

## **MORE ABOUT SOME OF OUR COURAGEOUS AND TALENTED SOUTH AFRICANS**

Helen Suzman (1917-2009) – See Chapter 10, pp 184-5, a member of parliament for 36 years. In 1959, she and eleven other liberals broke away to form the Progressive Party. Helen Suzman took an interest in politics even after her retirement and she was saddened by the corruption that had crept into it after so much promise. She also lamented the fact that the opposition parties tore at each other. This didn't happen in my day, she said. Even though our opinions differed, I was treated with respect.

Tony Leon (1956 - ) who succeeded her, earned the same kind of respect. He served in parliament for almost 20 years until 2007, which made him the longest serving leader of the official opposition since the advent of democracy in 1994. He, in turn, was succeeded as leader of the DA by Helen Zille. Tony Leon also served as ambassador to Argentina, 2009-2012, and afterwards became a much sought after and talented journalist, author and public speaker.

On his retirement from politics, former President Nelson Mandela said of Tony Leon: "Your contribution to democracy is enormous. You have far more support for all you have done than you might ever read about, and on 7 May 2007, one of South Africa's leading political commentators, Justice Malala wrote: 'Every South African should wake up today and say a little thank you to Tony Leon ... he was fearless when many were fearful, vocal when many had lost their voices, openly critical when many would only speak in whispers ... the man has done a remarkable job.'

The former Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1931- )\_ has also done a remarkable job for our country. Long before people elsewhere in the world had heard of our other leaders, they knew the name, Desmond Tutu. 'They know my name, Tutu, because it is short', he once modestly said.

Tireless fighter for justice and peace in South Africa and known for his knowledge and gentle demeanour, he was much sought after in times of conflict. In 1984, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, and in 1998, he was appointed by President Nelson Mandela to chair the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to hear evidence of the crimes and atrocities that were committed during the apartheid era, and to seek ways of reconciliation.

Ahmed (Kathy) Kathrada (1929-2017) was another fearless man with a long history of anti-apartheid activities as leader of the Indian Congress. He participated in passive resistance campaigns and was imprisoned along with other activists such as Dr Monty Naicker, Dr. Yusuf Dadoo, Dr Goonam, George Singh, Cissie Gool and M.D. Naidoo.

Ahmed Kathrada was one of the 156 accused in the four-year Treason Trial, 1956-1961, and the Rivonia Trial, 1963-1964, which led to twenty seven years of imprisonment on Robben Island and Pollsmoor Prison.

He was finally released in 1990 and after the first democratic elections of 1994, he became a member of parliament in the ANC government.

Like Helen Suzman Ahmed Kathrada deplored the rudeness that goes on in current parliamentary debates between the ANC and opposition parties. 'It was not like that when we were on the island' (Robben Island) he says, although we were different colours and held different views. At least we were united against a common enemy, apartheid. Now our common enemy is not apartheid, but poverty, hunger, poor sanitation, and so on. The different groups should be united in their fight against those things.

Prominent business men in our story who also took part in the struggle and did things for the wider community include Harry Oppenheimer (1908-2000) chairman of Anglo American Corporation, the business that his father, Sir Ernest Oppenheimer had founded in 1917, and Anton Rupert (1916-2006) the head of Rembrandt.

Harry Oppenheimer was the chairman of Anglo American Corporation for a quarter of a century and chairman of De Beers Consolidated Mines for 27 years until he retired from those positions in 1982 and 1984 respectively. An outspoken critic of apartheid, in the 1970s and 1980s he helped finance the formation of the opposition Progressive Party which later merged into the Democratic Alliance (DA), and his Chairman's Fund, established in 1973, initiated and financed projects which contributed to community development, particularly in the fields of education and recreational facilities in the townships. The beautiful Brenthurst library was built on his estate in Parktown, Johannesburg. It houses much original material source material about our history.

Anton Rupert had a similarly distinguished career. He built the tobacco conglomerate Rembrandt which split into industrial, mining and luxury goods sectors. An outspoken critic of apartheid, he was also deeply concerned with environmental conservation and his companies supported the arts and the preservation of historical buildings. He played an important role in the South African Small Business Development Corporation, a non-profit company whose loans to small and medium-sized businesses created nearly half a million jobs from 1981 until 2006.

In 1986, Anton Rupert wrote a private letter to the then President Botha pointing out the economic disadvantages of clinging to apartheid. It was not a system that would protect the minority white group in the long run, he said, but one which would ultimately crucify them; and referring to his own people, the Afrikaners, he added: It is degrading to a once heroic nation to now be the lepers of the world .

