

giving thanks at Riverlands

It was a day in mid-March at summers-end, set under clear skies created by our Creator, with the ancient Liesbeek river flowing lazily by and Hoerikwaggo (Table Mountain) with //Gam Naka (Lions Head) looking on, when indigenous descendants from South Africa's foundational KhoiSan and First Nations representatives from many regions of the world came to give thanks for a promise fulfilled and a treaty honoured.

It was exactly one full annual lunar cycle from the time when the sod was turned at New Moon on the First

Nation's precinct in the Riverlands development in Cape, to the final prayers with the rising of a magnificent yellow Full Moon, in salute to a first-of-its-kind partnership between the Western Cape First Nations Collective and the Liesbeek Leisure Properties Trust.

This was celebrated by many speakers as one that was underwritten by integrity and mutual respect, and has forever changed the way in which a developer and the progeny of dispossessed indigenous peoples forged a bond that leaves a beautiful and lasting legacy.

► More stories, pictures inside.





BLOWING THE SHOFARS: Allen Faubion from America and Hilary-Jane Solomon of the WCFNC.



Prayers, Protocols and Blessings under a Full Moon

IFN MEDIA REPORTERS

It was exactly one full annual lunar cycle from the time when the sod was turned at New Moon on the First Nation's precinct to the Thanksgiving Ceremony at the First Nations Gathering Space, at the Heritage Centre at Riverlands in Observatory, Cape Town, under clear skies set out by our Creator.

Later indigenous dancers from the Kalahari welcomed the rising of a magnificent yellow Full Moon, in salute to a first-of-its-kind partnership between the Western Cape First Nations Collective (WCFNC) and the Liesbeeck Leisure Properties Trust (LLPT).

This partnership has been forged by "a collective desire to achieve success, a successful mixed-use property development for the developer and a permanent place of anchorage for the descendants of South Africa's foundational peoples where they could be restored to their rightful place", said Chief IGaru Zenzile Khoisan, chairperson of the WCFNC.

This inspiring victory and the promise it presents for others elsewhere is what was celebrated by many speakers from across South Africa and beyond our borders as the fruit of what is possible from "a partnership based on integrity and mutual respect" which has, "forever changed the way in which a developer and a dispossessed indigenous peoples forged a bond that leaves a beautiful and lasting legacy".

"Today is an exceptional day, a day like no other, when we come to give thanks to the faithfulness of Abba Father our Creator, who on this day has sealed the restoration of the Foundation Nation who must now take their place and give direction to all the foundation Nations and all the peoples of the earth," said Hilary-Jane Solomon, secretary of the WCFNC, just prior to the commencement of the deeply spiritual, culturally rich ceremony of thanksgiving.

She was later introduced by master of ceremonies WCFNC trustee Kaptein Aaron William Messelaar who called on participants to "not forget from where

we came to reach our goals," and adding that "we cannot do anything without our Creator".

Solomon saluted everyone who had come from across the country and several other international destinations, saying that "as we blow the shofars today, we are not announcing war, but the beginning of the restoration of South Africa's Foundation nations, starting at the tip of Africa."

Solomon and Allan Faubion from Texas, America, who works with indigenous peoples worldwide, then officially inaugurated the Thanksgiving ceremony with the blowing of shofars and sending the sound of announcement toward the four major wind directions.

It was a gathering blessed with diversity with young people and the elders of all hues, corporate leaders and indigenous leaders, women and men, academics and artists, poets and painters, musicians and media professionals, priests and poets, residents of the Kalahari and the Arctic Circle, spiritual warriors and troubadours who all came to celebrate a dream that finally came true.

The release of the shofar sound was then followed by a series of prayers by First Nation spiritual leaders, interspersed with a special indigenous protocol dance performed by South Roots International. Their rendition included a spoken word performance, including the prayer Our Father, delivered soulfully in the ancient Khoigowab indigenous language.

