He would notice when there was something wrong with one of his learners and he would call you. Even if you did not want to talk, he was able to make you comfortable to the extent where you would free up and share your problem. He was the one who helped me to engage with the idea of going to high school, when I was stressed and fearful about this big change. He knew I didn't like such big life changes, so I am still very grateful to him.

I still remember when there was a big fight between me and my friends; we would fight every day, even in the classroom, when there was no teacher. He noticed that we were no longer close and that our fighting was affecting us academically, so he called us one day and talked to us about the dangers of what we were doing. He was able to make us stop fighting and forgive one another. Sometimes I thought he was too forward; I wasn't aware that he was only trying to help us build a better future.

My best teacher could never lie to learners. If a child did something great, he would compliment that child and the same applied when a child had done something wrong. Mr Boko would tell that child straight that what he or she was doing was very wrong.

When you are a teacher, it is difficult to be perfect for all your learners, but my best teacher gave of his best, although sometimes we made life difficult for him. It's clear that we all are different and each learner has his own learning style. Mr Boko made sure that he taught in a way that would enable everyone in the class to understand the lesson.

I remembered the day he called all the girls of my class into the classroom; it was still lunch break. It was the most awkward moment I can remember, because he taught us about the disadvantage of sleeping with boys and also about menstruation. Although it was awkward, since I was still young, it was really helpful, because it helped me to make more mature decisions in future life.

Mr Boko is one of the people who made me choose teaching as a career. Like a father, he took my hand, opened my mind and touched my heart and I decided that I also wanted to be a teacher. My best teacher made teaching look easy, because he loved his job. I chose teaching because of him and hope that I will have the same kind of impact on learners as he did. I want to change lives like he did, because he helped many learners who were losing their direction in life and led them back to the right path.

To the world you may just be a teacher, Mr Boko, but to me you were my hero.

He took my hand,
opened my
mind and
touched
my heart

Not only a teacher, but an influencer in hard times

Throughout my school career, I was never what you would consider a teacher's favourite learner. I was always one of the loudest learners in the class; a little bit distracted but also a learner who dived deep into topics that I loved to learn about. This story will be about a teacher who accepted me for the charismatic person that I am and encouraged me to push my boundaries when it came to what I was capable of, both inside school and in my personal life.

As a child I went to a variety of schools, all of which were strictly Christian private schools. The schools I attended were strict in their rules and abided closely to a code of conduct. I never had a problem with any of these requirements and quite enjoyed the traditions that came with them as they created a sense of unity amongst the learners and a sense of pride towards the school. However, when I got to Grade 10 my family decided to move to Ballito, a small town in Durban and I began attending a new school, Crawford North Coast. Crawford was a very different school to the ones I had previously attended. There was no strict school uniform, a golf shirt with any black pants and when I found out that girls didn't even have to tie their hair back I was shocked. I fitted into Crawford very easily and it soon became the most influential school I had ever attended as well as the best choice I had made for myself in terms of my schooling.

While I was attending Crawford a teacher crossed my path that influenced me in several ways and encouraged me to be the best learner I could possibly be. Mr Northcroft was my Grade 11 and 12 History teacher and was a new teacher to the school. I came to learn as time went on that he too came from a private Christian school where he taught before and was not quite used to the relaxed vibe that came with Crawford as a school. Mr Northcroft was a great teacher for many reasons and always seemed to go the extra mile. As a teacher, he did all he could to ensure that we were well equipped as History learners for our exams and even went as far as to ensure that we could write an essay at a university level to ensure we would be prepared for our studies when we entered our tertiary schooling. He knew that if we began to write this way from early on in our schooling, that we would not only be better equipped for our Matric exams but also be prepared to write suitable university essays from the day that we started. This is an example of something I am so grateful for because I have seen so many learners around me struggle and have to put so much extra time and effort into simply the structure of essay writing.

Mr Northcroft was one of my favourite and most influential teachers because he went the extra mile by not only looking at me



A TRIBUTE TO MR NORTHCROFT OF CRAWFORD NORTH COAST, KWAZULU-NATAL, FROM JADE PRITCHARD.

as a learner in his class, but as a person who was going through daily struggles. Before I was diagnosed with Lupus I was absent from school for very many days because I was getting sick so easily. When Mr Northcroft noticed my poor attendance and my struggles with keeping up with my work, he spoke to me personally after class and asked what was going on and if he could offer me any advice. From that day on, I kept him up to date with what was going on with my health and he did all that he could to help ensure that I kept my marks where I wanted them to be.

It took me a long time to realize that I was destined to be a teacher. That being said, there were a lot of triggers during my school career that if I had looked closer at, would have maybe led me down this path sooner. Mr Northcroft taught me that no matter what people are going through, if they have support, they are capable of getting through it. That lesson made me want to go out and be a support system to people who need a little bit of guidance. And what better way than to guide children down the path of learning in the most supportive and influential way that I can.

In conclusion, as soon as I am asked who my favourite teacher is in school I don't even have to think twice before I say Mr Northcroft. The reasons mentioned above portray clearly why I have such a fond memory of this teacher and why I will continue to remember him as my best teacher during my school career.



***A TRIBUTE TO MR METELERKAMP OF ALEXANDRIA
PRIMARY SCHOOL, WENTZEL PARK, ALEXANDRIA,
EASTERN CAPE, FROM ALEXIS METELERKAMP***

It was hard to know where to start on 'my best teacher' seeing that I have had quite a few influential people in my life. However, the person that has taught me the most would be my father, who was also my teacher in primary school.

I attended Alexandria Primary School, a school in the heart of Wentzel Park, a small and friendly community in a rural area. I was in Mr Metelerkamp's class for two years and he was my Mathematics teacher at the time. The school did not have the latest computers and many other gadgets that the schools in the cities had as it was located in a poor community, but the teachers they had made them the wealthiest. The teachers were their biggest asset as they were very passionate about their jobs and making a difference in the lives of children and their families.

My father is the reason for my being and the fuel that drives me to be successful in this world. He taught me many life lessons but the one that has stuck with me throughout the years is that I don't have to be afraid of anything or anyone. He used to tell me that, "The world is mine to conquer and I should be fearless".

Growing up and being in his class was a challenge, seeing that he was ten times harder on me than any other in his class. Our relationship was strictly professional and I never called him 'Daddy' or 'Father' at school. It was always 'Sir'. He even approached me and reprimanded me for doing that but my reason was that at school he was my teacher and only at home was he my parent. This made him chuckle for a while, but I could see he was not entirely happy at first with me calling him 'Sir'. He eventually got used to it and in the end he understood and respected my reasons for doing so.

My father was, and still is to this day, very passionate about his job. Every child in his class is treated equally and feels so loved and appreciated by him. He was, and still is, a head strong and upright individual who has always stuck to his principles. Those principles include respect, integrity, compassion, honesty and lastly, trust. This is trust in yourself, and belief in yourself, that you can make it to the top of any mountain through faith.

He made such a difference in my life; not just as my father, but as my teacher. When I reflect on my primary school experience, I am eternally grateful to have had the opportunity to be taught by someone as wise and dedicated to his learners, family and work as he was. I consider myself as one of the lucky ones being able to experience first-hand how complex it is teaching young minds.

I want to become a teacher seeing the direct impact you have on the lives of our youth and future leaders of tomorrow. Teachers do much more than teach, their influence extends far beyond the classroom. My father always told me that teaching is a challenging job with many unique frustrations, but the rewards of teaching are innumerable. One of those rewards includes, after ten to fifteen years, seeing those learners standing on top of those mountains that seemed so huge for them at one time, and remembering that they got there through the support and motivation from their teacher.

This is my best teacher and he is Mr Metelerkamp as he moulded me and my mind into the best I can possibly be. My father even as my teacher gave me the best gift anyone could ever give me....he believed in me.

**"The world
is mine
to conquer
and I should be
fearless"**

Love of the subject

A TRIBUTE TO MR GARETH MITCHELL, VICTORIA GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL, MAKHANDA, EASTERN CAPE, FROM CHELSEA ISAACS

Highly strung on the first day of my high school career, walking through long dull green passages at my new school, it felt as if I had strayed from the herd. Having to walk into my English class 15 minutes late because of getting lost, I stepped into a classroom where everyone else looked well settled and saw this tall, slender, white man with long, curly blonde hair standing in front of me. Instead of shouting at me for being late, he smiled at me and said "Have a seat, dear" and introduced himself to the class as "Mr Mitchell, the one and only". His smile had brought a sense of "you are going to be ok; there's nothing to worry about". Do you know that one smile can change a person's life and make them feel safe? Well, that's what I learnt that day.

Having battled with English all my life, I slowly grew to love it over the two years that Mr Mitchell taught me, because of his way of teaching. He wasn't like any other teacher I had met before. He would never raise his voice at us unless he was making a joke or singing. If we didn't understand the work, he would find other ways to explain so that every one of us could understand what was happening. If we didn't understand his slides, he would write on the board; if we didn't understand his writing, he would explain it within a game that involved the whole class, and if we didn't understand the game, he would either find a YouTube video of someone explaining it to us or he would sing - and everybody loved it when he sang. Whenever there was a problem or someone in class wasn't feeling that good, he would either sing or play music for us; he believed that music helps you focus and opens your mind. He would play music for us while we were working and it really did help us.

One day, I discovered that I was good at public speaking! The day we had our orals, I presented my oral with a few jokes in it. This made the whole class laugh, which made me happy, because I love being the reason that people smile. When my oral was over, the class clapped and Mr Mitchell looked at me with his bright blue-greenish eyes and smiled, saying, "That was amazing! Job well done, Chelsea!" As I walked back to my seat and the bell rang, everyone walked out. He pulled me aside and said, "I believe in you, Chelsea. I know that you will succeed and pass this subject and that you have a talent when it comes to orals, so use it well and keep making people smile". It is because of those words that I passed all my subjects, and that I always try my best and put my best into my work.

Mr Mitchell was not only my English teacher, he also taught us Life Orientation. In LO classes, he would always ask each one of us how we were feeling, giving us a sense that he truly cared for us. Sadly, he left in my Grade 11 year, but he told us all that we would all pass matric and do great in life and that he believed in us all. My matric class had 100% pass rate and we are all doing well for ourselves.

Not only was Mr Mitchell my teacher; he was my friend: someone I could talk to about anything or even cry to. That's the teacher I want to be one day. I want to be just like you, Mr Mitchell, but even better.



The believer



A TRIBUTE TO MR GREG EVERARD OF ALEXANDER ROAD HIGH, PORT ELIZABETH, EASTERN CAPE, FROM JANA JOUBERT

Alexander Road High - or Alex as everyone calls it - was full of different kinds of people and different races and had a very good balance between academics, sports and cultural activities. The best thing about the school and its teachers was that every kind of person was accepted for who they were and what their interests were.

Mr Everard, the Grade 10 to 12 Drama teacher, was very important in helping me become the person I am today. I was always a very shy person, and still am a bit reserved. I used to just sit back and do what was expected of me, without arguing or speaking up. I was very hesitant about doing drama, even though I have always loved dancing on stage and have always had a dramatic side.

Everything changed when I met Mr Everard. He knew that I was shy, but pushed me to speak up in class and to perform my practical pieces with confidence. He always stopped to hear our opinions about what we were learning, to ensure that we understood and that we knew that there was more than one side to a story. He always made us think more about things than the 'plebs' (non-drama learners) did. He also encouraged us to question everything, as he believed that this was the only way to learn. This is one of the things that made me become the philosophical person that I am today.

Mr Everard pushed me every day to do the best that I could, as I think he saw how much passion I had for the subject and for learning new things. He made me believe more in myself and taught me to have more self-confidence. He was always there to help us with anything and to give us advice about our performances.

The school had musicals every second year and a play every other year. In Grade 10, I did not yet have the courage to audition, but the following year I built up the courage to audition for a play and was chosen for a role. It was not a big role, but I was still proud of myself. In Grade 12, I had enough confidence to audition for a musical, where I had to sing in front of teachers and other people that I did not know. This was something I had never thought I would be able to do, and it was all thanks to my drama teacher.

My best friend and I had always had a great passion for dance and we loved choreographing dances together. Our teacher knew about this and always encouraged us to do dance pieces. When we had to choreograph a dance piece for a Grade 11 practical, we worked so hard that in the end we got 100% for our piece. From that day I realized how much the subject meant to me and how it had saved me from becoming a person I never wanted to be.

Since I realized that I wanted to become a teacher, people have always questioned my decision. My answer to this has always been simple: I want to make children feel the way about themselves that my drama teacher made me feel about myself. I want to inspire young people to find their voice and stand up for what they believe in.

So therefore, I would like to thank one of my best teachers for making me the person that I am today. He probably does not even know what an impact he had on my life and how much I appreciate what he has done for all of us. He gave me the passion that I have for becoming the best teacher that I can be.

Creating passion for drama

**A TRIBUTE TO MEM LAMANI, T.E.M MRWETYANA SCHOOL,
GRAHAMSTOWN, EASTERN CAPE,
FROM XOLISA JACOB**

A quote says “a good teacher is like a candle - it consumes itself to light the way for others”. This is exactly what Mem Lamani did for me.

Mem Lamani was my Hospitality and Economics teacher at T.E.M Mrwetyana public school. She was always smiling and friendly and she had her way of making us feel equal. She made teaching look like an easy job. Hospitality was one of my favourite subjects: one of the reasons I loved it was because there were always new experiments and field trips. One time she took us to Stenden University in Port Alfred, where we attended a lecture, went on a tour around the university and went to the hotel in order to experience how the hospitality industry works. It was an educational trip but she made sure that we had fun, going to the beach after the tour.

Not only did Mem Lamani look after us, but she made us feel free and told us never to hold back. We must always do our best in whatever we're doing. She was never afraid to join in with what we were doing, regardless of her age. We took plenty of pictures with her and braided together. To us, she was not just a teacher; she was also a listener when we needed one.

Teaching requires a lot of thought and patience and that is what this woman had. I remember a time when we had hospitality practicals at school. I am not good at cooking, but she was there to take me through the ingredients. My dish was a disaster – but she was able to make every disaster fun and was strong in every situation. She always enquired about our future plans, asking whether we had made up our minds what we wanted. That was one of the reasons that she took us to Port Alfred, so that so we could make a choice, having experienced the industry we wanted to be part of.

After going on the field trips and everything, I ended up dreaming of working in the hospitality industry, but that didn't turn out the way I expected. Mem Lamani once said to me, "No matter the circumstances, no matter where you are in life, always try and find a way to make your dreams a reality." That is the advice I have been following and the lesson I want to pass down to my learners one day. Hospitality was not only a subject; it served as a lesson to me, that I should treat each and every situation as a new business venture and give it my all to make it successful.

Special thanks, Mem Lamani. As a result of your motherly love and patience, I chose to become a teacher to spread the love and care to little ones, as you did to us. And thanks to all the other teachers who shared their knowledge with me.

ENKOSINI KAKHULU. NDIYABONGA.



The woman with the heart of gold



**A TRIBUTE TO MR MANI, THE MATHEMATICIAN OF
VELILE HIGH, BATHURST, EASTERN CAPE,
FROM INGA MSIMANGO**

Most of my relationships with teachers were professional rather than close. However, one teacher who stood out from all the others was Mr Mani. He taught me in Grade 11 and 12 at Velile High, in Bathurst, where I grew up. The school is a public school with some poorly-maintained classrooms; there was even a classroom that had been burnt down, next to our Maths classroom.

Mr Mani could solve almost any math equation put in front of him! One time when my classmate gave him an equation that was really difficult, he managed to do it and came with an answer that we had not expected. Mr Mani was influential and well-respected among colleagues and learners alike, because he respected everyone. I observed in him the qualities of a teacher and the way that a teacher should behave with his colleagues and respond in different circumstances. I have learnt that in every work place there will always be competition, which might create tension and jealousy among people who have the same goal. Although such things can be an obstacle to the development of a child, Mr Mani found a way to make sure his learners got the attention they needed.

