

Struggle heroes honoured at cemetery

Family, friends and comrades pay their annual respects

THE MESSAGE, despite the overgrown grass and littered papers covering the tombstone of Ashley Kriel, was covered by dust but visible. "We honour our heroes. They were young. They were brave. Their blood nourished the tree of our democracy."

Struggle hero Kriel, from Boonville, Cape Town, was an activist and a member of Umkhonto we Sizwe. At the age of 20, he was shot dead by police in Athlone in 1967.

During the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, secu-

rity policeman Jeffrey Benzen admitted shooting Kriel in the back while the latter was handcuffed. Benzen was granted amnesty in 1999.

Kriel's family, along with the relatives and friends of other Struggle heroes, such as Cotrina Williams, Robbie Waterworth, Anton Fransch and Zolile Malindi, paid a Reconciliation Day visit to their graves at the Maitland cemetery yesterday.

Kriel's sister Michel Assure said the memories of her

brother's death were still fresh and the family had not found closure. "To us, Ashley's death still feels like something that happened yesterday. We miss him a lot. We have not found closure yet. One can only wonder what role my brother would have played in our country had he been alive."

The families placed flowers on the grave sites and sang Struggle songs with other surviving Umkhonto we Sizwe members.

Kriel's former high school

friend, Christopher Rutledge, said Kriel - like Nelson Mandela - had been prepared to die for his ideas and principles.

"Ashley and the others sacrificed their lives to see changes in our communities. He was prepared for anything, as long as it was right. We should remember these heroes who gave us an example of how our society should be," he said.

Rutledge said it was important that the stories of the young heroes such as Kriel and Williams were told because

people often forget that others sacrificed their lives for the country's freedom.

"Let us ask ourselves what these heroes would have done in this country had they been alive. What they fought against - poverty, inequality and economic freedom - is something that still exists today."

"The Struggle is not over when thousands of our people still go to bed with an empty stomach," he said.

Melanie Adams, who is also Kriel's sister, said Mandela's



MISSING: Ashley Kriel

death had brought back painful memories. "The wounds of his death have not healed."

Williams's grave was among



HONOURING THE FALLEEN: Members of Umkhonto we Sizwe pay their respects at Maitland cemetery yesterday. PICTURE: ANDREW HUGHES

those cleared yesterday.

Her sister Selina Williams said: "In 1965 when my sister was arrested, she told my mom

that she had put all her efforts to the Struggle... She wanted to see the living conditions of our people improve."

HERTZOG MAKES WAY FOR MADIBA



MOVING ALONG: The 8.8m Hertzog statue at the Union Buildings was replaced by that of Mandela. PICTURE: EMMETT KELLY



CLOAK OFF: Removing the imposing statue of Nelson Mandela at the Union Buildings in Pretoria. PICTURE: CHRIS COLLINGS

Massive memorial looking out on the capital city

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WITH his arms outstretched and covered in a black overcoat, a silhouette of the late Nelson Mandela hovered above the Union Buildings grounds yesterday.

As President Jacob Zuma pressed the button to lift the cover, an awkward glitch prevented it from being removed completely.

"Manual is always better than digital," joked Arts and Culture Minister Paul Mashatile.

Once it was unveiled, an eagle-like figure seemed out of the people of Pretoria. The 10m bronze statue is well-coming everyone.

It is believed to be the largest statue of Madiba in the world, weighing 4 tons. It cost R3 million.

Sounds of excitement, praise songs and Struggle songs filled the grounds as members of the public watched the unveiling on big screens.

Twenty-one cannons were fired while three helicopters flew the South African flag over the bronze Madiba. Jets painted with the flag flew overhead.

"I was staring at the

screen when they removed the cloth. It was so touching," said Okeke Makabola, 57. She came to the event with her friend, Magdeleine Masopa, 50.

The women wanted to be at the actual event, rather than watch it on TV at home.

"We are happy with the way this turned out. We hope the youth will keep the fire burning," said Masopa.

Many of the younger generation went to view the statue rather than spend the public holiday partying.

The grounds were filled with people sitting under trees and large umbrellas. Families picnicked while vendors sold memorabilia.