The opening prayer at the auspicious event was delivered by Griqua National Council chairperson Barend van Wyk who preceded his prayers by a lesson from Proverbs 23:10-11 which reads: "Remove not the ancient landmark and enter into the fields of the fatherless, for their Redeemer is mighty, He will plead their cause."

"The fight that we have, is not ours, but the Lord's, and if you look in front of you and you see the wall, it says those who are busy with this project, are not ignoring where they are coming from," Van Wyk said.

The wall the leader mentioned is the imposing wall, 43m long and 9m high, which contains a massive mu-

ral, mounted against the Heritage Centre, which gives perspective to the history of South Africa's first peoples, who were the first stewards and custodians of the area.

It describes their valiant anti-colonial struggles, their dispassion, their resurgence their vision of coming into their own and eventually their restoration, from which they rejoice and, once again take their place as stewards and custodians. **(Read more on page 14)**

"Thank you to everyone who fought for this project, to everyone who contributed. They are not people who look for fame and fortune, but they focus on the history of their forebears."

Van Wyk then prayed: "Heavenly Father thank you that we can stand in the open air and that we can call on your name. Thank you for your greatness and love and thank you that you for your promise that you will never leave us alone as if we are orphans."

After the prayers the WCFNC under guidance of the Gorinhaiqua Cultural Council leadership conducted the necessary cultural rituals, as is required by the indigenous protocols when inaugurating an important new venture, or setting down roots of anchorage in a place of cultural practice.

This practice involves the burning of herbs for the symbolic cleansing of the air and then the symbolic cleansing of the terrain with the sprinkling of boegoe water in and around the terrain where the main activities are taking place.

"The boegoe is known as the herbs of the cleansing and purification and we are coming to clean the space," explained Chief Khoisan, who lead this part of the program with Chief Ron Martin.

"We don't lift ourselves because we have that strength, it is because of the strength of the Creator, and we clean this space to say that when we go and pay homage to those who went before, we do so from a clean space and to clear all the bad things."

Ron Martin, the Gorinhaiqua head of cultural practice then explained: "What you witnessed is the calling of the four wind directions where all our people reside and find themselves in the diaspora. When I say all our peoples I mean every single person who are indigenous people, because we have a solidarity, a bond, a connection and a common tragedy with all indigenous people on this earth."

Martin then explained the purpose of the lifting of the horns and paying homage and respect to those that went before. "These horns starts at two opposite places, and meets in the middle where the boegoe and the sacred herbs are burnt."

"It burns away all differences and brings it all together. It is a symbolism of peace and togetherness. We would normally have done by calling in all wind directions is we would have called the tribes in each direction by name, but today we have a representation of so many and more, including our international guests – we cannot leave anybody out, so today we welcome everyone who came from far and wide to share in this momentous occasion."



INTERNATIONAL VISITORS: From left: Elena Ilina from Vladivostok, Russia; Bee Pinthamarak (in red), who works among indigenous tribes in Cambodia; Allen Faubion (in pink); behind Allen is Gordon Paterson, an Australian expat from Adelaide who partners with Bee in Ratanakiri. The couple far right is Cheok Mann Law and his wife Dr. Sook Kuen Choy from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

God so bestem dat voetspore van KhoiSan nooit uitgewis kan word

DEBBIE HENDRIKS

Die aarde behoort aan die Here; die wêreld en almal wat daarin woon.

Dit was die openingswoorde van ds. Reggie Boesak, leier van die Hessekwa-stam en kapelaan van die Khoisan Herlewing tydens die Danksegging-geleentheid by die Erfenis-sentrum in Riverlands, Kaapstad.

Ds. Boesak het die Khoi en San aangespreek as sy geliefde Khoisan-volk, en gesê God maak 'n plan.

"God sê ek weet wat ek vir julle beplan, voorspoed en nie teenspoed nie.

Nou hoe werk hierdie plan van God?"

"Dit geskied volgens Ps. 24:1: Die aarde behoort aan die Here, die wêreld en almal wat daarin woon."