Both men have sons, Nicky Oppenheimer and Johann Rupert respectively, who have succeeded them and continued their work.

In more recent times, Patrice Tlhopane Motsepe has both distinguished himself in the business world and given generously to the community. Patrice Motsepe is a lawyer with specialisation in business and mining law. He founded the mining house, African Rainbow Minerals, which has interests in gold, ferrous metals, base metals, and platinum, He is also the non-executive chairman of Harmony Gold, the 12th largest gold mining company in the

world, and the deputy chairman of Sanlam. Apart from his business interests, he also owns the Pretoria-based football club, Mamelodi Sundowns. In 2013, he joined an organisation called The Giving Pledge and committed half his wealth to various charities.

We have also had some courageous women who have distinguished themselves in business, politics and the literary world.

Thulisile Nomkhosi (Thuli) Madonsela is an advocate and human rights lawyer and for seven years our country's fearless public protector. She is a Swazi but was born in Soweto in 1962, the daughter of informal traders. During the apartheid years she worked for the ANC and UDF and was one of the technical people who drafted the new Constitution for South Africa in 1994 and 1995.

## **SPORTS MEN & WOMEN**

South Africans are a sports-loving nation. Soccer is the most popular sport, played by thousands of people. Rugby comes a close second. Cricket, hockey, tennis, golf and most other sports are also popular and we have also produced some fine athletes and swimmers.

In 2010 South Africa hosted the world cup soccer competition for the first time, and some of our players who had already made a name for themselves overseas, got to play before their own people on home ground.

One of them was Steven Pienaar, the world-class player whose early childhood was anything but conducive to the greatness he would achieve.



Steven Pienaar ([www.betmama.com](http://www.betmama.com))



Lucas Radebe, nicknamed Roo or 'the chief'



Benni McCarthy

Steven Pienaar grew up in the coloured township of Westbury outside Johannesburg, 'one of the roughest places', he recalls. 'Gang violence, drug dealing and shootings were everywhere. When we watched television we sat on the floor so that we would not be hit if stray bullets came through the window.'

My mother was affected by apartheid, she wasn't allowed to use the same toilets as white people or step on the same beach. When Nelson Mandela became president, I was out on the streets like everyone else, dancing and singing'.

Steven Pienaar played for the South African national team, Bafana Bafana, and Everton and Tottenham Hotspur in the English Premier League. He was at one time rated probably the best mid-fielder in the world. He was delighted that South Africa got to host the world cup in 2010, and that visitors from all over the world came to our country. Sport can overcome differences and unite us as nothing else can, he said. <sup>1</sup>

Lucas Valeriu Ntuba Radebe was born in 1969, the fourth of eleven children in Diepkloof, Soweto, Johannesburg. He played for the local team, Kaiser Chiefs before leaving for Yorkshire in England, where he played 200 matches for Leeds United. He captained both Leeds United and Bafana Bafana at the World Cup in 2002, Nelson Mandela said of him: He is my hero.

Benedict (Benni) McCarthy was born in 1977 and grew up in Hanover Park on the Cape Flats, a poor area with a high unemployment rate and frequent gang violence. He played for local team Orlando Pirates and the South African team, Bafana Bafana as well as for overseas teams, West Ham United and Blackburn Rovers. He holds the record of international goals for a South African, and is Bafana Bafana's all-time top-scorer with 32 goals.

We have also had some distinguished swimmers. Penelope (Penny) Heyns was the first South African to win gold at the Olympic Games after our re-admission to the competition in 1992. South Africa was banned from the Olympics during our apartheid years. Penny Heyns won gold in both the 100m and 200m breaststroke events at the Olympics in Atlanta in 1996 – the only woman to have achieved this at the Olympics so far. She and Australian swimmer Leisel Jones are still widely regarded as the greatest breaststroke swimmers.

Another of our distinguished swimmers, Natalie du Toit. Natalie was already a promising swimmer when at the age of seventeen, a tragic motor cycle accident caused her to have one of her legs amputated at the knee. Her spirit was remarkable and within three months she was swimming again. She swims without her prosthetic leg and has competed in both paralympic and able-bodied competitions. She won gold at the 2004, 2008 and 2012 Paralympic Games and the 2002, 2006 and 2010 Commonwealth Games. In 2010, Natalie du Toit was awarded the Laureus World Sportsman of the Year with a Disability accolade for breaking down the barriers between disabled and able-bodied sport.