Mr Mani was like a father figure to some of us, always strict, but sometimes very funny. He managed us with a firm hand and would always go and check up if a learner had been absent for a few days. His motto was, "You miss a period, you miss a chapter". His dedication gave him the strength to work after school with us; he would even buy us food out of his pocket money, which was something very special to us. Evidence that he was really good at his job was that every year he would be called by the Department of Education to be one of the senior markers of Maths. This proves that if you really love what you are doing and you are not doing it to please anyone but yourself, then no one can stand in the way of your reaching your goals.

Although I admire the man's work and the way he did things, I have always been somewhat afraid of him, maybe because of the level of respect I had for him. He was my best teacher because he was not just a teacher but tried to be a friend to each and every one of his learners. To me, the fact that he could be professional and also be on the same level as us was "cool" and I thank God that he placed me in the same school as Mr Mani, where I could be under his care and guidance, because I would not be here if it were not for a dedicated teacher like he was.

You miss
a period,
you miss
a chapter

**A TRIBUTE TO MR NONGCULA, ZINGISA
COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOL, MTHATHA, EASTERN
CAPE, FROM PEARL-MICHELLE MATEBESE**

Even a small positive experience, a single moment or a single person can change one's life.

I was taught mathematics by Mr Nongcula in Grade 10, at Zingisa Comprehensive High School, a prestigious Catholic school counted as one of the best in Mthatha, Eastern Cape. He was loved by all learners in his class and his class was the leading mathematics class during his time at Zingisa.

Mr Nongcula didn't make us feel stupid for what we did not know; instead he commended us for what we did know. He paid attention to the needs of each learner, making sure no one was left behind. He gave special attention to slow learners in mathematics like myself, but not by giving us extra work. Instead, he gave us more opportunities to participate in class. For example, when he gave us homework, he would ask one of the slower learners to write their answer to the first question on the board. He would commend us for the parts we did right, thereafter correcting our mistakes. This way, instead of feeling that we were stupid for not getting the sum right, we would feel good about what we did right, while making an effort to correct our mistakes. He believed in uplifting the spirit of the learner before teaching them. He taught us to enjoy studying by creating a warm environment in the classroom, more like a father passing down wisdom to his children than like a teacher.

He told me that I was an extremely smart girl, but that my negative attitude towards mathematics was holding me back from excelling. He was right; I was doing very well in every subject but mathematics. I began to work on my attitude towards it in my first term with Mr Nongcula and began to do well, to understand and to solve problems on my own. I was also able to explain it to others, something I had never done before. But then it was announced that Mr Nongcula had left the school and would not return for the second term. I was worried. At first I tried to draw on the mindset I had developed during the previous term. But the current teacher was the exact opposite of him. She made even the smart ones feel stupid in her Mathematics class.

Although Mr Nongcula's influence on me was short-lived, the fact that in just one term he was able to help me overcome my fear of mathematics and take me from the bottom to the middle of the class was truly inspiring. Until this day I haven't a single idea how he did it; he never gave me extra homework or made me stay behind after school. I like to believe that if he had stayed longer, perhaps the temporary positivity I had towards mathematics would have been prolonged for the rest of my life.

His hard work showed me what kind of teacher I wanted to be. I don't want to simply teach or paraphrase the textbook like most of my teachers did; I want to inspire. I want to work on the mind of the learner, making them realise that they are capable.

The fact that I can remember Mr Nongcula even though he taught me for a single term tells how great he was. At least four teachers were recruited and fired in an effort to replace him, because no classes excelled like his after he left. And that, for me, is greatness. To be so good at your work that no one can do it better, is truly inspiring. And I too want to be inspiring.



**“I’ll count
with you”
he said**



**A TRIBUTE TO MR TENDAI JENJE, SEVENTH DAY
ADVENTIST PRIMARY, MAKHANDA, EASTERN CAPE,
FROM ZINTLE NZUZO**

Mr Tendai Jenje was my Intermediate Phase teacher, from Seventh Day Adventist Primary. He taught me Mathematics, Natural Science and Technology. There is (or was) a stereotype that male teachers should not be in primary schools because young children feel more comfortable being taught by female teachers. For me, that was never the case. Mr Jenje was just as nice as the other teachers and he always made sure that everyone in the class was fully engaged in the classroom activities.

I had always known that I loved Mathematics, but it was not obvious to other people until I went into Grade 4 where we would do mental mathematics every day. Mr Jenje would check our understanding and give us practice every single day. It was a kind of a competition and I found I could beat everyone. This was very helpful, because it showed me that if I wanted to reach a certain goal, I should commit myself to my work and show dedication, and I could get what I wanted at the end of the day. And that brought with it a sense of achievement.

Seventh Day Adventist Primary is a Sabbath school, so it is different from other schools in many ways, although not so much in the classroom. Something different in Mr Jenje's class was that we always sang church songs before learning and this would make everyone happy. At first I didn't understand its purpose, but I realize now that he was trying to ensure that everyone was in the same mood and spirit, because we came from different homes. We do not know what happens in other homes but singing to put everyone in the same mood helps a teacher work well with the learners. He also made jokes about himself in the classroom, saying, for instance, that he was a like a king in his house and his family should bow before him. He did not make bad jokes or jokes about other people and that is another reason why I liked him. I realize that I could do the same things with my learners in the foundation phase as he did with us. They have small hearts that need to be taken care of and can become very easily hurt or offended, by people at home, on their way to school or anywhere around them.

Since Mr Jenje loved mathematics as I do and cared enough to become a teacher in order to share his knowledge, I have also been inspired to take Education as my career, so that I can share my knowledge with those in need of help. There are children who know things in IsiXhosa, but not in English; I plan to help those children expand their knowledge into other languages so that they can interact with people of different races. This could expand friendships between children of different races and help everyone to be kind towards one another, one of the things that Mr Jenje encouraged in us, his learners.

I don't remember Mr Jenje ever coming to the class angry, but if he was angry during the lesson due to things that his learners had done, he would not take out those frustrations on another class. From his behavior I learnt that as a teacher you should learn how to control your feelings: when something makes you angry at home you should not take it out on your learners at school. During my teaching practice there would be times where I did not feel okay, but since I have learnt these things from Mr Jenje, I would behave as if everything was fine and be bubbly for my learners.

**If your attention
is divided
by added distractions,
multiply your
mental traction
by doing a bit of simple
subtraction**

**A TRIBUTE TO MRS SWANEPOEL, RIEBEEK COLLEGE GIRLS
HIGH SCHOOL, UITENHAGE, EASTERN CAPE,
FROM NOLUYOLO NYATI**

Mrs Swanepoel, my English teacher, was a tall, dark-haired woman who loved poetry. The walls of the classroom were covered with different English poems and quotes, mostly from the olden days. My favourite quote was, "Be not afraid of greatness: some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them." (William Shakespeare).

Mrs Swanepoel was the best teacher at Riebeek College Girls High school and she taught me English Home Language for three years, from Grade 10 till Grade 12. She always had a smiling face and kept us as happy at school as if we had been her own kids. Everyone at school got along with Mrs Swanepoel, as learners felt free to open up to her and they could talk with her when they had problems. She always talked politely to learners and knew how to handle any difficult situation at the school. She would also take care of all the arrangements if there was an event, celebration or competition at the school. One day, when I had lunch with her, she showed me the amazing skill of western penmanship, in which one ties two pencils together with rubber bands and draws letters with them. She also talked about her life during lunch and I found we had a lot in common. She loved listening to pop music and singing karaoke.

Mrs Swanepoel loved the teaching profession and taught us with enthusiasm and passion. I liked Mrs Swanepoel's teaching strategies, which ensured that we understood every topic very well. She would ask us to revise the poems that we had done in class as homework and would give us a test the following day to check our understanding. She would always review the previous day's work before going on to a new topic and would test us after teaching two or three topics.

From the time that Mrs Swanepoel started teaching me in Grade 10, my marks in English were good. She gave us tons of assignments for improving our English and was very patient and enthusiastic in responding to our questions. Moreover, she would stay after school for hours to solve the problems that we had in her class, sacrificing her private time to teach us. We could ask her any question related to her subject without any fear. She never discriminated between weak and brilliant learners, but gave her weak learners a lot of support and asked brilliant learners to help their weaker fellow learners. She would watch each and every learner while she was teaching and would punish misbehaviour.

Mrs Swanepoel was a very encouraging teacher, not only in our studies but also in our extracurricular activities. She would personally cheer the learner who did well, whether in academic or in sports activities. Mrs Swanepoel was also the Vice-Principal of the school and performed all her responsibilities very well, taking good care of the cleanliness and greenery in the school grounds.

Mrs Swanepoel advised us to concentrate on the study of poetry and reading English books and always to pay attention to what the teacher said in class, if you really want success in life. She told us to be passionate about our studies and our aims in life.

I would like to thank Mrs Swanepoel for helping me decide to become a teacher and thus shaping my future. She has taught me that by being organised and working towards your goal you can achieve a lot in life. She also taught me that watching children play can turn a teacher's bluest day into the brightest, and that children are the happiness in each teacher's eye.



The **teacher**
who showed me
my future



**A TRIBUTE TO MR MOLABA, KGADIME MATSEPE
SECONDARY SCHOOL, SOSHANGUVE, GAUTENG,
FROM KAMOGELO TLAMAMA**

A best teacher is a standard-bearer, a top-grader, and that was my teacher, Mr Molaba. He taught me from Grade 11 until I completed my matric at Kgadime Matsepe secondary school. Mr Molaba taught me Sepedi Home Language, and it was during the time that he taught us that I fell in love with my home language and started to embrace it.

It was at a small state school in one of Pretoria's locations, where male teachers were in the minority, that I found my top-grade teacher. Mr Molaba was not a teacher who taught from the mind only, but also from the heart. He was patient with learners and that is one reason for honouring him as my best teacher. He placed huge value on education and demonstrated the importance of being dedicated in life. This made a very positive impact in my life and because of that I have chosen teaching as a career.

Mr Molaba was a giant of a man, strong, with a deep voice. The whole class would fall into a deep, heavy silence at the sound of his voice. This was because his presence was respected by learners in the school. Mr Molaba always wore a tie and looked professional, no matter what day it was. He conducted himself with a dignity which showed how passionate he was about his work.

He was a motivational speaker, motivating me whenever I felt that Sepedi Home Language was challenging to me as a subject. This teacher was always there to help; he was my shoulder to cry on. He even taught us during the weekends, to ensure that all learners understood what he was teaching. For that reason, I fell in love with Sepedi; it became easy for me because of his help.

Mr Molaba was an unforgettable teacher because he used to accommodate every learner in class by changing his teaching strategies so that everyone in the class understood, whether they be slow learners or fast. This teacher built the spirit of determination in my heart because of the way he taught and encouraged me to study every day. His method of changing strategies when teaching encouraged me to do the same when I become a teacher, so that I can accommodate every learner in the classroom and improve learners' understanding.

Mr Molaba was the most active teacher in the whole school. He encouraged me to participate in the sport of my choice, because he believed that exercise is healthy for learners and builds flexible minds. If we have teachers like him - and I am planning to be one - learners will have healthy minds to study.

This honourable man was a strong, passionate teacher who never gave up on his learners. I struggled; he never gave up. Others doubted me, but he believed in me and I succeeded. Who would I be without his inspiring words: "kodumela moepathutse gago lehumo leo leswago kgauswi," which means, "nothing comes easy; you need to work hard". These words motivated me every day when I felt the pressure of holding a book to study. Now I see how these words changed my life. That is why Mr Molaba will always be my hero amongst them all.

My top-grade teacher

A TRIBUTE TO MRS NOGQALA-ZANA, CONCORDIA HIGH SCHOOL, KNYSNA, WESTERN CAPE, FROM ZANDILE SOLA

My best teacher was Mrs Nogqala-Zana, a tall, stout, dark-skinned woman with a loud, sweet, deep voice. She was always smiling and cheerful and would catwalk her way down the corridors of Concordia High from the office to her class. You would never hear her coming; you would only see her standing silently at the door, looking at the class.

You could never even tell when she was hurt because of her smile. Mrs Zana, as we call her, taught me from Grade 11 till Grade 12. She was my isiXhosa teacher, my role model and still a mother to me. She was my best teacher because she knew what a child is, always treating us equally and never having favourites. She is the reason I fell deeply in love with teaching.

She always took her time to know us all personally outside the school premises; something that was not done by other teachers. She was open about everything: a straight talker and encouraged us to work hard so that we would be able to reach our dreams. She was always there for me when I needed her and never ever complained that I had disturbed her. When I walked into her class while she was with learners from other grades, she would always say "Here is my bachelor," and I never understood her because we had not even written our mid-year exams. She always had faith in me even when all hope was gone, but she would push me to be better. She used to call me 'Sanalwam' which means 'my baby' or 'my child'.

In my Grade 11 year I fell ill and had to lose a year, because there was no way I could have caught up on the work that had been done in the first part of Grade 12. Mrs Zana was there for me every step of the way until I was completely better. The following year, 2017, when I returned to school, she gave me a warm welcome and made sure that I settled in. She was my pillar of strength; the person I would turn to with every problem. She told me not to put pressure on myself; everything would be OK. Every time that I could not go to school, I would call her and she would understand.

The way she taught isiXhosa inspired me and made me fall in love with isiXhosa books. I wanted to read the way she did. The way she pronounced her words, her emphasis, was a particular inspiration. Her eyes signalled that she loved what she was doing. She would smile, revealing her white teeth and her eyes would light up like the morning sun. She read with enthusiasm and from her heart. And when she read, you could always imagine perfectly what she was reading about. She pushed me to strive for the best and I started reading isiXhosa books, trying to improve my vocabulary. Everyone took part in all of the debates that we always had. We would even take turns in reading the books. The lesson I loved best was oral presentation. She always told us that someday we would be called for motivational talks, so she was aiding us to find our voices.

Thank you so much, Mrs Zana, for all the school and life lessons you taught me. You went beyond the call of duty to make sure, like the mother hen, that we were safe and had everything we needed. Today I am studying towards a bachelor's degree in Education because of your influence. I pray to God that I also become a loving and caring teacher like you, influencing learners positively.



Isikhukhukazi Esimaphik'omade

(The broody hen who protects its eggs and then its young chicks)



**A TRIBUTE TO THE LATE MR G VAN VUGHT, ST MARY'S
PRIMARY SCHOOL, GRAHAMSTOWN, EASTERN CAPE,
BY LAMEEZ VAN HEERDEN**

Looking back to my school years, the two things I remember first are the colours yellow and blue: the colours of the walls and of our uniforms. My primary school, St Mary's, is a small school in the main road of the coloured area of Grahamstown. And my best teacher was not an amazing being who did wonders in his lifetime, but just an ordinary teacher who loved what he did for a living.

Mr G van Vught was one of the few teachers everyone was afraid of; you would try your utmost to stay in his good books. We had the world's respect for him. He was a strongly-built man with a moustache and a big belly, who always wore a shirt tucked into his pants and a brown belt. I can still smell the early morning whiff of cigarettes as I passed in him on my way to class, and hear the way he greeted me by my surname.

Mr van Vught was our Mathematics, Technology and Natural Sciences teacher in Grade 7. He always found a way for the entire class to participate, even if you were not interested. Maths 24 was a game he loved to play with us: girls against boys or Grade 7 A against Grade 7B. Playing against people in your class was not so much of a challenge, but going up against people from a different class was tough; we did not know where their weakness or strengths lay. His aim was for us to believe in ourselves and believe that we could succeed in whatever we did, be it Maths 24 or any other challenge in life.

Another trick Mr van Vught had up his sleeve was the times tables. First thing in the morning he would randomly choose a number and we would have to answer questions on that specific times table, for example the 9 times table. Everyone had to stand and you could only sit down if your answer was correct. This was a way Mr van Vught found out who was strong, who was average and which kids were the weak links. For many children in our class this was the worst thing he could ever make us do, but he had his reasons.

Material things will never give a child what a good teacher can offer. Mr van Vught did small things that made big differences. Mr van Vught is the reason why I want to stand in front of a class one day, not to be known for what I do for children, but to ensure that their tomorrow will be brighter than mine ever was. I strive to be that teacher whom children hope to be like because they feel that I give them a sense of purpose. I want to be that teacher who values my learners, with their differences and difficulties, and I want to be proud of what I do for a living. I want to be an inspirational teacher like Mr van Vught was. An ordinary man who loved what he did and saw his teaching as a passion rather than just an everyday job.