Ds Boesak het toe die politieke leiers van Suid-Afrika aangespreek en hul gemaak om kennis te neem van God se woorde dat Hy die aarde gskpe het.

"Ons Herder, Verlosser, en Saligmaker het die aarde geskep. Daarom behoort alles wat op hierdie aarde leef, of beweeg aan God want Hy het dit geskep.

"Dit is waarom dit die Almagtige God, die God van reg en geregtigheid behaag het om die Eerste Inheemse volk, die San en die Khoi hier in die suidelike deel van Afrika te vestig.

God het so besluit. God het dit gedoen en toe kom die plan.

Hoe geskied hierdie plan van God? Ek dink diep en ek vra die Heilige Gees van God om my te lei. En God sê hy het 'n

klein, eenvoudige volk, die Boesman geroep, en God steek sy regterhand uit en vat die Boesman se hand en God roep die Khoi, en met sy linkerhand vat hy die Khoi se hand en ek sien hoe God hulle op die berg op lei en God sê vir hierdie volk gaan die hele wêreld in, gaan klim daardie berge, gaan kruip in daardie grotte, gaan loop in die riviere, in die waterstrome, gaan kyk agter elke rots en klip. Gaan skryf in die grotte, skryf op die rotse. En hulle skryf in 'n taal wat God hulle gee, wat God hulle geleer het."

Volgens ds. Boesak het die Khoi en San het nie rekenaars of tegnologie nodig nie, "want God is self die computer en tegnologie. God leer sy volk persoonlik."

"God sê vir hulle in my krag gaan skilder, gaan teken en gaan skryf wat ek sê julle moet skryf. En hulle klou tot diep in die diepste grot, onbevrees wat hulle daar mag wag.

"My geliefde volk, God het dit alles laat gebeur sodat daardie tekeninge, daardie kunswerke vir eeuë daar kan staan, onuitwisbaar. Die moderne mens met die tegnologie en geriewe wat hy het, sal nooit die voetspore van die Khoi en San kan uitwis nie. Dit is daar vir ewig en altyd om te bewys wie se spoor was eerste hier.

Volgens ds. Boesak is die Khoi en San die eerste ontwerpers in die wêreld want hulle is deur God geleer om die vel van die diere te gebruik om vir hulle klere te maak.

"God het ook vir die Khoi en San

geleer om potte te maak toe hy aan hulle gesê om na na die riviere te gaan en die klei te vorm en te meng. Vir die Khoi langs die see het God gesê vat die skulpe en maak vir julle versiersels.

"Verder leer God hulle wat is gif en wat nie. Die magtige God laat die diere loop en die San en die Khoi kyk na die diere en God wys vir hulle – ons voorouers – sien julle wat vreet daai bok en sien jy wat wat vermy hy? En op dié manier het ons voorouers geleer watter plante geëet kan word en wat nie.

"En nou kom ons by 'n politieke muur wat ons op hierdie oomblik stuit en nou word ons mense bang, ons Khoi raak bevrees en begin bewe. En ons beskuldig ons leiers en mekaar. Ons skel en vloek en praat lelik. Ons word verdeel.

"Kom ek sê vir u, toe die volk van God uit Egipte trek, en God hulle bevry, en die strydwaens van Faro agtervolg hulle en voor hulle kom die magtige see, die Rietsee en hulle word vasgevang in die middel.

"Hulle word bang en hulle slaan mekaar en vloek mekaar en toe kom God tussenin en sê vir Moses: 'Vat jou klerie en lig dit op na die hemel en vat jou hand en hou dit oor die see en ek sal vir jou wys wat gebeur.'

"My geliefdes toe Moses die klerie omhoog hou en sy linkerhand uitsteek oor die see, toe kloof God die see – toe gebeur die wonderwerk voor die volk,



DS. REGGIE BOESAK

en hulle is verstorm, hulle kon droogvoet daardeur loop.

