

Tot weersiens Khulu - Zelda la Grange

Zelda la Grange, former private secretary to Nelson Mandela, fondly recounts her time spent with Madiba in an official tribute. La Grange served the presidency from 1994 to 1999 when Mandela left office.



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"My sincere condolences to Mrs Graça Machel (Mum), Maki, Zeni, Zindzi, Josina, Malenga and the entire Mandela family as well as everyone who feels a sense of loss this morning.

Nelson Mandela inspired people to forgive, to reconcile, to care, to be selfless, to be tolerant, to maintain dignity no matter what the circumstances. I can attest to each of these because these are the ways in which he changed my life over the past 19 years. I am blessed and honoured by the privilege to have had the opportunity to serve him.

I often battled with the relentless pressure. But then I looked to him who carried himself with such grace and energy. I never left, I never could. Nelson Mandela did not demand loyalty, but he inspired profound and unwavering loyalty from everybody whose life he touched.

And now, as we grieve the departure of Madiba I am slowly coming to terms with the fact that I will never see him again. But heroes never die. As sad as it makes me that I will never walk into a room again and see his generous infectious smile or hear him say "Oh Zeldina, you are here" I have come to terms with the fact that Madiba's legacy is not dependent on his presence.

His legacy will not only live on in everything that has been named after him, the books, the images, the movies. It will live on in how we feel when we hear his name, the respect and love, the unity he inspired in us as a country but particularly how we relate to one-another.

Madiba will forever be present in my life because he made me into the human being I am today. I will cherish every smile, the pleasant but also the difficult times and especially my barefoot moments. Thank you for all the wonderful opportunities you afforded me, but most of all thank you for believing in me Khulu, making me a better person, a better

South African.

Tot weersiens Khulu! Will love you every day for the rest of my life."

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