I still cherish the moments I had with Mr van Vught because I know that a teacher who really cares and values each and every one as an individual is rare. I wish I had told you that your hard work was not in vain, sir. You truly were a diamond in the rough. Thank you for being the Best Teacher I could have asked for. I will always miss your sense of humour and the way you played with your moustache, making it white with your chalky hands.

May your beautiful soul rest in peace, Mr van Vught.

A diamond in the rough

**A TRIBUTE TO MR WILLIAMS, MACLEAR HIGH SCHOOL,
MACLEAR, EASTERN CAPE FROM LITHA MAGAZI**

I was transferred to a new school when I was about to do my Grade 10. Upon my arrival, my first period of the day was English and I could just tell that there was something special about the teacher. I had never heard someone in South Africa speak English the way Mr Williams did. I will admit that at first, his English vocabulary was beyond my understanding but at the same time I was impressed by his level of literature; he could make a simple statement and yet he would have us reaching for our dictionaries. He had the ability to make his lessons seem easy and he saw no need to impress anyone. Teaching came naturally to him.

Mr Williams first became aware of me after we had to write the first essay for the term and, based on my outstanding essay results, he asked me to stay after class and told me: "Your essay is impressive and there is a lot of potential in your writing, With more practice and effort on your grammar rules you might master transaction writing". At that moment what motivated me was not the comment itself, because anyone could have said that. But in this instance it was not just anyone, it was an individual I considered The Legend of English and this type of comment coming from him inspired me to work even harder at my writing.

Mr Williams had this thing he used to do towards the close of each term; he would take time to share his experiences and wisdom with us to motivate us for the upcoming exams. The speech would always be different but the moral of the story would remain the same; "Not all hard workers are rewarded the same, but life consists of public and private victories. If you know you didn't do as well as the top achiever but you did better than your previous performance, ask yourself what is more important to you, public or private victory?" These positive words that Mr Williams lived by started having meaning for most of his learners; they gave us purpose, not only in the academic aspect of our lives but also in our personal endeavours.

Although Mr Williams only taught me for Grades 10 to 12, his influence on my life feels like that I might have known him from my foundation phase years of schooling, given the strong bond I had with him. Professional at all times, Mr Williams was able to inspire his learners and develop strong connections with them. As learners, we could identify a father figure in Mr Williams and the kind of warmth he gave his learners became an inspiration to me to become a teacher.

I want to thank Mr Williams for not only inspiring me and pushing me to be the best that I can be, but also for being my role model. Thank you for indirectly giving me a sense of direction in life. It was after I met you that I could finally identify a passion within myself to be a teacher. But I do not want to be just any teacher, but the best teacher to my learners.



The English legend

The inspirational teacher



**UMBULELO OYA kuNKOSIKAZI ZONDI PLATJIE
OKWISIKOLO MURRAY HIGH SCHOOL, KWANOKUTHULA,
WESTERN CAPE, USUKA kuMIHLALI ZAZINI**

Utitshala wokwenene owayesenyongweni kum ngutitshalakazi uZondi Platjie owayendifundisa ukuqala kwibanga lesibhozo uyokuma kweleshumi, wayesifundisa isifundo esimalunga nezinto ezaye zenzeka kudala (History). Umntu onentliziyo entle noncumo lokwenene.

Ututshalakazi onenkathalo owuthathela engqalelweni umsebenzi wakhe, utitshalakazi ZondiPlatie ebengapheleli ekufundiseni kuphela ukuze umazi ukuba ngutitshalakazi, ebengenelela ebomini bomntwana abengumzali anikeze inkxaso kwakunye nothando njengamzali.

Indlela ebefundisa ngayo bekubonisa ukuba uyawuthanda umsebenzi wakhe, ebefundisa ngokukhathala ngangeenjongo zokuba ibe iyavakala lento ayifundisayo ukuze sizopasa isifundo sakhe. Ebengengabo abatitshala baye bagxeke abazali, ebenovelwano futhi nentlonipho xa kuza ngakwikhaya lomntu, nditsho noba kukho abangekabinazo iincwadi zokubhalela isifundo sakhe ebeye angabukisi ngabo kodwa abalinde babenazo nabo.

Ututshala funeka abe ngumzekelo yaye aziphathe kakuhle ukuze nabanye abantu bazomhlonipha bafunde lukhulu kuye, yena ke ebengulomzekelo futhi nesinxibo sakhe sihambisana kakuhle nomsebenzi lowo wakhe, indlela ebendiyithanda ngayo indlela ayiyo bendide ndibeneentsuku ndimbuke ezihleleli etafileni yakhe ndincuma ncumeze ndodwa.

Inkxaso kwakunye nokunyamezela kwakhe ibiziintsikelelo kuthi bafundi, besingoyiki ukumbuza imibuzo xa singaqondi ngoba ibingumntu ongonqenekiyo futhi ongekho rhabaxa, ebehleli nje unoncumo ebusweni phofu nokucaphuka kwakhe ibikokomzuzwana.

Ngamanye amaxesha ebeye athethe izinto ezihlekisayo futhi besingafumani kukhathazeka kulonto ngenxa yalomntu anguye.

Indlela ebeyiyo kwaye kwandenza ndizibone ngenye imini ndisezinyathelweni zakhe. Ebekwazi ukuhlala nathi ngoku sele sifunda ibanga leshumi asicebise ngokufuna iidyunivesithi esizokufunda kuzo ukuze siqhubeke phambili nezifundo zethu, asinike nolwazi malunga neebursary ezikhoyo yaye zifumaneka njani.

Oko ndafunda bendingaqinisekanga ngomsebenzi endiwufunayo apha ebomini kodwa ndithe ndokudibana naye ndabona indlela aqhuba ngayo kumsebenzi wakhe ndanqwenela ukuba nje ngayo nditsho nesinxibo esi ngoba ndiyasithanda.

Ukuba ngutitshalakazi kuza noxanduva oluninzi yaye umntu funeka awuthande awuxabise umsebenzi wakhe, yena ke undibonisile oko futhi ndifuna ukufana nje naye kuba ubutshintshile ubomi babafundi abaninzi nditsho naba bebengamameli betshaya iziyobisi bebenako ukuvula iindlebe xa kuthetha yena futhi ebacebisa ize ibengabo ke abazikhethela indlela abazakuyithatha.

Ukumbulela utitshalakazi uZondi Platjie ngokuba negalelo lokundivula amehlo ubomi bam batshintsha, ubengumzali kum, wangutitshala kwakhona undibonisa indlela nokukhathala ngeemini zobunzima futhi awanikezela. Ukuba bekungekho ngenxa yemfundiso yakho andiyazi ngendikweyiphi indawo, iintetho obuthi undinike zona ziwavulile amehlo wam zayimisa nengqondo yam ngokuzixhamla kwakho Mzali ndiyabulela.

**UTITSHALAKAZI
ONGUMZALI
WOKWENENE**

A TRIBUTE TO JUFFROU LIZE ELS, FROM ST TERESA'S HIGH SCHOOL, ROSEBANK, JOHANNESBURG, GAUTENG, FROM ALANNAH LYDALL

Within the small sea of blue, black, white and yellow striped blazers, worn by the learners of Rosebank's small private Catholic all-girls school, stood an even smaller group of outstanding teachers. One teacher in particular stood out from the rest. Blonde, tall, smiling, and wearing our white denim matric jacket with almost more pride than we did, was Juffrou Els. She had piercing blue-green eyes which she used to look straight into your soul. And when she looked at you, she really saw you. She always took a genuine interest, and would try to help you in the best way possible. Caring, understanding and kind, she also had a no-nonsense attitude. She would tell you exactly what she thought, and if she promised to do something, she would keep her word.

Juffie taught Afrikaans (FAL) to my particular grade in Grade 8 and then again in matric. She also had an additional role as grade head. At the beginning of the year she told our matric class that if ever we felt like everything was too much, and we wanted to die, we should hold our breath and check. She told us that when you cannot hold that breath anymore and eventually take a huge gasp of air, you know that even though you wanted to stop breathing, your body was fighting even harder to live. If your body hasn't given up on you, you shouldn't either. At the time, I dismissed it as something trivial, thinking it almost silly that anyone would need to check that their body hadn't given up fighting for them.

Fast forward to the end of May. I was sitting in my mother's car, desperately holding my breath. Since the end of Grade 11, severe stress and anxiety had taken a toll on my health, and I had missed a lot of school. I felt that I would never be able to catch up. One Tuesday morning my mother forced me to get dressed and just try to go to school. By the time we entered the parking lot I was lost in the midst of one of the worst panic attacks I have ever experienced and I could not get out of the car. My mother went to find someone who could help calm me down.

Juffrou Els tapped on the window and opened the car door. I don't remember much of what she said to me, but she promised that I did not have to go straight back into the school routine. I could instead sit quietly in her classroom and work for as long as I could on the more urgent tasks while we figured out together how I could meet requirements while also building up my strength. She also organised a meeting between my teachers, my mom and I, where she fought for the teachers to give me the time and support I needed. She encouraged me to finish my tasks and to write at least the July exams, after which we could see where I was, and where to go next.

Juffrou Els was an impactful teacher and an inspiration. She helped me get back off the ground and learn to walk again. She inspired me to keep dreaming, to work hard to achieve my dreams and to show myself and those around me just how capable I was. I would like to inspire something similar in my future learners, to teach them that when times get rough, they should hold their breath and check.



“When you think you want to give up, just hold your breath and check”



A TRIBUTE TO MR IAN FREEMANTLE, BRYANSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL, JOHANNESBURG, GAUTENG, FROM RUMBIDZAI NYABEREKA

Mr Freemantle was my mathematics teacher during a very critical part of my schooling career. He was an ex-military man and had the hulking, rigid figure to match. Mr Freemantle was in his early 60s when I was in Grade 6 but had the vibrant and energetic step of a much younger man. He was always smartly dressed in a suit and tie, no matter the occasion, and always wore a black wrist watch to complete his ensemble. I vividly remember his greying bushy eyebrows and his hairy hands emphatically waving around when he attempted to explain complex topics. Mr Freemantle had been the Maths teacher at Bryanston Primary, a semi-private school situated in the fast-developing suburb of Bryanston, for many years before my arrival. As a result of the school being semi-private, there were learners from all walks of life in a single classroom. Mr Freemantle made it a point, in his classroom, to be understanding and accommodating of everyone's home life and culture.

I consider Mr Freemantle to be my best teacher because he embodied so many different characteristics. He was a strict disciplinarian who would not tolerate tardiness in his classroom and yet he was also an extremely humorous man who came up with jokes to help us remember mathematical concepts eg: "Pies are round not square" (used to help us to remember the formula for calculating the circumference of circles). He was also extremely passionate about his learner's well-being and all-round success in every aspect of school life. He was always at school events and sporting fixtures (even on the weekend), enthusiastically cheering us on from the side-lines. Most importantly, Mr Freemantle was constantly attentive to every single learner in his classroom; even the quiet kids in the back of the classroom (like myself), who felt as if they had been forgotten, got constant reassurance that we were not invisible to him. This for me was the most outstanding feature of Mr Freemantle's teaching.

Mr Freemantle changed my life. His constant reassurance that I was not invisible to him encouraged me to stop living in the shadows and to claim my rightful place in the world. His faith in me and my abilities planted seeds of confidence and self-assuredness that have grown and blossomed over the years. As I grew older, I realised that one man had completely changed the course of my life in an instant and as a result, I wanted to do good things for the world. I wanted to have a similar positive effect on young lives. I wanted to have this effect particularly on learners who like myself had grown up in socially-disadvantaged homes and who needed someone to look them in the eye and tell them, "I see you". I began to realise what a big role teachers play in the development of our future, not only as individuals, but in society as a whole and I decided I wanted to be able to influence change.

Thank you Mr Freemantle, thank you for seeing a light in me and bringing it to the surface. Thank you for realizing my potential, before I even knew it was there, and handing me the key to unlocking it. Thank you for your unwavering commitment and significant contribution to our society.

The locksmith of my potential

Utitshala xa ekwigumbi lokufunda zininzi izinto azenzayo kunye nazijongayo, noxa nje abantwana bebininzi kodwa uye afikelel kuye wonke ubani. Umsebenzi katitshala ayikuko ukufundisa qha kodwa kukujonga inqubo yomntwana ngokwasemzimbeni, engqondweni kunye naphakathi emoyeni. Sonke sohlukene kwaye sisuka kumakhaya angafaniyo apho iimeko ziye zingafani ngoko ke ngumsebenzi wazo zonke iititshala kuxhasa kwakunye nokukhuthaza abantwana bazokwazi ukuzithemba baphuhlise izakhono zabo.

uLindiwe Siko ngutitshala wam wakwibanga lokuqala wayendifundisa kwisikolo iSikhokelo Public Primary School esiseKapa kwingingqi iKhayelitsha. Ndafika isikolo sigcwele kodwa ngenxa yakhe ndaye ndayifumana indawo yokufunda, kwaye azange kuphelele apho zonke iititshala zazingandifuni kumagumbi abo besithi kugcwele andizobanayo indawo yokuhlala. Waye wandichola wandibekela isitulo kwitafle yakhe, noxa kwakunzima ukuhlala kwitafle katitshala kodwa ndaye ndanyamezela kwaze kwathi ekuhambeni kwexesha kwakhona abantwana abayekayo ndaze ndafumana indawo yokuhlala. Wayeyibona intlungu kunye nentlupheko yam ngokuba wayesoloko endikhathalele, wayendinika ukutya ukwenzele ndingabonakali phakathi kwabanye abantwana ukuba ndihlelelekile. Wayemane ukubiza umzali wam rhoqo owayengubhuti wam emcenga ukuba andithengele iUniform yesikolo kwade ekugqibeleni nam ndafana nabanye abantwana. Ndiyathemba ukuba ikhona into awayeyibona apha kum ngoba indlela le awayendincekelele ngayo kwaye wayendifundisa ukukhuthalela ukufunda iincwadi ukukwazi ukwandisa ulwazi kunye nokwandisa isigama sam kwisiNgesi.

Phantsi koqeqesho lwakhe ndifunde izinto ezininzi kwaye akadlalanga indima yobutitshala kuphela kum udlale nendima yomzali, umzali lowo endikhule ndingamazi ebomini bam, uye wandinika uthando, wandikhuthaza kwaye wandomeleza ukuze ndibengulo mntu ndinguye namhlanje. Nasemveni kokuba ndiphumile kwisikolo samabanga aphantsi andizange ndimlahle ndandimane ndimvakashela rhoqo ndimbalisela ngeengxaki zam zobom akazange andibhebhetho koko wayendinika indlebe andithuthuzele, andikhuthaze, andicebise kwaye andincende xa akwaziyo ukundinceda. Ndikhumbula ngoku sendifunda unyaka wam wesibini eCape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) ubomi babunzima ngeyona ndlela ingathethekiyo kodwa ndandisithi ndakufika kuye ndimbalisela ngezinto ezindehlelayo wayengandigwebi koko wayendimamela ngomdla nangomonde aze emva koko andincede apho afikelela khona. Le nto ebengayenzi kum ndendwa kodwa kuye wonke ubani ofuna uncedo wayesoloko ekhona nje ngomzali nanje ngomhlobo, kubo bonke ootitshala wayengoyena unomonde wayemncekelela umntwana ade awuqonde umcimbi ukuba uhamba njani na. Awusoze umve ekhupha isithuko ngomlomo wakhe kwaye awusoze umbone edikiwe okanye engatyhilekanga wayesoloko enoncuno onwabile ngalo lonke ixesha. Andizange ndithathe ixesha elide ukufunda ukubhala igama lam okanye ukufunda incwadi ngenxa yendlela eyohlukileyo afundisa ngayo, noxa ndingazange ndiye Crèche kodwa azange ndifike ndisokole ngenxa yake.