Chad le Clos from Durban, KwaZulu-Natal has been our most recent claim to fame in the swimming world. He is an Olympic, World and Commonwealth Games champion, and holds the Commonwealth record for the 50m and 100m butterfly event. He won gold in the 200-metre butterfly in the 2012 Olympics in London, beating the defending Olympic champion and world record holder, Michael Phelps by 0.05 seconds. He also won five medals at the 2010 Summer Youth Olympics in Singapore.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Saturday Star*, 6 February 2010



Chad Guy Bertrand le Clos, born in Durban in 1992, gold medallist at the Olympic Games in 2012



Ernie Els ([www.golftunes.com](http://www.golftunes.com))

One of our golfers, Theodore Ernest (Ernie) Els, has won major world tournaments, including the US Open twice ( 1994 and 1997) and the World Match Play Competition a record seven times. He has been ranked World Number 1 and was inducted on to the World Golf Hall of Fame in May 2011. Ernie Els is known as `The Big Easy `both because of his nature and because he is a tall man (6 ft 3 or 1.91 m) and has an easy, fluid swing. He is also known for his commitment to charitable causes like support for golf development for the under privileged, and for people suffering from autism. He displays a badge about autism on his golf bag to create awareness of this condition because his son, Ben suffers from it. It was diagnosed when Ben was five years old.



*The stuff dreams are made of: In 1995, the South African rugby team, the Springboks won the rugby world cup against the odds and President Mandela was there, wearing Springbok colours, to present the trophy to the captain, Francois Pienaar. Picture from Gallo Images*

### **The 1995 Rugby World Cup**

Since South African teams were allowed back into international competitions, our rugby teams have done particularly well.

In 1995, ,when our `new` South Africa was barely a year old, our country hosted the rugby world cup. For the first time in many years we had rugby players and their supporters from all over the world visiting our country. We came across them in restaurants and hotels, and listened with fascination to their different accents. It was an exciting time. We felt the world was celebrating with us as we adjusted to a free society with our iconic president, Nelson Mandela who delighted in it all.

No-one expected South Africa to win after years of isolation from world sport, but in the final of that world cup competition, our Springboks narrowly beat the All Blacks from New Zealand.

The euphoria which greeted that victory is something that will live on in the minds of most South Africans for all time. The sight of the captain, Francois Pienaar (an Afrikaner) lifting the Webb Ellis trophy with our first black president, Nelson Mandela, who had only been released from prison a few years before, in February 1990, was particularly memorable. The story has been immortalized in the movie, *Invictus*, starring Morgan Freeman as Nelson Mandela and Matt Damon as Francois Pienaar.



*Joost van der Westhuizen in his heyday, playing scrum half for the Springboks against Australia in the 1995 rugby world cup. [www.couriemail.com.au](http://www.couriemail.com.au)*



*Stricken with MND, but still standing tall at Ellis Park ahead of the Springboks match against the All Blacks in October 2014. Joost van der Westhuizen with his two children and Springbok flyhalf, Morne Steyn. [Sport24.co.za](http://Sport24.co.za)  
He died on 6 February 2017, aged 46 years*

In 1995 and again in 2007, South Africa won the world cup rugby competition, but the win in 1995 was particularly significant.

One of the team members on that historic day was scrum half, Joost van der Westhuizen, a man described as always ready to put his body on the line for his team and country.

One of the team members on that historic day was scrum half, Joost van der Westhuizen, a man described as always ready to put his body on the line for his team and country. He played a major role in the victory that day. Years later he contracted Motor Neuron Disease (MND) which his doctors said was terminal. He suffers greatly but displays the same courage that he always showed on the rugby field. With the help of his brother, Pieter and others, he established the J9 Foundation to educate people about MND, and to remove some of the stigmas attached to it. People in poor areas, he says, are often shunned if they have MND because people think they are bewitched.

## COMEDIANS and CRITICS



*The brilliant satirist, Pieter Dirk Uys advertising one of his shows. The word 'Eish' found its way from the Xhosa language to Afrikaans and then English. It is used to express exasperation and disbelief. Picture from Gallo Images*

Through even our darkest days and despite covert activity, some things were still transparent. Cartoonists like Zapiro, Dov Fedler and Rico of Madam and Eve fame, and satirists like Robert Kirby and Pieter Dirk Uys exposed the unjust and often absurd policies of some of our leaders, and got away with it. Pieter Dirk Uys, especially poked fun at Piet Koornhof, Pik Botha, P W Botha with his 'wagging finger' and other NP politicians, most of whom could take it, and were even quite disappointed if they were left alone as it suggested they were not important enough.