Tumiso Masera, 19, was happy to see the statue.

"Everybody came here today. It's more important than going out to dance. For me it's a good thing," he said.

Moses Makhala, from Alberton, wore his ANC badge proudly. "What this symbolises is my respect for Madiba as the father of our nation. As a continent, Africa must unite," he said.

Makaba said that if the country could maintain what Madiba had done and keep his spirit alive, the lion would be proud.

Giant Mandela statue embraces his wish for reconciliation

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FOR ANDRE Prinsloo and Ruben Jasse van Vuuren, watching Nelson Mandela's statue being unveiled at the Union Buildings was a moment they will cherish for ever.

They are the sculptors who collaborated to make the giant statue of Madiba. They were contracted by Dali Tambo's company, Kakoma Growth, which was appointed to design and craft the statue.

"We couldn't wait, and seeing it like this makes it worthwhile. It's amazing," Prinsloo said yesterday.

The pair and other dignitaries watched keenly as technicians in unwrapping the statue almost spent the proceedings. They joined in the clapping and cheering when "technicians" managed to

'It was a very focused and condensed time'

remove the large cover, revealing the imposing, much larger-than-life but friendly figure with his hands outstretched.

This pose, Prinsloo said, blended with the Union Buildings' amphitheatre while also

capturing Mandela's charisma, benevolence and belief in reconciliation.

"The concept of his face smiling and his outstretched hands show his friendliness and his stature as the father of reconciliation. We wanted to make it an all-embracing (symbol) because Madiba was a true democrat and a peace-loving person who wanted to embrace everyone," said Prinsloo.

Jasse van Vuuren repeatedly nodded in agreement.

"Madiba was also a playful and funny person, and so we brought in that element," said Prinsloo.

So how did it all begin?

"Dali Tambo approached us



PLEASED: Andre Prinsloo at the statue's unveiling yesterday.

In December (last year), but we seriously started doing this sculpture around June, and we

finished it in record time," Prinsloo said.

The initial figure was "upscaled", reworked by the artists and moulded at Sculpture Casting Services Foundry in Cape Town.

It was cast in 147 pieces at four different foundries before it was assembled in Cape Town last month.

Prinsloo admitted that designing and crafting the statue of a revered global icon wasn't an easy task.

"We were too focused. It was a very condensed and intense time. But we are happy. The Union Buildings have always been a sign of the old South Africa. I think that, for the first

time, we can say we have an all-embracing sculpture."

Also present at the unveiling yesterday was Gert Oosterman, who represented the family of James Barry Munnik Hertzog, the former prime minister whose statue was moved to make way for Madiba's.

"Mr Hertzog's grandchildren say they acknowledge that the times are changing and that he lived in a different era. They have high regard for Madiba's work and great admiration for him," said Oosterman.

"They are also grateful that the statue of Hertzog hasn't been moved out of the Union Buildings, which shows reconciliation."

Life is returning to normal in Qunu

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THE MASSIVE 4,500-seater dome started slowly being dismantled yesterday.

The heavy police and military presence began dissipating.

The village of Qunu in the Eastern Cape slowly began returning to normal after Sunday's unprecedented state funeral for Nelson Mandela.

Villagers went about their daily chores, women washed clothes, and men and young boys walked around herding sheep and cattle almost as if nothing had happened over the past week.

Enterprising locals from Mthatha who had set up take-away garages during the 10 days when herds of journalists and photographers milled around the village were nowhere to be seen.

The only remnants of the mass pilgrimage by thousands of foreign and local visitors to Mandela's ancestral village were the scattered heaps of rubbish.

Visitors of Mandela returned stripped to wire fences and poles.

"We're happy that things



AFTERMATH: A dog approaches a pile of litter left behind by informal traders in Qunu on the day after Nelson Mandela's burial on Sunday. PICTURE: ANDREW HUGHES

are normal now, the roads are open and we can travel around freely again," said Pum Marwa, 28, adding that the villagers could continue their preparations for Christmas and the festive season.

"Now we can feel like it's December," she said.