Andiyazi ukuba ndandingazange ndidibane naye ukuba ngendiyintoni kwaye ngendiphi ebomini, undifundisile indlela yokuziphatha kwakunye nendlela yokuphila apha kulo mhlaba umagada ahlabaya. Ndingulo mntu ndinguye namhlanje ngenxa yemfundiso zakhe, indlela endibaphatha ngayo abanye abantu ndiyifunde kuye kunye nendlela endiziphatha ngayo ndiyifundiswe kwanguye lo.

NTINGA NTAKA NDINI!



NTINGA NTAKA NDINI!!! INTAKA YAKHA NGOBOYA BENYE

UMBULELO OYA KU NKOSIKAZI LINDIWE SIKO OKWISIKOLO
/SIKHOKELO PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, KHAYELITSHA,
WESTERN CAPE, OSUKA KU NONCEBA H SIBARBOOI



A TRIBUTE TO MR MONGEZI SIGUDU OF COFIMVABA SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL, COFIMVABA, EASTERN CAPE, FROM AKHONA SOBEKWA

The teacher who inspired and motivated me to become a teacher was my high school English teacher, Mongezi Sigudu. He taught me in Grade 10 at Cofimvaba Senior Secondary School. At the time that he taught me, Mr Sigudu was very young: only 23 years old. In spite of his youth, he was very smart and already becoming successful; in short, he was what I always wanted to be. He motivated me and gave me hope and is still my inspiration today.

It was Mr S (as we called him) who made me realize that teaching is not about how much you earn, but about supporting and being there for your learners. What I admired most about him was that we could talk to him whenever we felt we were not coping academically. Almost as young as we were, he was a very good listener, supporting us and advising us on how to deal with our difficulties.

I hope to be like that for my learners once I have graduated and found a job. I want to support my learners in whatever they are going through, as Mr S inspired me to do and would want of me. If I can become successful like Mr S, I will be a much-respected teacher in the school and in my community and many learners will also be inspired by me. I would like to use my intelligence to be a good influence and a teacher who is always approachable.

I chose to study towards my B.Ed. because of Mr S's love for his work and the way he treated his learners at school. He dressed very neatly, always being presentable and wearing formal clothes during school hours. He had a very nice Polo Vivo car which he bought during his second year of teaching, when I was in Grade 11. He used to ask me to wash it for him. To me, Mr S was a mentor, a brother and a very supportive person. When I decided that I wanted to study teaching, he was the first person I told. He encouraged me not to listen to people who criticized teaching.

Being a foundation phase teacher was not something I had dreamt of. This was because I knew of scarcely any male foundation phase teachers when I was growing up and I thought that a foundation phase teacher's salary would not satisfy me. Now that I am studying foundation phase teaching, I am starting to develop an interest in it. My experiences with the learners I work with on teaching practice has made me see that teaching those children is a lot of fun and a sweet thing to do.

Mr S was a very smart thinker with a lot of creativity, a person who liked to socialize and share jokes with learners, engaging with every one of them. He was everything I want to be when I am successful: an inspiration and a role model. Thank you, Mr S, for supporting and advising me when I was at Cofimvaba Senior Secondary School. I am now fulfilling my dream of being a teacher because of your wise words, which are always in my mind to strengthen me.

**Young,
smart and
successful:
he aspired to
inspire**

**UMBULELO ONGAZENZISIYO KUTITSHALAKAZI WAM
OWAYE ENDIFUNDISA KWISIKOLO SAMABANGA APHE-
ZULU INJONGOZABANTU SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL,
UNKOSIKAZI ZOLEKA BONCO MAGADU uMAGATYENI
ISIDUKO PHAYA KUMHLABA WASE ZWELITSHA KWISITHILI
SASEQONCE eMPUMA KOLONI**

UNkosikazi Zoleka Bonco Magadu ngumfazi phakathi kwabanye abafazi, liliwa lokuphephela mhla ligqwithayo. Yintombi ekhanyayo ngokwebala waze wahonjiswa ngamabalana eentsumpana apha ebusweni, akamdanga kuyaphi kodwa noko ke usukile egadeni, iwuphiwe umzimba intombi noko engamkhulwanga kuyaphi. Imbonakalo yobuso bakhe yeyosana ikhatshwa luncumo olungazenzisiyo oludiza uthando nenkathalo. Ngumntu lo yintombi yakwaXhosa ubuhle bentliziyo yakhe ubuva esaqala ukuwuvula umlomo, ukusulungeka kwamazwi azakuwakhu-pha ngomlomo ukubona kwizinyo lakhe elitsho intliziyo ikhululeke. Ukuvelana kunye nokuthamba kwentliziyo yakhe ukubona mhla iinyembezi zinqumleza ubuso zijolise kwisolevu sakhe kucaca ukuba uyavelana nawe kwintlungu okuyo.

uNkosikazi Magadu lo uqale ukuba abengumntu endinako ukuthetha naye kwibanga lesithandathu kuba yayingutitshalakazi wesifundo ngobomi (Life Orientation) kwaye ndandiqala ukudibana naye kuba ndandiqalisa amabanga am aphezulu kwesisikolo wayefundisa kuso. Kwakucaca elubala ukuba ndingumntu okrelekrele owonwabileyo kwaye otyhilekileyo imihla yonke, unkosikazi Magadu lo waba ngumntu wokuqala ukuqaphela ukuba ikhona ingxaki endinayo emva kwenyanga ndingumfundi kwesi sikolo. Ngoko ke wazama ngandlela zonke ukufikelela kum ngezinye iimini andibize ndiyokumhlambela icephe okanye ndimkhelele amanzi. Kulapho ndaqaphela khona ukuba unkosikazi Magadu ngumzali engutitshala, kuba waye engapheleli eklasini ukuthetha nomntwana okanye umfundi koko wayeqinisekisa ukuba wonke umntwana uyayazi imeko yakhe.

UNKosikazi Magadu ebendixelela xa ndiphazama kwaye engandigxeki ezama ukundibonisa ukuba wonke umntu unazo iimpazamo kodwa lonto ayimtshintshi ukuba ngumntu naye kwaye xa uphazama ngamandla kukhona uya ufunda ngamandla. Ndisenza ibanga lesithandathu ndisemtsha eNjongozabantu, ndaye ndashiywa ngumakhulu wam endandihlala naye, kwintsuku zomngcwabo wakhe ndagqiba ekubeni ndingayi esikolweni iintsuku zalandlelana kwaye yazi veki. Ibe ziiveki ezimbini qwaba wathumelisa abafundi iphetshana elalinenombolo zomnxeba ebhalile kwelo phetshana ukuba ze ndimtsalele umnxeba xa ndifumene ithuba.

Ndalifumana ithuba ndamtsalela umnxeba, yayingathi ndivulele unomathotholo ndlela le waye thetha ngayo ephatha kundibalisela amabali ezinto adlule kuzo naye ekule minyaka yam, aphinde andibalisele ngendlela imfundo eyabutshintsha ngayo ubomi bakhe, loo nto yandenza ukuba ndiphindele esikolweni ukuze ndikwazi ukuzimela ebomini nam ndibutshintshe obam ubomi- kuyo yonke lonto waye ezama ukuba iingqondo zam zivuke emaqandeni ndibone ikamva ngaphaya kweenzingo endithi ndihlangane nazo apha ebomini. Yeyona nto ndayifundayo kulo mfazi wakwaMagadu ukuba noko kukubi nje kodwa likhona ikamva eliqaqambileyo elindilindeleyo ngaphesheya kweenzingo endidibana nazo kwaye nazo zimele ukundikhuthaza ngaphezu kokuba zindityhafisa amadolo.

Kuyo yonke le minyaka ndifundiswa kunkosikazi Magadu, ndiqaphela ukuba uyawuthanda umsebenzi wakhe kwaye akukho ndlela angakwazi ukuyisebenzisa ukujongana neengxaki athi azifumane emsebenzini wakhe. Eyonanto eyayibangela ukuba ndikhuthazeke ukuba nam ndibengutitshalakazi ngenye imini kukuba unkosikazi Magadu lo ebeye athi xa ndizalwa andithengele



INGXAKI MAZIKWAKHE ZINGAKUCHITHI

ikeyki kunye nencwadi ecaleni, incwadi ibiye ibeyeyesiXhosa kuba wayeqaphela ukuba ndiyasithanda isiXhosa. Ukufunda ke ezoncwadi ebeye andikhaphele ngasemva endibuza injani incwadi, ezama ukuqonda ukuba kumaxa ndindawoni ngokuyifunda. Kwimeko ezinjalo bendiye ndikhuthazeke kwaye ndikubawele ukufana naye ngenye imini kuba undenza ndinqwenele ukuba ngomnye wotitshala abazinikeleyo emsebenzini wabo ingakumbi ekukhuliseni nasekuhlohleni intsha yaseMzantsi Afrika ulwazi olungasoze luphuncukane nabo njengam. Ulwazi alufakileyo kum ebengenzeli ukuba kuthiwe iklasi yakhe iyaphunyelelwa ngabafundi koko ebesenzela ukuba into oyifundileyo ungumfundi weklasi yakhe ungaze uyiphuncule kwaye uyisebenzise kwizinto zobomi, abe namazwi awayethanda ukuwathetha xa singenzanga kakuhle kuvanyo athi “ezi zinto nizifundayo musani ukuzifundela ukuzilibala kuba zizo ezizakunivulela iindlela kobomi nisaya kubo”.

Ngokuba ndibe ngutitshala ndiyakuba kanti ndenza umbulelo kuye unkosikazi Magadu kwaye ndinika abantwana ubomi endabunikwa nguye.



’n TOEKENNING AAN MNR O JACOBS VAN PEARSTON SEKONDERE SKOOL, PEARSTON, OOS-KAAP, VANAF VALENCIA CASLING

As jy verdwaal het, het hy jou gekry. As jy jou visie verloor het, gee hy vir jou ’n nuwe een. Toe ek my hoerskool loopbaan as ’n jong bang meisiekind met geen rigting begin het, het hy my hand vasgehou en my laat glo dat ek kan. Alhoewel hy ’n jonk onderwyser was, het ons hom as ’n vader gesien, omdat hy ons inspireer en motiveer het. Ek sien hom as die lig in ons donker akademiese wereld.

Mnr J het altyd die dag begin met ’n grap of twee, om ’n vriendelike atmosfeer te skep. Die man was geduldig, altyd ondersteunend, netjies en stiptelik. ’n Man met ’n natuurlik groot liggaamsbou en groot bree hande was ons goeie Samaritaan.

Die ou gekraakte geel gebou van Pearston Sekonder, die plek waar alles snaaks en skandelik gebeur het, wou geen ouer hul kinders na toe stuur nie, maar dit was al wat sommige van ons oorgehad het. ’n Ou gebou wat besig was om inmekaar te val het ons die geleentheid gegee op onderwys. Met ’n onderwyser soos Mnr J was skool ’n plesier. Mnr Jacobs was aangestel by ons skool nadat ons ’n jaar sonder ’n onderwyser gesit het. Hy was ons Besigheidsstudies onderwyser en ons persoonlike sielkundige; enigeeen was welkom om hul sorg en laste op hom te gaan plaas. Hy was ons onderwyser, ons pa, ons vriend; hy was ons alles. Besigheidsstudies was onder normale omstandighede baie werk, maar ons het nooit gekla nie omdat ons elke oomblik van die vak geniet het. Mnr J was baie gebasseer op netheid en kreatiwiteit. Hy sou altyd se, “Die is ’n vak waar jy kreatief moet wees, en oorspronklikheid tel baie.” Sodra hy sien jy het geen kleur in jou boek nie, sê hy altyd, “My kind, hoekom is jou lewe so vaal? Praat met meneer, wat gaan aan?”

Soggens as ons bymekaar kom vir die byeenkoms, sing meneer altyd die hardste, want dis hoe hy sy God verheerlik, met sang. Ek onthou nog hoe kwaad hy geword het as een van ons begin giggel het. Hy sou jou naam uitroep en jou in die verleentheid stel, want volgens hom disrespek jy Onse Vader.

“My kind, jy gaan want jy kan. Al sê mense wat, ek weet hier is goeie kinders en goeie produkte kan hier uitkom!” Dit was die geloof en vertroue wat hy in ons gehad het. Besigheidsstudies was nie een van die maklikste klasse nie, maar die klas was altyd propvol. Almal het gevoel hulle tel vir iets; hy het ons almal spesiaal laat voel. Mnr J. het nooit na ons verwys as leerders nie, maar as sy eie kinders. Glo dit of nie, sy klas was die snaakse, maar dieselfde klas was die een waar ons die beste presteer het.

Mnr J was die beste onderwyser wat Pearston Sekondere skool al ooit gehad het. Toe meneer daar aankom en homself voorstel, kon ek daar en dan sien dat hier gaan ons werk laat die bessies bewe. Ons het nooit ’n af dag by hom gehad nie, ons moes net werk, werk en meer werk. Hy het elke Vrydag met sy nuwe kar skool toe gekom en dan het hy na skool die hardste musiek gespeel. Dan kon leerders net dans en vrolik wees.

Mnr Jacobs het buite die klaskamer ’n baie ernstige voorkoms maar hy was die gemaklikste persoon om rondom te wees; hy sou altyd na ons ouers en persoonlike lewens vra; hy het altyd belangstelling getoon.

Elke kwartaal het hy die top leerders se name in sy klas opgesit en ons motiveer om te verbeter. Hy sou vir ons elkeen ’n klein aanmoedigings present gee. Hy was ons beste dryfkrag. Hy was vir ons die lig!

Die lig in ons donker lewens

Utitshalakazi uMabala yinzwakazi eyaziwa kakhulu kwisithili saseCacadu ngokuwuthanda kwayo umsebenzi wakhe omhle. Ufundise kwisikolo samabanga aphezulu iTambekile CHS esikwilali yakuNdonga. Ubebizwa ngegama elithi 'Gogo'. Eli gama belibonakalisa ubudala bakhe kwaye ligxininisa nento ethi uqale wafundisa abazali bethu phambi kokuba abe ufundise thina. UGogo ubengomnye wootitshala ebesele bebala intsukwana badle umhlala phantsi kwaye enamava kwesiskolo.

UGogo ubefundisa izifundo zeSayensi yezoBomi (Life Sciences). Undifundise ezi zifundo kwibanga leshumi elinanye de ndenza ibanga leshumi elinesibini. UGogo ubengaphozisi maseko ngexa ekuthe kwafuneka ngalo ukuba abesegumbini lokufundisa kwaye bekunqabile ukuba afane angaphangeli.

Yangathi ndiyambona xa ejije lomilenze yakhe igoso ngenxa yezigweqe ethe chu ukusingisa egumbini lokufundela. Intokazi enoncumo olungapheliyo, ithi yakuthi gqi kubekho ababaleka baye kuzimela ematyhloweni kuba besithi lo mama uyathanda ukufundisa. Phofu ke bengaxoki.

Ngexa esithe asabinamhlohi wezezibalo, uGogo wakwazi ukuba asihlanganise singabafundi, wasifundisa ukuba akunyanzelekanga kume ititshala phambi kwethu ukuze sibe siyafunda. Emva koko zakwazi ukunyuka iziphumo zethu zezibalo kunenqanaba ezazikade zibakulo. Ubengumntu othi amane esikhuthaza ukuba masikholelwe ekubeni sinako ukwenza ngcono ngawo onke amaxa.

UGogo ubethi xa efundisa axolele usheka ngasemva lo gama abanye ootitshala behamba kuba kufikelele ixesha lokuba baye emakhaya. Ubezama ngandlela zonke ukuba abandakanye bonke abafundi bakhe xa efundisa. Imizekelo ebethi ayisebenzise ibiyeyezinto esikwaziyo ukuthi sizibone. Amava esinawo nawo ebeguquka abe yimizekelo kulo nto siyifundayo.

Akusiyoncwadi kuphela athe wasifundisa yona. Lo mama usifundisile uthando, ucoceko, inkathalo waqwela ngokusifundisa ukuba sithi xa sisebenza umsebenzi sizinikele. UGogo ubengumntu okhathalayo ngomntwana amfundisayo, de kunge ngathi ungumzali womntwana lowo. Ezi zinto zenze ukuba ndimbone engumntu ofundisa ukuziphatha ngohlobo olundilisekileyo.