Dit was 'n wonderwerk. Hier staan ons voor die stryd. Ons is bang vir politici en 'n politieke leier wat ons wil stuit, maar ek sê vandag vir u, wat jou klerie my broer, wat jou hand my suster en steek dit uit na God en dan sal God kom met die wonderwerk en hy sal dit oopkloof.

"Vandag staan ons binne in die wonderwerk, wat God vandag gebruik. Wat twyfel u nog? Wat laat u toe dat die duiwel in u oor fluister?"

Hier staan dit wat God kan doen – 'n wonderwerk – en aan hom kom die eer toe, want as God vir ons is, wie kan teen ons wees?

"Maar ons probleem is dat ons die eer wil hê. Maar dit is God se eer en ons moet hom erkenning gee. God sê die wat eerste is, sal laaste wees en die wat laaste is sal eerste wees."

Ds. Boesak het toe die gehoor gevra om nie die inheemse leiers af te brek nie, maar hul liever te steun.

"Wees lojaal teenoor ons leiers sodat ons geseënd kan wees. Hier staan die wonderwerk en nou gaan God Sy seën op die gebou plaas," het Ds. Boesak sy boodskap afgesluit.

'Put God first in all our plans'



PAST. JOHANNES MAARMAN

"We

want to thank the First Nation Collective who called me to say a prayer. I want to share with you, while we are planning and thinking God is busy doing, He has already done it.

He said everything goes through our Creator. Whatever we do we must put God first, and not include Him later.

We thank the Father for this great achievement and historical event. We pray for mercy and thank Him for what He has already done.

Thank you Father for the First Nations Collective that you advised, guided and led to bring about what we are

seeing in front of us today.

We thank you for what you are doing and what you are still going to do. We thank you for bringing all these people together to celebrate this special moment in the history of the Khoi-San people.

We thank you for this first ever non-fighting, project that you brought about, and we are so thankful for that.

And we pray that you train and lead us as leaders to follow in the footsteps of the First Nation Collective.

We are so grateful and pray for your blessings over us as we come to bring honour to you, because without you we are nothing."

Erfenis-gebou 'n wonderwerk

Die gebou wat hier voor ons staan, is 'n wonderwerk – een waarvan ons nooit eens gedroom het nie – en ewe skielik is die wonderwerk hier," het Chief Poem Mooney, Attakwa-leier by die Danksegging seremonie in Riverlands gesê.

"Hierdie plek is opgerig deur mense met besondere gawes. Ek wil hê ons moet dié plek, dié foto wat ons vandag sien, nooit uit ons geheue laat gaan nie.

"Ons staan eintlik op heilige grond, want hierdie massiewe gebou wat hier verrys het, staan as 'n teken van God se belofte aan ons soos dit geskryf staan in Jeremiah 9:11: Ek weet wat ek vir julle beplan, voorspoed en nie teëspoed nie... Ek wil vir julle 'n toekoms gee."

Chief Poem het toe 'n blik gegee van die tydperk sedert die KhoiSan Herlewing sowat 30 jaar gelede.

"Dit was 'n baie emosionele tydperk in ons lewe. Ons het begin deur ons mense bymekaar te maak en met hulle te praat oor die Eerste Inheemse nasie. Te lank was ons voorouers uit ons geheue gevee.

"Maar ons wat ouer is, het daardie geheue prentjies in ons koppe vasgevat. Geheueprentjies van wat was, van leierskappe wat nie meer saam met ons is nie; oor leiers wat uitgestaan het vir hierdie organisasie, en wat gesterf het, en nooit verbeeld is in die geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika nie.

"Daar is geskiedenis van die eerste koloniste wat na die land toe gekom het en onder hulle aanvoering het die Khoi-Khoi, die eerste inheemse nasie 'n besitlose volk geword.

"Die grond was van hulle weggeneem, hul krale is vernietig en hulle het vee verloor. En aan die einde van die dag het hulle 'n grondlose proletariaat geword."