Award Winning Trevor Noah, born in Johannesburg in 1984

Our talented artists still poke fun at the absurdities of life in our country and help us to laugh when we really should cry. In more recent times, South African comedian and television personality, Trevor Noah has filled this role, both in our country and overseas. He pushes boundaries and spares no-one, including himself.

In his comedy show aptly named: 'Born a Crime', he talks about his white Swiss father and black Xhosa mother and says he was born a crime because inter-racial relationships were illegal at the time. He also describes how as a child walking in Joubert Park, his father would walk on the other side of the park and his mother would 'drop him like a weed' if a policeman approached, to avoid being questioned as to why she, as a black woman, had a coloured child.

My mother didn't fit into any category in those days, he added, because she was also half Jewish.

Trevor Noah has appeared on The Tonight Show and the David Letterman Show in the US, and in June 2015 it was announced that he would take over from Jon Stewart as the host of *The Daily Show* in the US later in the year.

Just like the San protest artists hundreds of years before, the cartoonists, satirists and other artists in the 20<sup>th</sup> century recorded what was happening in South Africa, played on the consciences of people and helped bring about change.

So, too, did brilliant historians like Charles van Onselen and Luli Callinicos who recorded our history in user-friendly written form, the good aspects and the bad, and made it available to the wider world<sup>2</sup>. They wrote about the ordinary people as well as the leaders which was unusual at the time. The pictures in Luli Callinicos's book, *Gold and Workers*, published in 1978 about migrant workers and conditions in compounds, shook the reading public, and Van Onselen's works, *New Babylon* and *New Nineveh* about early Johannesburg and some of its notorious characters, first published in 1982, exposed the struggles of ordinary people on the Witwatersrand 1886-1914. Van Onselen's books won the Trevor Reese Memorial Prize for outstanding achievement in Commonwealth and Imperial history, in 1983, and have recently been reprinted in a single volume published by Jonathan Ball publishers.

## MUSIC and DANCE



*Traditional dancing, Picture from Mining Survey Number 2/4, 1986*

African music and dance has adapted and changed over time. In the cities, different kinds of dance forms developed according to the experiences people were having, but many of the old traditional forms remain. The picture on the left is of the Zulu 'Indlamu' dance. The leader does an acrobatic and energetic solo before calling the others to join him.

Migrant mine workers practice their traditional dances over weekends and there are displays at Gold Reef City.

---

<sup>2</sup> Charles van Onselen's books on early Johannesburg include *New Babylon* and *New Nineveh*, and *The Fox and the Flies* about a notorious racketeer, Joseph Silver who operated in Johannesburg at the turn of the century. He has also written a book about a black sharecropper who survived all his life working on white farms in a book called *The Seed is Mine*.





*Johnny Clegg, anthropologist, lecturer, singer and songwriter, and one of South Africa's most unusual artists performing with Zulu traditional dancers.*

One of our artists best known for his African music is Johnny Clegg. In 1981, together with a Zulu friend, Sipho Mchunu and in defiance of the *apartheid* laws of the time, he recorded a song called 'Scatterlings of Africa' about how difficult it was for a white man and a black man to be friends in a country which had laws against this. Johnny Clegg identified strongly with the Zulu culture and recorded and performed with his bands Juluka and Savuka, his son, Jesse and as a solo act. His music is a blend of western and African Zulu rhythms. In June 2015, he was awarded an O.B.E by Queen Elizabeth for his three decades of cultural activism.



*Coloured people participating in the annual Christmas/New Year Carnival in Cape Town. Gallo Images.*

Another national treasure in our country is the annual parade of Cape minstrels over New Year in the streets of Cape Town. This is a cultural tradition among coloured people in the Cape, and all ages participate. It is always a joyful occasion as the bands and minstrels make their way down the streets of the city in their colourful costumes.

Gail Nattrass  
*A Short History of South Africa*



*Possibly the first mixed-race group in South Africa, Mango Groove, with its lead singer, Claire Johnson, who joined the group in 1984, during the apartheid years. She was 17 years old at the time. The band played a combination of pop and African township music. Picture from Gallo Images.*



*The highly successful, internationally-known all male South African singing group, Ladysmith Black Mambazo. Their songs teach people about South Africa. They have won many awards. Picture from Gallo Images*



*The toyi-toyi protest 'dance'. See, also, information about this distinctive protest form in the Glossary at the end.*

Our distinctive toyi-toying protests when people take to the streets when things do not go their way, are also a form of dance.

Toyi-toying can be quite intimidating, but it is usually peaceful and a fascinating form of protest in its own way.

A lot of issues are represented in dance in our country