Linenekazi eliyithandayo impumelelo yomntwana wesikolo. Kangangokuba ekhathala uGogo ubede asicenge ukuba sifunde iincwadi zethu. Ukusicenga kwakhe bikoku kuthi, "fundani iincwadi zenu, uphela konyaka lowo uthe wafumana amanqaku angaphaya kwamashumi asibhozo ndakumwonga ngembasa". Lo mbasa ke ibiye ibeyimali. Kum le mbasa ibifana nenkuthazo khon'ukuze ndenze kakuhle ngawo onke amaxa. Besiyilwela ke le mbasa, elowo nalowo esebenzela ukuba ibenguye intshatsheli.

UGogo undenze ndazibona ndifaneleke kukuba ndilandele ikhondo lokubangutitshala, nangona yena ebesithi ubona ugqirha kum. Izinto endithe ndanethamsanqa lokuba ndizizuze kuye, ndinqwenela ukuba nam ndikwazi ukuzigqithisa kwisizukulwana esilandelayo. Isizukulwana esizonqwenela ukuba nomhlohi okhathalayo, umhlohi ozakuthi ehlohla ulwazi, abuye afundise umntwana indlela yokuthi aziphathe, kungakhange kubekho ubulalekayo phakathi kwabo.

Ndibulela kakhulu ngegalelo elihle athe wanalo uGogo ebomini bam. Namhlanje ndenza izifundo zam zobutitshala kwiziko lemfundo ephakamileyo, iRhodes University. Ndilapha nje ziimfundiso zakhe ezingenakho ukulinganiswa nayo nayiphi na into. Ukanti ndikwathemba njalo ukuba usezakubona oko athe wakutyalala kuthi xa kufikelela ixesha lokuba akuvune. Enkosi Diba elihle.



Ndandicinga nguGogo, kanti yititshala

UMBULELO OYA KU NKOSIKAZI U NONKOLISEKO MABALA NOBEFUNDISA KWISIKOLO ITAMBEKILE COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOL, KUMHLABA WAKUNDONGA, KWISITHILI SASECACADU EMPUMA-KAPA USUKA KU MDUMISENI CHRISTOPHER NGCOZANA

Going beyond the call of duty



A TRIBUTE TO MS LANCASTER OF GADRA MATRIC SCHOOL, GRAHAMSTOWN, EASTERN CAPE, FROM YAMKELANI PEACOCK

I remember how Ms Lancaster would stand outside her office door at the beginning of each lesson, just so that she could spot any late comers. Her office was near the entrance, so if you were late, she was the first person to see you. Some days I would be on time, but whenever I stopped to greet her I would be late for class, because every greeting turned into a life lesson conversation and she would repeat herself over and over. Ms Lancaster is an elderly woman who has dedicated 20 years of her life to Gadra Matric School as its principal. Gadra Matric School is an independent school for Grade 12 repeaters looking to upgrade their National Senior Certificate results.

Ms Lancaster had the true marks of a leader. She was a mother to most of us as, we were away from home for the first time. I first met her when I went for an interview. I thought the interview would be formal and the air would be so heavy for me to breathe, but to my surprise it was more of an opportunity to motivate me and show me support. Ms Lancaster was my role model, because she proved that a woman can also lead an institution and produce consistently good results. She also had a genuine humility, referring to herself as a coordinator and not as the principal.

Ms Lancaster's office door was always open for a chat and whenever you went in there, even if your visit was not school-related, the red book would be brought out so that, together with her, you could compare your previous year's results with your current term marks and try come up with ways of improving your marks. Ms Lancaster believed that the devil found work for idle hands to do, so instead of having free time, we were encouraged to engage in activities such as Creative Writing or knitting.

For most of the 2017 year I felt academically inferior because I was repeating Grade 12 and most of my friends had started university studies, but Ms Lancaster always reminded me that in spite of the hurt I was feeling, I would someday realise that my struggles had changed things for the better; sometimes it is good to have hiccups in life because they make you a stronger and better person.

Before I went to Gadra, I had never wanted to be a teacher but now I want to make the same difference to others that Ms Lancaster made to me. I want to be a teacher in order to help improve the quality of education in South Africa, just as Gadra was trying to fix some of the problems in our country's education system. I have realised that the most important years of a child's schooling years are the foundation phase years. I understand that there is a lot of work to be done, but the collective effort of thousands of dedicated teachers can make a difference.

It is not every day in life that you get a chance to prove yourself for the second time, but Gadra gave me that opportunity. Thank you to Ms Lancaster and staff at Gadra Matric School for helping me to realise my true potential and for opening the doors of higher education to me. Today I'm a student at Rhodes University, something I never dreamed of. May the school continue to make a positive change in the lives of South African youth. Ms L, you are my guardian Angel.

An Angel sent to open doors

A TRIBUTE TO MRS TESSA KIRKALDY, GADRA MATRIC SCHOOL, GRAHAMSTOWN, EASTERN CAPE, FROM THEMBANI BUKA

A good teacher can inspire hope, ignite the imagination, and instil a love of learning. That was exactly what Mrs Tessa Kirkaldy did for me. A very ingenious woman, tall, with short blonde hair and a bright smile that awakens the heart to long for more. She wore very simple clothes and comfortable shoes that enabled her to jump from one corner to another with perseverance and passion to serve her learners, making sure that they understood the content she was dealing with. She taught Maths Literacy at Gadra Matric School, one of the best upgrading schools in Grahamstown. We learned so effortlessly; sometimes she would buy materials (e.g. number games, measurements) to do practical tasks in class, something I had never before experienced in my days of schooling.

I was a quiet person in class, but something she said to me, "You are doing well, Thembanii! Keep it up!" made me so intrigued with learning, that it enabled me to see beyond the basic facts being taught. Her classes started at 7h45 every day. I always arrived 15 minutes before class started, having walked 10km from home to school every morning. Every time we were in the classroom together, it felt like home. She created a very comfortable vibe in class, that moulded my inner self. She made sure that I felt part of everything that happened in class and never doubted myself because of where I came from or what I did not have.

Her classroom was small, but it was full of significance, as the walls were covered with the names of top achievers (including me!) so that it represented the standard of hard work we always maintained. We were always battling for our names to be on the list, but she cautioned us, "Take a close look at how you began your journey: tackle the subject at your own time and pace". Today I realise how my character has been shaped by Mrs Kirkaldy, for my continuing journey through life. She set up afternoon classes to help those who did not understand in class, and I attended one of those classes one day, just to observe. By involving me in helping others, she drew me nearer and nearer to this amazing life of a teacher. She brought thorough preparation and creativity to her bold teaching style, coming up with many ways of solving problems without using a calculator. She made teaching a very noble profession.

Moreover, there came a time where she started involving learners in conversations concerning our circumstances back at home. I was astonished to find that she had love to offer as well as Maths Literacy. Not only was she fascinated by our stories, she helped learners who were unable to eat before coming to school. I was fortunate to be one of those. I remember the time when she sneaked in between lectures to give me food to take home. She would say, "I wish I could do more" and I replied, "This is a privilege for me; it is quite sufficient; you are already doing a lot for me in class". Her love, drive, passion and the constant push contributed to my decision to become a teacher.

Today I am a warrior, full of fruitful motives and the desire to make time for people needing help. I am grateful for all your work in building my life, Mrs Kirkaldy. Within you there is a spark of joy that waits to serve and longs to see people happy. Thank you for shaping me to enter the alluring environment of teaching, where I can help people to learn, with vision.



**She made
teaching
a noble
profession
that shapes
character**



***A TRIBUTE TO MR RANGULA OF NTSIKA SENIOR
SECONDARY SCHOOL, GRAHAMSTOWN, EASTERN CAPE,
FROM MNONELELI DINGISWAYO***

My best teacher's name was Mr Rangula. He taught me English at Ntsika Senior Secondary School, a dusty school with broken windows in the middle of a Grahamstown township. The school did not have ideal facilities such as computers and a science laboratory and classes were large, mine having 52 learners.

Mr Rangula was skinny and tall and his hands were disabled, having thumbs but no fingers. He was approachable and liked sharing jokes; you would never find him in a bad mood. He was not the best dressed teacher at school, but he had a very good heart. He was like a parent to every child in his class; it was easy for me to call on him for assistance.

I remember one day when I was supposed to play in a soccer match. I was in the starting lineup of the under 16A team and we were due to play one of the best soccer schools in Grahamstown, but was left behind by the school transport because my last class had not yet ended. I cried, because I loved playing soccer very much. Mr Rangula saw me crying and asked what was wrong. When I told him my problem and that I had no transport money to go to the stadium, he smiled and gave me a hug, saying that everything would be okay. Although I was extremely dusty - especially my shoes, given that at lunch break I had played soccer with my friends - this did not deter Mr Rangula from giving me a lift. His main focus was getting me to the game on time. I will never forget his generosity at that moment.

Mr Rangula was an excellent English teacher, always advising us - and at one time making it compulsory - to speak English in his classroom, so that we could become fluent. I was a talkative person, but in English class I would not talk at all, for I really struggled with English. Seeing our struggles, Mr Rangula organized extra classes for us after school. I was one of the few learners who attended these classes.

Mr Rangula used to say, 'In order for you to gain knowledge, you must listen.' That stuck in my mind, since I had the habit of ignoring people who were speaking English and paying no attention to what they were saying. I then started to listen when people spoke, which improved my understanding of the language.

Our teacher encouraged us to speak English even in the playground, so I started speaking English when my friends and I played soccer. They started to call me names like, 'Cheez-boy', but that did not discourage me because of my teacher's lessons and his constant encouragement. My English improved until I was able to communicate and managed to pass the subject. I was content with D's and C's because I knew how bad I had once been, and there came a time when my English marks were higher than those of my other subjects.

Mr Rangula's support made a great contribution to my life; I think of him as a parent, there for me in times of need. I wish I had a chance to express my gratitude to him, but I understand that his spirit has already left this world. His wise words and advice contributed to my wish to become a teacher, to work towards the same vision which he had. I believe if I can mentor and support my learners as he did, I will be showing my gratitude, and giving back the love I received from my great teacher. Perhaps I can become a great teacher too.

Whether in English or soccer, he went the extra mile for me

UMBULELO OYA KU NKOSIKAZI MATYOLWENI WAYENDI-FUNDISA E C.M VELLEM HEALTHY PROMOTING SCHOOL (ISIKOLO ESINOPHULO LOKUPHUCULA IMPILO) APHA E MAKHANDA, EASTERN CAPE, USUKA KU ANELISA JULY

Utitshalakazi wam, Mrs Matyolweni, ndidibene naye kwisikolo endandifunda kuso amabanga am aphantsi iC.M Vellem Primary School, endifundisa ulwimi lwesiNgesi. UMrs Matyolweni ibingu titshalakazi omfutshane ngokwesithomo, eyonanto ndiyikhumbulayo ngaye yalivumba lakhe xa endigonile ndimphalazela intlungu zam. Ebengumzali kum ngoba bendibonisa uthando endithatha njengomntwana wakhe. Bendisonwaba kakhulu xa ndisiya kwigumbi lakhe lokufundela kuba bendisazi nokuba bendikhe ndakhubeka ngalo mini izokuphela yonke lonto. Xa efundisa befundisa ngendlela efanelekiyelo ebonakala ukuba uyayiphila lento ayenzayo yokuba ngutitshala.

uMrs Matyolweni ebe yeyona titshalakazi yam eyayibalasele kuba wathatha isigqibo sokuba ayondicela kubazali bam ukuba ndiyohlala naye kuba wayeyibona imeko yasekhaya. Baye bavumelelana ke nabazali bam kuba nabo bendinqwenelela konke okuhle ebomini bam babona iyeyonanto ililungileyo into yokuba ndiyokuhlala no Mrs Matyolweni. Kulapho ndambona khona uMrs Matyolweni ukuba ungumtu onothando noyaziyo ukuba umtu ngumtu ngabantu.

Ndathi ukufika kwam endlini ka Mrs Matyolweni ndandiziva ingathi ndithatha indawo yabantwana bakhe kodwa zange yenzeke lonto kuba nabo abantwana bakhe yayingabantu abalungileyo kucaca ukuba baphuma kwikhaya elinemithetho elungileyo. Njengokuba ndingumntu onentloni ndandisoyika ukuzenzela into endiyifunayo, kodwa waye wandibona ukuba ndizibambile wahlala nam wandixelela ukuba mandikhululeke ndisekhaya. Uthando nengxaso owandibonisa lona lalingumangalisayo yayingathi ndiyaphupha okanye ndiyaboniswa kuba ndandingayikholelwa lento yenzekayo. Wayendincedisayo xa ndinemisebenzi yasekhayeni endixhasa endibonisa uthando olo ndandilufumana kumzali wam.

Ukukhula kwam ndandifuna ukuba ngunontlalonle kuba ndifuna ukunceda abantwana abasokolayo nabangathathi ntweni bangazifumani ezazinto ndazifumanayo ekukhuleni kwam. Ndathi ndokufika kwibanga leshumi ndabona indlela ezinqongophele ngayo ititshala apha eMzantsi Afrika ndagqiba ekubeni ndibe ngutitshalakazi kuba nabo buyelelene kubunontlalonle kuba zombini zisebenza ngabantwana. Ndaye ndahamba ndayokubona uMrs Matyolweni ndamxelela isigqibo sam sokuba ndifune ukufundela ukuba ngutitshalakazi, wandixhasa esithi ukuba yinto endifuna ukuyenza kwaye ndizimisele ekwenzeni yona mandiyenze into ethandwa yintliziyo yam. Wavuya kakhulu akuva ukuba basekhona abantu abafuna ukuba ngotitshala naxa ndisithi ndifuna ukufana naye ndabona olwancumo lwakhe luhle luthandekayo. Uthando nenceba endalifunda kulo mama yenye yenzinto ezandenza ukuba ndikhethe ukufundela ukutitshala. Ndingqwenela ukuba ngutitshalakazi ofana no Mrs Matyolweni, ndibe ngutitshalakazi onobuntu!



INTAKA YAKHA NGOBOYA BENYE



A TRIBUTE TO THE LATE MRS MDAKA, NATHANIEL NYALUZA SECONDARY SCHOOL, GRAHAMSTOWN, EASTERN CAPE, FROM NOLUBABALO MANYATI

In 2003, I went to Nathaniel Nyaluza Secondary, a Xhosa medium school, to start my Grade 11, having been up until then in a multiracial school where I studied English as a first language. It was the worst challenge I have ever encountered: I had to study isiXhosa as a first language, not being able to read or write it at all. My classmates would tease me for not knowing my own language, for the way I pronounced words; I would be called a coconut and a fake. Then came a light at the end of the tunnel: Mrs Mdaka, our Xhosa teacher for my remaining two years of schooling.

Mrs Mdaka was a short lady and a style diva, known for her quality, expensive clothes. She was a parent, caring and understanding, going overboard to see that I understood her lessons. She used to group us and give us tasks, constantly reminding my classmates that school is a place of learning. She reminded me that if I had known everything about isiXhosa, there would have been no point in coming to school. I was too afraid to answer in class, but she used to ask me my views about a topic, wanting to build my confidence and give me a “voice”.

In helping me to reach my goal, Mrs Mdaka mentored me every afternoon, at her home. She started with the basics of isiXhosa and gave me books to read in order to increase my vocabulary. She would ask me oral questions about the book, then require a written reflection on it and give me feedback.

I passed isiXhosa, right up to Matric. Surprisingly to me, I surpassed learners who had studied isiXhosa for the whole of their schooling, some of whom failed. My pride and confidence grew.

This experience motivated me to become a teacher. It became my passion to explain the work we were doing to my peers. I found that the presentations we did at school and the debating club that I belonged to had trained me to talk freely in front of others. Hence, at various of my workplaces, namely Old Mutual, Standard Bank and Nedbank, I was the best sales person.