Chief Poem het vertel dat daar in sy hotelkamer teen die muur 'n plan van die Valkenburg-landgoed is, met die Bloemendal plaas wat gekoop is 1880, die foto van hoe die destydse opstal gelyk het.

"Dan is daar 'n foto van die grondpad waar 'n perdekar getrek word met 'n blik op Duiwelspiek – van 1895.

En vandag, byna 130 jaar later, staan ons deur die vensters van hierdie hoofgebou na Duiwelspiek en ons sê ons is hier!

"Ek wil herhaal dat hierdie gebou 'n wonderwerk is, en ek wil vandag die woorde lees in Psalm 77:12-13: *Ek wil dink aan die dade van die Here. Ja ek wil dink aan die wonderwerke van vroeër. Ek wil nadink oor al u werke en ek wil daaroor peins.* En in vers 21 sluit die Psalmis af: *U het u volk soos 'n kudde gelei deur die hand van Moses en Aaron.*

"Ons is nie alleen nie, daar is iemand groter as ons wat vir ons beplan, en op Sy bestemde tyd dan gee hy vir ons iets waarna ons vreugdevol uitgesien het. Soos hierdie gebou wat u vandag sien, as u na die gebou kyk moet u mos hande klap. Dit is ons gebou."



CHIEF POEM MOONEY

Khoi en San kom van dieselfde wortel

Oupa Jan Pietersen, erfeniskenner van die Kalahari Boesmans, het 'n droë boompie na die Danksegging-seremonie saamgebring om te illustreer dat die Khoi en San vanaf dieselfde wortel kom.

"Hierdie boompie is iets wat ek graag wil los hier in die Erfenis-sentrum se museum en dit is die boodskap wat ek uit die Kalahari gebring het.

"Julle sien die dooie takkies – daar is drie dorings – maar as julle sien die vorm van die takkies, dan sien julle dit is dieselfde bos.

"Net so kom ons almal van een wortel, al het ons in verskillende vorme gegroei. Ons bly een bos.

"As julle mooi kyk, sal julle sien hier is nog so 'n dowwe groen takkie, maar hy sal seker môre doodgaan. En dit is hoe ons se grootmense ge-gaan het, maar hulle het altyd 'n saadjie gelos.

En dis die saadjie wat nog binne ons almal is. Ons taal, kultuur en praktyke, wat ons op ons beurt moet oordra aan ons nageslagte.

Dit is belangrik dat ons wat hier sit, die verantwoordelik neem om ons kultuur te laat bly leef, om dit te koester en te sorg dat dit nie verdwyn nie."



ERFENISKENNER: Oupa Jan Pietersen van die Kalahari.

ONDER: Oupa Jan illustreer dat ons almal van een wortel afkomstig is.



Honouring a covenant

AARON MESSELAAR

We gather today to mark a significant milestone in our collective journey towards reconciliation, recognition and restitution.

The First Nations Collective has arranged this Thanksgiving and Covenant Ceremony as a testament to the resilience and determination of our people to overcome the embarrassments and slander during the many court cases, where we have fought tirelessly for this development with the hope that our rights and dignity will be protected at large.

As we celebrate this momentous occasion, we are also mindful of the long and arduous journey that has brought us to this point. This Riverlands Development project is situated on the ancestral land of the first indigenous peoples of South Africa and so it has been the subject to numerous court challenges and controversies.

Hereby we acknowledge the struggles of the Khoi and San communities and the injustices of the past, including the forced removals, land dispossession and cultural erasure, and renew our commitment between the developer and the First Nations Collective and hope we can still walk the path with dignity and respect.

We recognise that the path forward will not be easy, but we are willing to walk it together and we are committed to working with the developer to ensure that this Riverlands Development project reaches its final stage in a way that honours our ancestors, respects our culture, and benefits our communities.

To the developers and government representatives, we expect you to uphold the



KAPT. AARON MESSELAAR

commitments that were made. We expect you to work in partnership with the First Nations Collective to ensure that their rights are respected and their interests are protected.