A few motorists travelling along the N1 briefly stopped on the roadside to take pictures of the dome where the international lion's funeral

service was held.

But the nation and world's interest in the village where the former Struggle leader

rests is far from over.

Nomzamo Yokwana, chairwoman of the Nelson Mandela Museum in Qunu, on Friday predicted a constant influx of visitors.

"I know in future there'll be many people wanting to walk the footsteps of uMkhonto we Sizwe."

Family say thanks for support

STAFF REPORTER

PUBLIC support had made their loss easier to bear, according to Nelson Mandela's family.

"The last 16 days could've turned out to be the most difficult days in our lives had it not been for the support of all South Africans and people of the world," Nkosi Zwellivile Mandela

Mandela, one of Mandela's grandsons, said yesterday on behalf of the family.

"The goodwill that rained on us as a family from people of this world has touched me deeply and I am sure it has had the same effect to all of us as Madiba's children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren."

Mandela said that although Madiba's death was not unexpected, it was still painful. "The first few days I felt alone even though I was surrounded by family and friends."

Colin's wooden links to Madiba

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IT WAS in 1997 that the relationship between Colin Fitzgerald and Nelson Mandela began. There was a relationship carved in wood.

Fitzgerald was asked by a client who did government work to work on the home Mandela had just bought in Houghton.

"I was asked to jack it up and renovate it for him to move into. My wife Clare gave me a hand," said Fitzgerald.

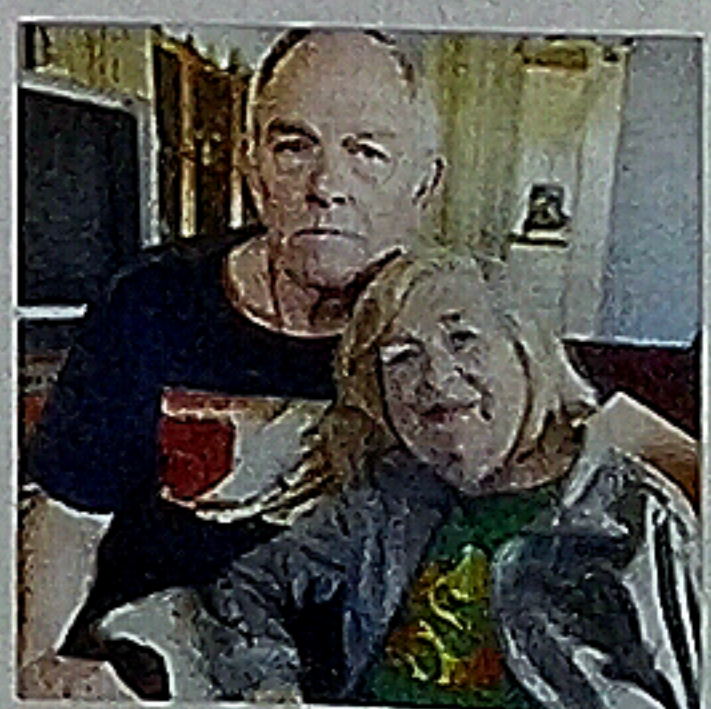
The couple worked on a number of rooms in the Houghton home from October 1997 to October 1998.

"We were there to prepare the house when he got married to Graca (Machel)," he said.

While working on Mandela's study, Fitzgerald said the then president said him to put in as many bookshelves as he could squeeze into the house.

"It took us two-and-a-half months to build both his and Graca's studies. I learnt a lot about him through the books he used to read. He was a genius," said Fitzgerald.

In one of his fondest memories, Mandela came to see the study and commented on how



CRAFTY: Carpenter Colin Fitzgerald and his wife Clare worked on the Mandela home for 15 years. PICTURE: DANIEL JONES

lovely the woodwork was.

At Madiba's old age, the Fitzgeralds would go to the house to fix things to make it more comfortable for the increasingly frail ex-president.

The couple said they were inspired by the love Madiba

and Graca had for each other, raising their love the purest in the land.

Fitzgerald loves writing, which Madiba encouraged. His short stories about children were a firm favourite with Madiba, he said.