But I realised that there were children who suffer from low self-esteem because of teachers who put no effort into reaching out to them. I wanted to change that. Mrs Mdaka played a role in this dream because of her humanity, kindness, generosity and tireless explanations. I want to be like her, to motivate, inspire and to equip the children of tomorrow with knowledge. I want to be the reason learners never give up on their dreams. I want to involve parents in the education of their children and work to eliminate absenteeism, which is a root of poor performance. It is because of this dream that I resigned my job to start living a life of change in our less fortunate schools. It is rather unfortunate that as I was beginning to implement this dream, I heard that Mrs Mdaka had passed away.

If I could cross over to heaven for five minutes, I would say: “I thank you Ma’am. You have indeed served your purpose in life. In many homes, including mine, you have instilled hope, a positive mentality and the belief that everything is possible. In future years, you will remain in my heart. Cheers to a heroine, a star, an educator, a parent, a friend, a shoulder to cry on and most of all, my Best Teacher!!!!”

A light at the end of the tunnel

**UMBULELO OYA KU NKOSIKAZI NOSISEKO KHONDLO OK-
WISIKOLO I ST MARY'S PRIMARY ESISENYANGA ENYE
YENGINGQI EZIKWISIXEKO SASEKAPA ESUKA
KU AKHONA GIGABA**

Kwakungonyaka ka-2006 ndisenza ibanga lokuqala kwisikolo esikwiningqi encinci iNyanga ekwiSixeko saseKapa, isikolo esibizwa ngokuba yi-St Mary's Catholic Primary School nalapho ndadibana khona noNkosikazi Nosiseko Khondlo. Umama ontsundu ngebala, omile kakuhle ekwanalo nethanjana. Kukho konke oko enoncumo, uncumo olwalungenasuku lutheni na, lwaluhleli lukhona ntsuku zonke. Umntu owayenentetho ephantsi, owawungasoze umve ethethela phezu ngenxa yokuzola nobubele bakhe. Lo mama wayefundisa kwibanga lesithathu engandifundisi mna, ukudibana kwam naye kwenzeka mhla ndalahla ubhaka wam. Lo bhaka kwafumaniseka ukuba ubiwe ngamakhwenkwe ayekumabanga aphezulu, umkhuba lo babewufunde kwiziganeko ezazisenzeka kwiningqi leyo esasihlala kuyo. INyanga yayidumile ngobundlobongela ngoko ke ifuthe lokwenza lomkhuba ayelufumana apho becinga yinto ebalulekileyo leyo. Ngalemini ndandikhala ndisoyika ukugoduka waze unkosikazi Khondlo wandihlangula ngokundigodusa ayochaza ekhaya ukuba ndiwulahlile ubhaka wam wesikolo. Ngokwenza oko kwaye kwalula kakhulu kum kuba nabazali bam baye baxola xa besiva ibali lichazwa ngutitshalakazi wam endixolisela nokundixolisela kubo.

Baqala apho ke ubudlelwana bam nonkosikazi Khondlo. Ukusukela lomini wangumama, wangumhlobo, wangutitshalakazi wanguye nodade kum. Imini yayingapheli engandibizelanga kwigumbi lakhe lokufundela andibuze impilo. Yayiba luvuyo nje kum xa kusenzeka lento kuba kaloku ndandifumana uthando nemfudumalo kulomama. Xandikunye naye kwakubangathi yonke into igqityiwe. Uthando awayendinika lona lwalungummangalis. Ngelaxesha akhonto ndandiyazi ngothando kodwa kwakucaca ukuba ndifumana undoqo wothando. Ngendlela endandonwabe ngayo kwakungekho nanye imini endandifuna indiphose ndingabikho esikolweni.

Iye yadlula ke iminyaka ndade ndafika kwibakala lesithathu. Ngethamsanqa ndakwigumbi lika nkosikazi uKhondlo. Yayimnandi ke kum lonto kuba kaloku ndandiza kufundiswa nguye lonto yayithetha ukuba ndizokuchitha ixesha elininzi kunye naye. Ekufundisweni nguNkosikazi Khondlo ndaqaphela into yokuba kwigumbi lakhe lokufundela inqabile into yokufumana umntwana okhubekileyo. Wonke umntwana ebekhluleka onwabe kwaye bekungekho nto ikhathazayo. Lento yayingenziwa kukuba wayengasigwebi, hayi wayesigweba xa sonile kodwa lonto yayingasiniki zizathu zokuba sikhathazeke kuba sasiyiqonda into yokuba xa wonile uyagwetywa. uNkosikazi Khondlo kwaye wayengenacalucalulo. Wonke umfundi wayelingana emehlweni akhe. Wayesiphatha ngokufanayo nangendlela elinganayo. Kwakubamnandi kwigumbi lakhe sasikhululeka, sidlale kodwa singayekanga ukwenza umsebenzi wesikolo. Indlela ekwakumnandi ngayo kwigumbi lakhe wayede asenzele itheko elincinci xa kuphela ikota, athenge ikeyiki nezinye izimuncumuncu.

Unkosikazi Khondlo wayendithanda kangendlela yokuba abanye abafundi babesele besithi ndingumntwana wakhe. Zininzi izinto andifundise zona. Okukuqala njengoko isikolo sethu yayisisikolo esiphantsi kwecawa yamaRoma. NgoLwezihlanu sasiya enkonzweni rhoqo. NgeMivulo sasibanemithandazo xa kusando kungena isikolo. UNkosikazi Khondlo wayengumququzeleli kwicala lokuya ecaweni. Wayeyithanda inkonzo, engumntu omoyikayo uThixo. Ecaweni wayesifundisa ukuthandaza, ukucula kwakunye nokushumayela.



Isikhukhukazi!

Ndikhumbula ngomhla owathi kum mandifunde iculu kumaculo ase wisile, elo culo libengumsimelelo wam. Eyona nto awayendifundisa yona nguThixo. Wandifundisa ukuba endleleni zizobakhona izilingo kodwa kuyafuneka ukuba ndibenento endizongqiyama ngayo, lonto nguThixo. Namhlanje ndomelele kwaye ndiyalazi ilizwi likaThixo kuba wandingcambazisa ngalo.

Namhlanje ndingulomntu ndinguye ngenxa yakhe. Namhlanje ndifundela ubutitshala ngenxa yokuba nam ndibonile ukuba xa ungutitshalakazi unika umfundi ithemba kwakunye nekamva eliqaqambileyo. Umama uKhondlo undibonise ukuba xa ungutitshalakazi wenza umsebenzi wakho ngokuwuthanda nangenkuthalo. Undibonise ukuba ubutitshala ayikokufundisa kuphela koko kukwakha umfundi, kukuthanda umfundi, kukubangumzali kumfundi kwaye kukubangumhlobo kumfundi. Namhlanje ndifuna ukuba kwiminyaka ezayo ndibengutitshalakazi onjengonkosikazi uKhondlo. Utitshalakazi othembekileyo nonembeko ebafundini. Ndibengutitshalakazi ozobangumzekelo oncomekayo ebafundini. Kuba kaloku kutshiwo ukuba abafundi bafunda lomntu unguye kunalento uyifundisayo. Nam ndiyayingqina lonto kuba nangona ndingazikhumbuli zonke izinto awandifundisa zona umama uKhondlo ndifundile ukuba nguye. Ndiyabulela maRhadebe, maShwabada Ndlebe-ntle zombini ngomsebenzi owenzileyo kwindlela ende endiyihambileyo ungadinwa ndim.



**A TRIBUTE TO MS N NQEZO OF LUTSHAYA JUNIOR
SECONDARY SCHOOL, LUSIKISIKI, EASTERN CAPE,
FROM MKHWEDINI NTUTHUKO**

Ms Nqezo was a slender, good-looking teacher, who dressed formally from Monday to Thursday and then casually on Fridays. She taught Social Sciences from Grades 4 to 6 and was a dedicated teacher. She treated us like her biological children, very kind and cordial, but not allowing us to take advantage of her kindness by failing to submit our work on time or playing during the lesson.

Our school in Lusikisiki had no library or computers and it was hard to find information when you were given an assignment. In spite of this, she made it a decent and fun place to be. When the cold air came through broken windows in winter, her motivations made the air warmer. She made us keen to attend school every day, saying, “*Xa uzixelela ukuba unako, unako kwaye unokuphumelela ebomini*”: “If you think you can, you can be successful in life”.

From the time that we were young, Ms Nqezo used very easy and effective strategies to teach us. Once she had taught us, I did not have to study Social Sciences again at home; we were very clear about the lesson of each day. She believed that all learners have the ability to be successful despite their backgrounds. If only they can work hard, they can succeed in making their dreams come true. She understood that children develop at different rates and that every learner is different in terms of understanding, because of different abilities and aptitudes. When some of my classmates could not comprehend what she was teaching us, she would adopt different approaches or methods and even repeat the information over and over again until everyone understood it.

I was so inspired by her personality and the way she conducted herself that I fell in love with teaching. She used techniques that served every learner’s abilities and everyone felt valuable and loved. She made me feel that teaching could bring me closer to helping future lawyers, engineers and teachers; that teaching someone could give you the best feeling ever. She treated her learners equally, no matter their backgrounds, or whether they were weak or brilliant. Ms Nqezo was an inspiration to me and set me on the path of becoming a teacher.

I always felt that I needed someone to lead me in the right direction and influence me to be the best; that person was Ms Nqezo. She went beyond the educational syllabus that it was her duty to teach me and taught me life. She played a significant role in my life at the time when I had no dreams. Once I met her, the course of my life changed forever in a positive direction and now I have a goal in life.

Because of you, Ms Nqezo, I have come to love teaching; you gave me strength when I needed to take the next step toward my dream of becoming a teacher. I am so grateful to you for emboldening me and motivating me, even though you were not aware that you were building someone. Your positivity and encouragement brought me to where I am today. You made me a better, more thoughtful and more responsible person. You helped me to see the good qualities in myself and to realize that I could be more. Thank you for your patience throughout the intermediate phase of my schooling and for molding me into the person I am today. You are the best teacher ever.

If you **think**
you can,
you can be
successful
in life

UMBULELO OYA KU**NKOSIKAZI XOLISWA LUNGILE RALO**
OKWISIKOLO INTSIKA, ISIKOLO SAMABANGA APHAKAMI-
LEYO, MAKHANDA, EASTERN CAPE, USUKA
KU**THANDOKAZI TSHUNUNGWA**

Utitshala wam yinzwakazi ekhanyayo ngokwebala, inzwakazi emfutshane futhi enomzimba. Unomkhitha ke umntwana wakwaLungile. Ndichithe iminyaka emihlanu kwisikolo eso afundisa kuso nesaziwa njenge Ntsika, isikolo samabanga aphakamileyo. Ngelishesha ndiye ndaqaphela ntonye ngaye nto leyo iyintloko yakhe nebihlelinje izinwele zakhe zendalo. Ebene ntanyongo zamehlo umntwana 'omntu, ubusithi xa ugeza ekllassini azinyuse okwi ngathi zizakuwa umve esithi "uzungandiqali ngoba andizelwanga izolo". Kule minyaka ndiye ndachola umzali, umama onobulali, umntu apha ongadinwayo nokuba sele umlibazisa kanganani na kulento ayifundisayo ngoba inzondelelo yakhe ibikukusibona siphumelela. Ndithethwa ngoXoliswa Lungile Ralo.

Le nzwakazi ibisithi xa isingxolisa njengabafundi abe nendawo angayishiyiyo athi "mna andizalwanga ndingu mem Ralo ndizalwe ndingu ndiyintombi yakwa Ralo uXoliswa igama" besiyihleka sonke ekllassini kodwa mna kula ,mazwi ale nzwakazi ndaye ndafumanisa ukuba kukho intsingiselo ephilakeleyo. Yona onokuthi ukuba unokuyifumanisa uzibone sowulangazelela ukuphumelela ebomini. Bendimthandela ubuzali, ukukwazi uncama ixesha lakhe nabantwana bakhe avuke ngenja ixukuxa ukuqaqambisa ikamva labanxanelwe impumelelo. Ebede avuke nokuba akukho sikolo xa ebona ukuba intloya ijinga ngaphezulu athi bantwana bam ayikabiyiyo umve esithi ndifuna xa nibhala uviwo nibe nombono wam ndimi phambi kwenu. Umsebenzi wakhe uwuthande wade wagqithisela, wade wazilibala nobunguye umntwana ka Ralo.

Nkosikazi Ralo mzali, sihlobo ndiyabulela ngenkathalo othe wanayo kuthi njengabafundi bakho, ndiyabulelo ngegalelo nendima othe wayidlala ukuba siphumelele. Kodwa eyona nto ndiyibulela ngokungazenzisiyo lixesha lakho othe walincama ulincamela abantwana bebengeva njengathi. Ndibulela amazwi akho uzinqwanqwada usibonisa indlela esixabiseke ngayo kuwe njengo titshala, akhonto imnandi nesiqubela phambili njengothando nenkuthalo yakho. Enkosi Nobulali Wam.



UNOBULALI



A TRIBUTE TO MS BUSI MAVUSO, A FORMER TEACHER AT VICTORIA GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL, GRAHAMSTOWN, EASTERN CAPE, FROM DANIELLE WALKER

On the 28th of August 2015, we sat huddled in our register classes waiting for attendance to be taken. It was a chilly morning at Victoria Girls High School, a well-established ex-Model C School with a red brick exterior and a cold hospital-green interior, situated close to Rhodes University in Grahamstown. Our class, Grade 11T, was usually quite easy to settle, but this morning was different; there was a sense of unease amongst the members of the class and a fair amount of whispered muttering. I quickly picked up that the uneasiness concerned me and was clueless as to why.

I felt uncomfortable but looked forward to the next lesson with my favourite teacher, Ms Mavuso. She was a beautiful person, both inside and out. Her makeup was minimal and her outfits well-coordinated, but her bubbly personality pointed to a deeper beauty. Ms Mavuso taught us from day one that average was not acceptable; we were all capable of the highest possible marks. Signs of her interest in every one of us were the box of tissues in front of her desk and the accompanying cushioned chair if we ever needed "a good cry". This caring nature left a lasting impression on me and is something I wish to carry with me in my teaching endeavors.

An incredible History lesson with Ms Mavuso made me forget completely about the cold glances and mutters. But as I walked out of her bright yellow classroom and into the busy quad, I was met by a glass of water in my face and a, "Now you know what it feels like".

Confused and humiliated, I ran to the nearest bathroom to gather myself. My friends, hesitant at first, let me in on the scandal. There had been many student protests during 2015, on Rhodes University campus, due to the "Fees must fall" movement. A student activist had posted a video titled "Apartheid 2015", in which a man threw water in a student's face. This man had been mistaken for my father, an academic at the university. I broke down, unaware of whether the man in the video was in fact my father and if it was, why he would do something as racist, vile and disrespectful as this.

Ms Mavuso, walking to her tea break, pulled me aside, demanding to know what the problem was. Sensing that I was uncomfortable speaking in front of people, she placed her comforting arms around me and ushered me safely into her classroom. Placing the almost empty box of tissues in front of me, she waited for me to speak. She did not make me feel silly for crying or for being afraid, but took it upon herself to watch the video. She then informed me that the man who had been rumored to be my father was not him. This act of watching the video without me saved me from a lot of trauma. She held me close and I honestly felt the warmth of her heart.

Ms Mavuso, it is because of you that I passed matric with a distinction. You taught me so much more than the Cold War and South Africa's History. I can never truly express the gratitude I feel towards you with regards to my schooling as well as that event through which you supported me. You have impacted my life in such a significant way that I want to become a teacher like you - not the kind of teacher who just opens a book and teaches, but a teacher who is kind, caring, supportive and driven, a teacher who is there for their learners on the good days and the bad.

**I'll be there
for you on the
good days
and the bad
days**

**A TRIBUTE TO MISS MARAWU OF KHULANI COMMERCIAL
HIGH SCHOOL, EAST LONDON, EASTERN CAPE,
FROM MALIZOLE SIYO**

My favourite teacher was like the sun. I don't know where she got her energy from but she radiated hers into her learners' lives. She inspired most, if not all, of her learners, and ignited my passion to become a teacher by seeing in me the ability that I couldn't see.

My school, "Khulani Commercial High School", was one of the best commercial schools in East London. It offered only commercial subjects like accounting, economics and business studies. Miss Marawu taught me business studies from Grade 10 until Grade 12. She played different roles in my life simultaneously: mother, mentor and teacher.