Thanksgiving refers to the act of expressing gratitude and appreciation to God or a higher power for the blessings, provisions, and mercies received.

It involves acknowledging and honouring the divine providence and care in one's life. As we move forward, we are guided by the principles of justice, equality, and reconciliation and we recognise that the journey ahead will be challenging, but we are committed to walking it.

A covenant is a solemn agreement or promise between two parties, often between God and humanity. In the biblical context, covenants are central to the relationship between God and His people. Covenants involve mutual obligations, commitments, and promises.

A place of higher purpose

It was with a magnificent full moon on 14 March 2025 that the cultural and spiritual blessing of the First Nations Heritage precinct at Riverlands in Observatory, Cape Town occurred.

It marked the end of a long and turbulent struggle and the beginning a brilliant new chapter – a season of restoration for South Africa's Foundation Nation.

The blessing ceremony was conducted by spiritual and cultural leaders of the contemporary Khoi and San resurgence and witnessed by indigenous leaders from across South Africa and indigenous representatives from abroad.

It was jubilantly celebrated by many who have thrown their weight behind the Western Cape First Nations Collective and the Liesbeek Leisure Properties Trust who partnered to realise the creation of a first-of-its-kind heritage precinct for South Africa's Foundation Nation.

This partnership, which had survived a disturbingly grueling war of attrition against several detractors, had been forged by a collective desire to achieve success. Through this partnership a win-win outcome could be achieved by a most unusual set of partners, a prominent property development corporate entity and a conglomeration of indigenous structures that has for many years

fought for Khoi and San restoration, recognition and restitution.

It is out of this that a winning template was created for a phenomenally successful mixed-use property development for the developer and a permanent place of anchorage for the descendants of South Africa's foundational peoples where they could be restored to their rightful place".

This inspiring victory, and the lesson it presents for others elsewhere, is what was celebrated by many speakers from across South Africa and beyond our borders.

It demonstrates what is possible when parties come together and form partnerships based on integrity and mutual respect.

The journey of this partnership that is sign-posted by an intricate path of over seven years forever has changed the way in which property developers and dispossessed indigenous peoples forge a bond that is enduring.

These parties then definitely need to be celebrated and saluted for overcoming the nay-sayers, the cynics and the elitist groups driven by narrow self-interest who used every nefarious tool to undermine, defame, denigrate and destroy this partnership.



Thanksgiving is then definitely the sweet victory of those who refused to succumb to the pressure, throw in the towel or walk away when, lies, innuendo, convoluted narratives, court interdicts, social media trolling and even threats against their families threatened to break the partnership.

In contrast, through resolute commitment both partners showed dedication to a cause of a higher purpose. It sealed the restoration of the Foundation Nation who must now take their place and give direction to all other peoples in South Africa and far beyond our borders.

Yes indeed, it is certainly time to give thanks for the victory that could not be denied.

This partnership, unusual in a world driven by mercenary objectives and interests, was based on values and principles and held together by a collective desire to give a beautiful legacy to the generations of the future, and the beautiful ones that will live out the higher purpose that underwrites this partnership.

Zenzile

Centre resonates with resoluteness of a people reclaiming their dignity

The boegoe we are using is known as the cleansing herbs. Today we are coming to clean this space.

It is symbolic to clean everything that wants to be in the way of what is yet to happen, but is also to open the way to say that this protocol that we do, is cleared of any kind of association with the forces of darkness that hold our people in bondage.

We clean this space so that when we pay homage to those that went before us, we do it from a clean space.

We come to this place because we know that it is a treasured place, a special place. Thank you Jo Noero, for your

words. Thank you Jody Aufrichting, here is the result of a most incredible journey walked together with integrity.

Jo Nero is one of those true heroes of a cause that sometimes remains unsung. Today, we want to give you a sound salute, Jo. Thank you.

