

A goodbye Tribute to the beloved Mmemegolo Queen Mother Dr Semane Bonolo Moletlegi

.....*And it seems to me you lived your life
Like a candle in the wind
Never knowing who to cling to
When the rain set in
And I would have liked to have known you
But I was just a kid
Your candle burned out long before
Your legend ever did.....*

~Elton John~

Mmemegolo had strong ties to the SADC Royal families. In particular, she shared a very good “*Kingdom to Kingdom*” relationship with the Royal Family of eSwatini, amongst many others. We were fortunate as eSwati to have been blessed with the opportunity to have excellent personal and working relationship with Mmemegolo, to develop the interests of those in need. We have fond memories of her visits to the Kingdom of eSwatini (for our cultural events in particular) and are grateful for the warm hospitality extended to our Queen Mother *Ndlovukazi* of eSwatini during her visit to Phokeng a few years ago.

I am grateful, as a son of HRH Prince Thumbumuzi Dlamini (the only of His Majesty King Mswati 111’s brothers permanently based in South Africa due to marriage), to have worked with Queen Mother, Dr Semane Bonolo Moletlegi. Her passion was in Education and that’s how we connected. Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Teacher education is what we had signed an MOU in 2018 to do, amongst other things. We donated tablets to schools (ICT and Education projects) and used her charm/charisma to bring in private sector companies to support schools in Phokeng. These projects we hope to continue under the Thuto-Thebe banner going forward with her daughter Princess Tirelo, Ms. Nthabiseng Thabethe and Ms Aysha Tshose as part of the team. We had planned to do projects in financial literacy training for women at Thuto-Thebe, Tourism and Hospitality, ICT and skills development projects even in Aviation. In 2021, we were going to launch a global teacher learning exchange program in the USA for 30 teachers from North West Province and now her death has robbed us of this opportunity to benefit from the Queen Mothers Leadership. Death is indeed an intruder!

In conclusion, we will miss the Queen Mother during the King Edward Patrick Lebone Moletlegi Memorial lectures. They were the ultimate fundraising platforms for the Queen Mother to bring in support for the NGOs she supported, and she displayed her great skills not only in *playing the piano very well*, but also her charm to bring in various investors/sponsors for her projects. It was through this platform that I got the bug to support Thuto-Thebe!:-)

I feel bad for having have missed the Oct 24th event with the UCT Vice Chancellor, Mamokgethi Phakeng this year, but my favourite lecture in the last 2 years was the one delivered by Mme Mamphela Ramphele. We are forever grateful to Princess Tirelo and the Queen Mother for exposing us to these great lectures and buckets of wisdom that have come out of the memorial lectures!

My sincere condolences to Princess Tirelo and all Mmegologo’s children and staff/team, especially Nthabiseng Thabethe who worked closely with the Queen Mother. Mmemegolo has left a great legacy in building the Bafokeng Nation to what it is today and has earned much respect worldwide for making this world a better place for children, women and the disenfranchised.

Her memory will forever live in our hearts and may her soul rest in eternal peace. Robala ka Kgotso Phoka! You have indeed multiplied!! We will take the spear and move forward with the candle you lit so bright and taught us that indeed “*a candle loses nothing by lighting up another candle.*”

We Love you always.

HRH Prince Cedza Dlamini