What I loved about her is the way she conducted herself: the way she was always formal, friendly and smart. She handled things differently from other teachers, giving advice to everyone and treating everyone fairly. She was good at what she did; everyone passed her subject with flying colours and I even got a distinction in her subject. What I also loved about her is that she would recommend to us strategies which she had used herself.

She was such a dedicated teacher that she would give us extra lessons in her own spare time without being paid for those lessons. Miss Marawu offered a lot of assistance; you could go to her office at any time without having to make an appointment to ask for help. Even when you faced bad times and tragedies in life, she would console you in a private space.

She really loved helping those who were in need for help. For example, she would buy you school equipment that you needed, like stationery, school shoes and school bags. What I learnt about teaching from Miss Marawu is that teaching needs someone who is very patient and tolerant. You have to listen to your learners and show them love.

We would even share our social life with her and when she was around us, she would act like one of our age group. I had good times at high school, because she made me feel at home. Going to school was not a problem, because I felt the same love there that I experienced at home.

Mrs Marawu was young and very ambitious as far as her career was concerned. You could tell by the way she was teaching that she had passion for what she was doing; in her business studies period you would feel the friendly environment that she created. She was sanguine about life in ways that never failed to surprise me. She was full of life. She understood everyone in her classroom and won an award for being the most committed teacher. Miss Marawu was also a motivational speaker. She followed rules and regulations without taking bribes from any one.

She made me realize what it means to be an educator and what characteristics a teacher should have. One of them is act professionally at all times, because you are dealing with different learners with different mentalities so you need to be confidential about their progress.

I acknowledge Miss Marawu for the contribution that she played in my journey through to the final decision that I have taken to become a teacher. She truly exemplified successful teaching, and she taught me how to have faith in my own abilities.



She was
like **the sun**



***A TRIBUTE TO MR MAY OF MARY WATERS HIGH SCHOOL,
GRAHAMSTOWN, EASTERN CAPE FROM HOPE PRINCE***

Being pregnant in high school was a very depressing time for me. I was de-motivated and always tired. Having to deal with the back pain and school work at the same time was unbearable and I eventually dropped out.

A few months after I gave birth to my son, my Maths teacher, Mr May, came to my house and requested to speak to me alone. As I sat down and he started talking I felt so embarrassed; I felt like a failure and I didn't have the courage to look him in the eyes while he was talking to me. But he said something to me that day that changed the way I felt about myself.

"If you are going to let your situation get you down, you will never get anywhere in life. What you are going through is a test and how you go about it will determine your future". When he said this, I started crying and he scolded me for crying and told me that there wasn't time to be weak, that it was time for me to make plans to get back to school.

Mr May helped me get back to school and put in a good word for me to the principal so that I could start school in the February of the new year. This gave me enough time to get everything in order, finding a nanny, come up with a study time table and work out how to divide my time between school and the baby. Once I got myself in order, I thanked him for caring and taking his time to help me. Mr May told me not to thank him yet and that I still had to finish school, that this was just the first step.

When I returned to school in February the teachers and the learners all looked at me differently and they were talking about me behind my back. This really made me feel bad and at some point, I even started crying. I sat in the bathroom and cried for a whole period. When I went to the next lesson my eyes were all swollen. Of course the teacher noticed and called me to her desk and asked me if something was wrong. I lied and said that I was sick but she knew that I was lying and took me to the principal's office.

In the office we ran into Mr May and he immediately took me to his classroom. I explained to him that I could not help feeling bad when everyone was gossiping about me. He told me a story about how he became a teacher, the struggles he faced and the problems he had at home. This did not stop him working harder and making a life for himself. He asked me if the people gossiping added value to my life and if they were going to work and take care of my son. I said, "No, they are not". He told me to lift up my head and smile and to remember why I was at school. And so I did.

Mr May helped me with my Maths when I did not understand my work and he even came to my house sometimes just to check if everything was still okay. I went to him to talk about everything that bothered me and he would give me the best advice. He also stayed behind after school to help me and a couple of other learners to study for our tests and to advise us on how to go about answering our test questions. When we got our tests back, we would go and show him our marks and this made him very happy. He would motivate us and tell us that we could do anything we wanted to do if we only worked hard and did our best.

If it was not for Mr May I would probably not have gone back to school and probably not be at Rhodes University today. I am really blessed to have had a teacher who actually cared about his learners' future and what they did to achieve their goals. He is truly the best teacher that I have had and I am forever grateful for the impact he made on my life. I hope that someday I can show Mr May that he did not waste his time with me and I want to make him proud and get my degree. I want him and everyone else who taught me to see that their hard work was not in vein.

**"If you are going
to let your
situation get
you down, you
will never get
anywhere in life"**

Foundation Phase

stories and classrooms

*h HULDEBLIK AAN JUFFROU TOESIE, SACRED HEART
PRIMER, OUDTSHOORN, WESKAAP,
VAN KERISHNE MAY*

Juffrou Toesie was h klein juffrou, bruin van kleur, met h pragtige glimlag, wie die oulikste rokkies gedra het. Sy was elke kind se rolmodel. Haar klaskamer was redelik groot en dit was h vrye omgewing waar jy kon wees net wie jy wil wees. Ek onthou hoe kleurvol die klaskamer versier was. Die prente van Biebie en Kalla was op die agterste muur en in elke hoek was n pragtige pot plant. Voor in die klaskamer was die mat waarop ons gesit het vir leestyd.

Juffrou Toesie was n groot inspirasie vir my as h kind toe ek Graad 1 begin het. Ek onthou nog alles wat sy gedoen het in die klas sowel as hoe sy vir ons op die skryfbord gewys het met haar middelvinger. Ek het dit altyd snaaks gevind. Ek het elke dag by die huis vir my ouers vertel wat ons by die skool gedoen het en hoe die juffrou op die bord gewys het. Sy was n lieflike onderwyseres, die geduldigste onderwyseres wat ek al ooit ontmoet het. Sy het nooit kwaad geword nie, nog minder het sy moed verloor. Sy het in verbetering geglo en sê altyd dat niemand te sleg is om goed te word nie.

Sy was my beste onderwyser omdat sy vir my geleer het om nooit op te gee nie. Ek onthou hoe ek gesukkel het toe ek vir die eerste keer in Graad 1 gekom het. Ek het nie geweet hoe mens h legkaart bou nie en ek het geïrriteerd geraak met myself omdat ek nie kon klaarbou nie. Ek wou selfs opgee maar sy het my aangemoedig en gesê, "Jy is amper daar". Ek moes selfs die verskillende kleure leer. Ek onthou toe ek eenkeer die water bruin ingekleur het en sy my vra of water bruin of blou is. Toe ek "blou" sê, het sy vir my n ander blad gegee en gesê, "Nou toe nou". Ek kan nie onthou dat enige ander onderwyser spesiaal soos sy nie.

Met Juffrou Toesie kon ek elke dag gelukkig skool toe gaan want ek het geweet ek gaan iets nuuts leer. Sy het potensiaal in my gesien en dit het my in myself begin glo. Sy het n groot deel bygedra in my besluit om n onderwyser te word. As dit nie vir my goeie fondasie was nie, sou ek nie vandag h universiteitsstudent kon gewees het nie. Nou voel ek dat as ek h onderwyser word, kan ek ander mense ook h kans gee om hier uit te kom. Ek wil kinders inspireer soos my juffrou my geïnspireer het en ek wil hulle sekere waardes leer wat hulle vir die res van hul lewens kan dra. Ek voel Juffrou Toesie het n groot verskil in my lewe gemaak en in baie ander kinders se lewens ook.

Juffrou Toesie, jy is n kunstenaar, n sprinter en n bloemis. Jy is n koningin en n bestuurder, n verpleegster en n berader. Jy is n digter en selfs n politikus, al weet jy dit nie. Jy is n botanikus, n strateeg en h regter. Jy is h ma en h pa. Jy is n hardloper en h trekker. Jy is n diplomaat en n akrobaat. Jy is n vriend, n instrukteur en n afrigter. Maar mees belangrik van alles, jy bou drome. Jy is n onderwyser en jy is ongelooflik.

Ek wil graag dankie sê vir my wonderlike Graad 1 juffrou. Ek kon nie vir n beter onderwyser gevra het nie. Dankie vir die aanmoediging, liefde en aandag; dis tog maar al wat n kind nodig het om te groei. Jy het n groot rol gespeel in my lewe as n kind en ek sal altyd dankbaar wees daarvoor.



Inspireerend en innoverend



**A TRIBUTE TO MS MANDISA GWATA OF MTYOBO PUBLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOL, PORT ALFRED, EASTERN CAPE,
FROM ASEMAHLE MBALI**

She looked like Sunday morning sunshine. Every little thing about her: the way she talked, walked, laughed, walked and sat, was perfect. She always wore red lipstick and minimal make-up. You wondered, when you looked at her, whether she was human or not. Her confidence and style of dress meant that even if she wore a rag, she would still be beautiful. She was my Grade 3 Foundation Phase teacher and her name was Miss Mandisa Gwata.

Mtyobo Public Primary had sagging windows, dull grey walls, cracked tiles, crooked doors and not-so-perfect chalk boards, but Miss Mandisa's class was always neat, tidy and shiny. She used to say confidently, in her firm voice, "Asinokwazi ukuhlala nokufundela endaweni emdaka sibahle kangaka," which means, "Beautiful people cannot stay and study in an untidy environment". She would host beauty pageants, spelling bee competitions and cultural activities at school, and she was also the health environment representative at school. She never made us feel belittled, but instead made us comfortable with the fact that each person's light shone differently from that of others.

Mandisa was not a teacher who only focused on academics; she cared about our well-being, emotional, mental and physical. For me personally, our relationship did not end in the classroom; she was also my aunt from my mother's side (in isiXhosa we say uMakazi). We even shared a birthday: the 30th of March. Although she made sure that, at school, we maintained a teacher-learner relationship, she started a ritual when I was in Grade 4, where she bought a birthday cake for us and we shared it with my classmates. We would usually write down our resolutions and support each other in trying to keep to those resolutions. When I left primary school, she made sure that I visited her at school and she would advise me on things that I could not talk to my mother about.

When I was young, she was my inspiration; I wanted to be a teacher like her. Later, I changed and wanted to be a doctor like everyone else. As the years went by, I wanted to be a Social Worker. By the time I reached Matric, I wanted to study Psychology. My mother had other plans for me, however. Due to circumstances at home, she decided that I should study Bachelor of Education, saying that I could move to other options when I was done with this degree. At first, I was not happy; I thought my life was doomed. I contacted Miss Mandisa and she gave me an earful, trying to make me understand my mother's perspective. After talking to her, I became reconciled to the decision. At the start of the year, I made a vow to myself that one day I would be like her and inspire children to be great, the way she did for us. Little did I know how content I would be by this time.

"You took the time to learn of us, you changed for each and every one of us, you modified how you addressed us depending upon our specific needs, you transformed into the person we needed you to be. And while you took the time to learn of us, you guided us to learn ourselves. You reminded us how priceless our identity was, and that it was not to be taken lightly."- Author unknown.

Miss Mandisa, I am where I am today because of your encouragement. For that I say, "Thank you".

**She changed
all of that with
her **angel**
ways**

**A TRIBUTE TO MRS BAIER, LOMAGUNDI COLLEGE
PRIMARY SCHOOL, CHINHOYI, ZIMBABWE,
FROM ABIGAIL MEIKLE**

I used to despise the idea of school until Mrs Baier became my teacher in Grade 2. She did not come to school every day just to receive a salary at the end of the month, but rather to make an impact on the life of each and every child in her class.

From the times she comforted me with a hug, I remember her sweet scent. The outfits she wore were brightly coloured, her hair was always tied back in a neat ponytail and her glasses hung round her neck from a beaded rope. Our classroom was always tidy and clean and decorated with our colourful art work. Mrs Baier was very organised and professional: I could trust that she would already be in class, prepared and ready for the day, before I arrived each morning. I also knew that she would be in a good mood and greet us all with a smile. Her professional attitude did not stop her from joining in when we sang nursery rhymes or did dance shows for our parents at the school concert. At story time, we used to laugh as we sat at her feet and listened to her using strange, deep voices to make the story come alive.

Lomagundi Primary School was an out-of-town school with large open spaces and beautiful gardens, close to the farm on which I grew up. Many children from my community attended this popular, well-resourced school. For the time that Mrs Baier was my teacher, I remember school as not only time spent in the classroom but also time having fun outdoors and making memories. On days that it was raining, we wore old clothes and gumboots, as we would play in the mud and puddles that day. I believe such activities are very important for a growing child. As Vivian Greene states, "Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass, it's about learning to dance in the rain".

Mrs Baier taught me many life lessons. She taught me the importance of loving one another and making friends instead of enemies. She would never allow learners to be unkind or fight with one another. I was a shy and reserved young girl entering Grade 2, but because of her, I made many friends in primary school that I am still close to today. She taught me to believe in myself at times when I thought I was incapable, and always complimented me on my work and praised me for my efforts. She encouraged us to be creative and imaginative, especially in our stories and drawings, and she would never try to adjust or change our stories and pictures into something different. She appreciated us just the way we were.

Mrs Baier was a powerful influence on my decision to become a teacher. As I look back at the year that she taught me, I feel I was blessed and am encouraged to make an impact on children's lives as she did on mine. I want to help children experience the fun and excitement of learning, to look forward to coming to school each day, and to know they are making the most of what they have and who they are. I hope to encourage and motivate children and make them believe in themselves and their capabilities. I also dream of being a teacher whose smile is powerful enough to brighten children's days and make them feel loved.

Mrs Baier, your kindness, motivation and support has brought me to where I am today. Many of my life choices, as well as my career choice, have been based on your wise words. I treasure the bond between us. Your heart is gold.



**A foundational
role model
who inspired
me to become
a teacher**



**h HULDEBLYK AAN JUFFROU FLORENCE JAPHTA,
COLRIDGE PRIMÊR, OUDTSHOORN, WES-KAAP,
VAN BENIELLE BENNIE**

Dit was h warm somersoggend in Januarie 2002 en my eerste skooldag by Colridge Primêr. Die skoolterrein was bedek met soutsand en het net onkruid opgelewer, maar dit was my skool – ons skool. Ek was in Graad 2 en verstrengel in angs. h Enkele traan het by my wang afgerol terwyl pa sy hand van myne losgemaak het. Boesemvriende was met mekaar herening en ouers het hul kinders trots aangestaar. Tog, daar was ek, stoksielalleen, doodbang. Uit die verte hoor ek die geklak van skoene en ek voel h warm hand teen my wang. “Kom! Ek is jou nuwe onderwyser,” het sy gefluister en met h gewels my na die kleurvolste klaskamer wat ek nog gesien het, begelei.

Juffrou Japhta se fyn, vroulike figuur was altyd beklee in vrolieke rokke, wat dikwels versteek was onder truië, elegant oor haar skouers gedrapeer. Haar stem, dun maar magtig, het ons beveel en betoos. Haar roesbruin hare het haar oë effens bedek terwyl sy vir ons geglimlag het. Juffrou Japhta se klas was soos h geverfde skilderdoek, h kleurvolle tapyt van kunswerke wat sy en leerders met die jare heen gemaak het. Net daar het ek geweet dat ek ook my kunswerke op haar muur wou hê. Skielik wou ek iets ontwerp waarop ek kon trots wees – iets wat die volgende generasie leerders ook sou bewonder. Dit was die wonderlike uitwerking wat Juffrou Japhta se onderrig styl op my gehad het. By Colridge Primer was daar nie naastenby genoeg hulpbronne om vir elke kind te gee wat hul benodig nie, maar sy het h arsenaal vol planne gehad.

Die vetkryt was skaars, maar sy het ons aangemoedig om mededeelsaam te wees en ten alle tye ons klasmaats in ag te neem. Op een spesifieke geleentheid het ek nie speelklei van my eie gehad nie en dit het my verskriklik hartseer en skaam laat voel. Juffrou Japhta was bewus daarvan dat my ouers dit nie kon bekostig nie en het h klein briefie in my sak gelos vir my ouers. In die briefie was h resep vir tuisgemaakte kleideeg wat ek spotgoedkoop by die huis kon maak. Ons was baie verlig en dankbaar. Sô het Juffrou Japhta seker gemaak niemand bly agter of word afgeskeep nie. Sy was innoverend en het nooit opgegee op ons drome of potensiaal nie.