To get to a place like this, is almost impossible for the Khoi and San. Everything is put in your way. Every trap is thrown, every agreement is abrogated. Every light at the end of a tunnel is a train – a bullet train fully loaded with cargo coming towards you. Every pathway you think leads to the solution is filled with snares. That is our story as a people, our crucible.



**ZENZILE KHOISAN,
GORINHAQUA CHIEF**

guilty, this place will divest you of your guilt, or your martyrdom.

But what we have here is a place that resonates with the indefatigability, the resoluteness of a people who would not leave without achieving a result again,

But at this place – we did not come here to crucify ourselves or other people.

This is not a place that will convey guilt. If you feel

and will not be denied their dignity.

We refused to go and sit under the trees and wait for the master to invite us to talk at the back door.

This place was not created through the back door. This victory represents spirit of our people. And they sit here today.

Each and every one of them have endured the blows. If you go outside of this First Nations Heritage precinct – you will see a commercial establishment, you will see flourishing real estate, you will see a headquarters on the other side of our precinct. This place represents the very best of what South Africa's first people give to the world.

A Building speaking to the landscape

"It took many people to pull the process of this Heritage building together. What was remarkable is that this process was not easy. I have worked on many similar project, but in this case the odds have been so high that there has been palpable tension and we had to work really hard to pull it together.

People sometimes misunderstand participation, where it's the in thing. It's not just that everyone gets along and in the end of the day we do something. It's not that.

In this case there were different views that had to be aired and different tensions that emerged and they all had to be resolved in a way.

It's a compromise sometimes, and sometimes it's a win, but it's a really tough price.

Two things about the building. It's really about connecting to the landscape. It's a landscape that you knew about 25 000 years ago



JO NOERO, ARCHITECT

and you occupied it. It's difficult to occupy it now because its so foreign. Its about a building that talks to the mountain and to the river, axis to axis.

The second one has to do with the wall. Both the Chief (!Garu Zenzile Khoisan) and I are admirers of a man called Diego Riviera who was a famous Mexican mural artist from the early 20th century.

Riviera painted the most beautiful wall murals. What he took inspiration from and celebrated was the first time in colonial history in Mexico that indigenous people had freed themselves from colonial rule.

The mural represents the past, the present and the future. The key thing about the mural is that its for seven generations in the future, to this building and everything that happens in this building is not for the people now. Its for the kids and the generations to come."

Flip switch on trauma

"The Lord said he is going to release the generational trauma that has been held in this people of the land. He said go and minister that.

And I questioned God, asking how can you expect someone who comes from colonial descent to come and release that! I mean, the irony and hypocrisy? How do we do that?

He said, 'Well you have to reverse-engineer the wound.'

I asked how? He said, 'well your ancestors came here uninvited unto this beautiful land. And when this people stood on the beach and welcomed them with hospitality and trust, your people were arrogant and defiant and greedy – and that DNA sits in your body.'

Whaaat? So how am I supposed to minister a healing word when in my body, in my cells and those of my children and their children we carry arrogance, and lust and violence.

And He said to me, 'you know there was a time before the pain, before the wound that is also in your DNA. So you need to flip the switch in



DR. STEPHANIE THOMAS

yourselves, because I didn't create DNA to be your prison, to hold you forever.

'Will you as a white colonial ancestor forever walk around in shame and not be able to lift your head and give your gift because you have this arrogance and disgusting things in your DNA? Flip the switch,' He said.

So how do we flip the switch, because we all have switches that need to be flipped. It is not just my colonial ancestors who had their switches undone.

When they landed they flipped your switches too. They came and turned trusting DNA into mistrust. They turned generosity into withholding. They turned your vitality into shrinkage. They made a people feel devalued.

And they turned those switches – that vibrant, beautiful resonance of the people of this land, and turned those switches of.

So how do you flip the switch? The Father said to me, 'it is easy. You just repent. You take that low vibrating emotion that your ancestors have passed down and you say, it is not mine anymore. And you turn on another switch.

