

A TRIBUTE FROM HÖLMAVIK, ICELAND

[Letter to the editor]

It was with great sorrow that I learned of the passing of the queen, Mmemogolo Semane Bonolo Molotlegi. During my tenure as music teacher and choir master at Lebone II College of the Royal Bafokeng, Mmemogolo encouraged students to practice their instruments and to make use of their voices.

Mmemogolo was an avid singer and sang in choirs for many years. I was honoured to assist her on numerous occasions to re-transcribe the choir sheets according to her specifications. She often visited the school's music department for a chat and to see how we were progressing or to book a choir for an upcoming event in the community.

As she moved amongst us, she was so elegant and poised, clear about her expectations but without exception always understanding of our limitations and concerns.

Although I had lived in several different countries before South Africa, including

two monarchies, never before have I felt part of a Kingdom, until I worked for the Royal Bafokeng Nation. Several years ago, I told Mmemogolo my country only had presidents and that I would be honoured if she would be willing to be my queen. She agreed to my audacious request and from that moment I considered myself her subject.

My wife and I last saw Mmemogolo in July 2019, to bid her farewell before returning to Iceland.

Always the diplomat, she asked us to present the president of Iceland, Mr Guðni Th. Jóhannesson with a book about the proud history of the Bafokeng. A month later we were able to deliver the gift in which she had written a message to encourage him to visit South Africa.

My wife and I send our deepest condolences to Mmemogolo's entire family. She will never be forgotten. I was proud to call her my Queen.

Bragi Thor Valsson