Juffrou Japhta het altyd my horison verbreed. Sy het ons na die C P Nel Museum gevat en op h ander geleentheid gewys waar C J Langenhoven, die Vader van Afrikaans, tuis was. Om op Arbeidsgenot te kon wees het h liefde vir Afrikaans in my gekweek en lewenslange trots vir my taal in my hart opgewek. Ek het suksesvol my Graad 2 by haar voltooi, maar dit was nie die einde van ons pad saam nie. In graad 8 het Juffrou Japhta my genader en gevra om deel te word van haar na-skoolse kunsinisiatief. Ek was stomgeslaan. Nooit sou ek kon dink dat sy my sou onthou vir my kunswerke nie! Dit het my laat besef dat sy werklik omgee vir ons in al ons wese – as leerders, kunstenaars en kinders.

Juffrou Japhta het sonder twyfel my geïnspireer om h onderwyser te word. Haar geloof het ons wanhoop oorwin. Haar deugsamheid het my hart met liefde besaai. Ek streef daarna om h onderwyser soos sy te wees, om hoop te gee vir h generasie kinders wie, soos ek, nie veel het om na uit te sien nie. Net soos sy, sal ek nooit moed verloor met my leerders nie. Ek sal hul beskou as familie en nie net as vriende nie, hul potensiaal in hulle aanmoedig en versterk en met my tong opbouend en nooit afbrekend gebruik nie. Soos Juffrou Japhta behoort ons almal te wees.

Haar gees het my wêreld betower

Onderwyser Ma

Vandag wil ek haar graag bedank vir haar toewyding en uithouvermoëns met n klein gediggie:

Onderwyser, held.

Dankie vir die gawe van stilte in die woeste stormdae.

Dankie vir Jan-Pierewiet, poeding en vla

Onderwyser, held.

So soet soos moedersmelk.

Wyser as die manne van ouds

Sagter as kant om 'n oumensboud

Hier staan ek jou leerder,

Kind,

Alleen die wille wereld in...

Duister is die pad van die leerling,

Maar in die lig van jou glorie

Sal my drome nooit verdwyn nie

Jy drink jou rooibostee warm

In my hart sal jou liefde altyd talm.

Stroop my van dwaasheid,

Vrees!

Jou vermaning sag en teer.

Omring my met walms van moed

Lê my neer by Sy hemelse voet

O, seëninge kom jou toe vir ewig!

Laat God ons in Sy midde herenig

Onderwyser, Ma.

Dankie vir Jan-Pierewiet, poeding en vla.

Deur Benielle Bennie



**A TRIBUTE TO MISS NYOKA, ISIGANGALA JUNIOR
SECONDARY SCHOOL, BUTTERWORTH, EASTERN CAPE,
FROM SESETHU SOFUTE**

Miss Nyoka, my Grade 3 teacher at Isigangala School, was the most sophisticated teacher I ever had, and she mentored and moulded me at a very young age to be the best learner I could ever be. I will be forever grateful to her. She has supported and believed in me, even though I did not see anything in my future beyond being a village girl.

She was a very beautiful woman and a phenomenal person. I still remember her kindness, and her smile; her smile was the most important thing that brightened up my day. I still remember her look; she was a very loving person who saw potential in all her learners and that made her my best teacher. Her favourite colour was yellow, and she used to wear high heels every day. I am not someone who likes perfumes because of the allergy I have, but I loved her perfume; it smelled like strawberries, my favourite fruit. It also smelled very expensive. She used to call me 'little one', I am not sure why, but I liked it.

My main reason for loving her so much was her good heart. She was always there for me and my family. She used to give me and my siblings clothes to wear, as we were poor and struggling. Although the clothes were not new, we appreciated the gift and accepted them with warm hearts, because we did not have that kind of clothes. I used to go to Miss Nyoka's house with my mother to wash her blankets in return for money, which my mother needed to buy groceries. Miss Nyoka also helped us with groceries, but not enough to feed our big family. Neither of my parents was working at that time, so my mother used to help at the school.

Growing up was the hardest journey ever, but Miss Nyoka's help made it easy. Even if I went to school without eating, she would notice and call me. She would ask me to open my mouth and then put food in my mouth. One time when I opened my mouth, she put something into it that I did not like. I don't know what it was, but to me it was awful. I had to lie that I wanted the bathroom, so that I could get rid of that thing.

She used to call me during break times to read her an isiXhosa newspaper. It was not that she could not read isiXhosa, but I loved reading at that age and she wanted to give me the chance.

She shouted at me once for not going to school. I cried the whole day and I did not want to read. She asked me for forgiveness and indeed I forgave her. She was my friend, because she always believed that I would become something someday. She used to say, "You will make your mom proud sometime, little one". Every time she called me by that name, I smiled, and my heart beat faster than as usual.

What she did for us inspired me to become a teacher someday. She gave us hope that all the troubles we were facing would fade away. She inspired me to become a teacher like her, who takes good care of disadvantaged children. I will give them the love she gave me when I was a little girl. She is not with us anymore, but she will always be in my heart. I am thankful to her for everything she has done for me and my family; without her I do not think we would have made it this far. It was an honour and a privilege to be taught by an amazing soul like her.

The art of teaching

**A TRIBUTE TO MRS JACOBS, KLAPMUTS PRIMARY
SCHOOL, CAPE TOWN, WESTERN CAPE,
FROM PHINDISWA BEREN**

My best teacher was my Grade R teacher Mrs Jacobs. She was a young and energetic Afrikaans speaker who lived in Cape Town. She taught at an Afrikaans school called Klapmuts Primary, where I attended my foundation grades. She was very kind and always had a smile on her face. She loved children and loved her work as a teacher, something which could be seen by the fact that she was always at school and always on time.

In her class, I was the only child whose home language was isiXhosa. I did not understand a word of what was being said in class. I could not even ask her to go to the toilet because she did not know any Nguni language. She only knew Afrikaans and English. She had to call my sister who was in a higher grade at the same school to come and talk to me, but my sister was sometimes busy in her class and could not come. I had no friends and no-one to talk to.

When it was play time, I struggled. I did not know the name of the toys, so I would just play alone with my own toys. When it was story time, I could not understand, because all the books were either in Afrikaans or in English, both new to my ears. All I could hear was when she was pretending to be a certain animal and would make sounds of that animal. When it was singing time, I would just keep quiet because I did not know the song. School was boring for me then.

She tried to comfort me by hugging me when I was crying. She tried so hard to accommodate me, once coming with a story that was translated from Afrikaans to isiXhosa. That did not work because there was no one who could read the story for me, since I was young and could not read for myself. I just looked at the pictures in the book. She even tried learning a few words in my language, words like come (*yiza*), sit (*hlala*), go out (*phuma*) and others. That was more helpful.

I never thought, back in those days, that this story would inspire me to become a teacher, but as I grew older, I reflected on those experiences. Although it was tough for me then, I used it as a motivation. I want to change things now. Since language was a problem to me in my school, I do not want it to be a problem for the next generation. My teacher inspired me to learn more languages in order to accommodate every child. I do not want any child to go through what I went through.

The fact that Mrs Jacobs knew two languages made me to want to become a teacher who knows more than two languages, a teacher who knows that we live in a diverse country, where isiXhosa-speaking children attend Afrikaans medium schools, where English-speaking children attend isiXhosa medium schools. I want to accommodate every child, from every race and every part of the world. I thank her for being the teacher that she was to me. Because of her, I now have a career and a big part to play in another child's life. Communication is the key to problem solving. If you cannot understand what is being said, you cannot respond.

I thank Mrs Jacobs for the role she played in contributing to my wanting to become a teacher who speaks different languages. If I had not gone through this in my foundation years, maybe I would not have wanted to become a teacher today.



How I learned
that
language
should not be a
barrier in the
classroom



In her eyes we were all angels

A TRIBUTE TO MISS MCCrackEN OF CLARENDON GIRLS' PREPARATORY, EAST LONDON, EASTERN CAPE FROM AMBER BOUWER

I often find myself flicking through my scrapbook that my mother had made of my school career and there is one lady that always seems to catch my eye. I have always been a shy child; I often didn't bond or get to know my teachers over the years but that one lady makes reminisce of the old care free days and reminds me of why I want to pursue my dream of becoming a teacher.

In January of 2007, I walked into the best classroom in the world. The walls were covered in bright posters and our names were in colourful letters on the desks. I had just begun my Grade 2 year at Clarendon Girls' Preparatory School in East London. By walking into such a vibrant classroom, I immediately felt at home.

Miss McCracken had short brown hair with frosted blonde tips and the kindest green eyes. She was young and vibrant which made my experience of her lessons so much more enjoyable. Her voice was sweet and kind – something which made me even more comfortable around her. She treated everyone equally with no favourites. In her eyes, we were all angels. Miss McCracken was an approachable, generous teacher who always had her learners' best interests at heart. She not only made me love going to school but she also influenced my desire to read.

The alphabet was brightly coloured and stuck up across the chalk board. Miss McCracken made the ABC's so exciting to learn that I could probably still recite today, some of the rhymes she taught us then. I always felt that she had my best interest at heart and wanted me to do my best in everything I did. Coming from my experience of my Grade 1 teacher, it was a great change.

Although Miss McCracken was very kind, she knew how to control the class. If we misbehaved, she reprimanded us accordingly but was never unfair. I remember once having sat in the classroom for break time instead of going outside. When Miss McCracken walked in and found me, she told me off and said that I wouldn't be getting a slice of cake from one of my classmates for her birthday because I had broken the rules. This upset me at the time but I at least knew what I had done wrong. She never punished her learners unfairly and always explained to us what we did wrong. Looking back on that experience, I know that I also want to be a fair and reasonable teacher.

An example of Miss McCracken's fair teaching was during her Maths lessons. I used to struggle with my times tables and became very embarrassed when we were asked to recite them in class. Miss McCracken forced me to practice my times tables until I could recite them along with the class. Although it made me upset that I had to do them, it forced me to learn them and recall them better. She showed me that sometimes you have to be firm to be kind. I particularly enjoyed being allowed to choose my own reading books in class. This allowed me to have some freedom – even though I mostly read Dick and Jane. My aim in Grade 2 was to read all the books in our classroom. Miss McCracken always told us that reading is the key to success.

So, this is where it all began; my ambition to be a teacher. In one of our creative writing stories, we were asked to write about what we wanted to be when we grew up. This task seemed so simple to me; I wanted to be just like Miss McCracken. Looking back, nothing has changed. I want to inspire children to love education just as Miss McCracken inspired me. I want to create a desire to learn and an environment where children feel free to express themselves.

Often saying thank you simply isn't enough because the impact that some people make in your life is so great. I plan on demonstrating Miss McCracken's legacy by showing that teaching and educating is not 'just a job', but also a way to show children that they are loved and they are fully capable of doing their absolute best.

A TRIBUTE TO MR KLASS, ANDREW MOYAKE PRIMARY SCHOOL, GRAHAMSTOWN, EASTERN CAPE, FROM SITHEMBELE NJOKWENI

2005, the year I was doing my Grade 3, was a year of joy and excitement. I attended school at Andrew Moyake, where a loving and caring teacher, Mr Klass, was teaching in a school that had dusty walls and broken windows. Mr Klass was an inspiration to me; he taught me responsibility and that made me who am I today. He had a delightful sense of humour; I had never seen him angry or sad. Sometimes at school when we had a free period, he would come and sit with us and tell us stories about himself when he was growing up; they were such funny stories! Mr Klass never looked for glory or praise, but this best teacher of mine remained steadfast, with quiet strength, through times of laughter and tears.

Mr Klass was my Life Skills teacher; he gave us homework to do each and every day. In our class we were taught about taking responsibility for the environment of our class, keeping it clean at all times. If you didn't do homework, you would get a punishment, like cleaning the toilets or cleaning the classroom after school. Mr Klass always had a smile on his face when he was giving you this punishment. This punishment meant you always did your homework, by all means; this was his way of teaching responsibility.

There was a time, during his period, when he introduced us to this word "responsibility". "Being a great man comes with great responsibilities," he said. I knew already that he was a great man. Now he was telling us that we must devote ourselves to our school work, with care, every day. Not all of us were doing our school work, and I was one of them. I lived with my Grandmother and whenever she asked about my homework, I would tell her we didn't have any. That day everything changed; I started attending to my school work, inspired by those words. Things changed at home because, motivated by those words, I started doing my homework every day.

From that day, the thought of becoming a teacher started developing in me and during break hours, every day, I would say to my friends, "Let's play a game where we imagine I am a teacher and you are learners". In that imaginary classroom I was an inspiration to someone, just like Mr Klass was to me; I was taking responsibility for my learners and they were taking responsibility for their school work.

Since then, I have always taken responsibility for my actions and that created this man I am today, who will be a teacher. Taking responsibility is the thing that moulded me to become a student of Rhodes University and take a teaching degree, so that in future I could inspire learners by helping them to take responsibility. The responsibility that I learned informs everything that I do. I need a way to deal with my studies so that I have full control over them. I praise Mr Klass for his inspiration and how he taught me about taking responsibility for everything, in order to become a teacher just like him.



**Being a
great man
comes with
great
responsibilities**



**A TRIBUTE TO MRS LOUISE OOSTHUIZEN, MERRIESPRUIT
PRE-PREMIERE SKOOL, MERRIESPRUIT, VIRGINIA, FREE
STATE, FROM WAM XOTONGO**

The floral scent of her sweet perfume filled the room, her clothes nice and bright just like her smile, as she walked in to the classroom every morning. “Goeie môre, mense,” she would say, and you could see in her eyes that she really loved what she was doing.

Louise Oosthuizen was my Grade 2 teacher’s name, but we called her Juffrou Louise. She was tall, had light freckles on her face and beautiful short red hair. She allowed us to play with her hair and massage her scalp and shoulders with scented cream while she read us stories. Juffrou Louise was also our netball coach and although some of us were not good at netball, she never made anyone feel less capable or left out.

In Juffrou Louise’s class you could just be a child at school, free from all your troubles. You were able to forget about racial issues and tensions at home, which I was very aware of, in spite of being in Grade 2.

Juffrou Louise was a selfless being who truly cared for her learners. I remember one of our classmates was in hospital and Juffrou Louise made us all design “get well soon” cards for the learner, which she then delivered on our behalf. When I lost my mother, she came to my house to see me and my grandmother and, like a true fairy godmother, she did not come empty handed. She brought me her daughter’s old clothes and school uniform and took me to spend a day with her family. That’s where I had my first swimming lesson with her daughter. By this time, I had moved out of her class, into Grade 3, but she still felt the need to show her support. She was there for me when I felt most alone, and the best part is that she chose to be there.

From the time I first saw her, I wanted to be just like her. She motivated us and believed in us even when we couldn’t. She told me that I should not allow my circumstances to determine the way I turned out. She told me that, just like her daughter who had to go for multiple surgeries almost all her life, I would be an inspiration, a role-model to other children who had lost their mothers. She helped me realize that losing my mother was my “superpower”; that it was not the end of the world, and that there was still hope for me. She made me see that I could still make my mother proud, talk to her and love her from this side.

Juffrou Louise was not a regular teacher and her lessons always had a twist. She would sometimes bring her husband to tell us stories. I still remember the one about the “worm” that bit his finger off when he was digging in his nose. I now know that he only told us that story to prevent us from digging our nose and it definitely worked, because I don’t remember seeing anyone sticking their fingers up their nose in class. She would also bring her daughters (they were older than us) and they would tell us stories, play, sing and dance with us. These may seem like simple things, but these acts made us feel so special, loved and, most importantly, part of something. This is why I want to be a teacher. I want to help children unleash their “superpowers” just like my teacher did for me.

I have not seen her since I left the school, but her words still remain with me till today. I am who I am because of her and her love.

My teacher my Fairy Godmother