You know? That switch literally works. In scientific language it is called epigenetics. We can take what is in our DNA and turn it on or turn it off.

So this place is a supernatural switch. And as we stood outside feeling the resonance of the sun and the soil – it not only holds the wound, it holds the original vibration.

We connect with that resonance and we invite it into our DNA and turn of the switch.

When we felt disconnected, we can feel connected again. When we felt displaced, we can feel ownership and custodianship. When we felt devalued we can look up to that wall and just honour the value and the beauty that is in us."

Open the ancient gates

"In 2014 I was in Johannesburg, and the Lord spoke to me and said: "I want you to hold up your shofar." He asked: "What did you see?"

I said I see Africa. He said to me I am going to release my breath through the African continent to the rest of the world as part of my plan and protocol for the restoration of humanity.

God said I am going to press my lips against the tip of Africa and release my breath.

When we blew the shofars today, we released five sounds.

The first four sounds were for the primary directions of the compass. Then there was the release of what is like an ululating sound.

This is the sound of the glory,



ALLAN FAUBION

fullness, the presence, the greatness, the wholeness of Creator on the earth.

In Psalm 24 its states: "Open up O ancient gates, that the King of Glory may come in.

The Lord spoke to you, because you are the heirs of ancient gatekeepers. Since the time of the flood your people have been appointed to keep the gates.

Now is the time for the restoration of the earth. Today people came from Russia, Cambodia, China, Malaysia.

They are all part of the indigenous groups in their lands. It is your ultimate responsibility to open the gates and watch the King of Glory prepare to come in."

Symbolic meaning of lifting horns

"What was witnessed here today is the calling of the four wind directions where all our people reside and find themselves in the diaspora.

When I say all our peoples, I mean every single person who are indigenous people on this earth, because we have a solidarity with all indigenous people.

We have a bond, a connection and a common tragedy with all indigenous people on this earth. A common tragedy.

These horns are symbolic of many things. It starts at two opposite places. As we move along the horns it meets in the middle where the boegoe, the mpepho, and the sacred herbs are burnt.



**RON MARTIN, HEAD OF
CULTURAL PRACTICE**

It burns away all differences that started in being apart and brings it all together. It is a symbolism of peace, a greater symbol of peace of togetherness.

What we would normally have done by calling in all wind directions is we would have called the tribes in each direction by name, but today we have a representation of so many and more, including

our international guests, and it would not be fitting for us to leave anybody out.

So we call everybody and including everyone. So today we welcome everyone who came from far and wide to share in this momentous occasion. We thank you for sharing this time with us."

!Gâi tse Gûre Koning Links

22.8.56 – 06.4.25

DEBBIE HENDRIKS

Onbesonge held van die Kammiesberge. Dit was oupa Corneel Links, 'n ware seun van Namakwaland, koninklik in alle opsigte van die inheemse waardes en beginsels.

Dit was die grondslag van sy inheemse bewussyn en hoe hy met familie en die breë gemeenskap saamgeleef het.

Dit was 'n warm, helder Saterdagoggend op Paas-Saterdag in die eenvoudige dorpje van Kharkams in die Noord-Kaap, waar wyle Koning Links vanuit sy huis na die lykwa gedra is met die geluid van die Methodiste kerkklok en ritme van 'n volle blaasorkes, wat al die pad van Touwsrivier gereis het.

In die familiehuis, waar hierdie groot gees van die Kammiesberge – wat in die Namataal bekend staan as Th'amies – is die verdriet sigbaar op die gesigte van sy lewenslange eggenoot, Ouma Charlotte Links, sy kinders en agterkleinkinders, asook gemeenskapslede en vriende, wat van naby en ver gekom het, om sy familie by te staan.

Saam het hulle agter die stoet gestap deur die strate van die gemeenskap wat hy getrou gedien het, om eer te bewys en vaarwel te sê aan 'n buitengewone dienskneg en nederige leier van die Nama-Khoi.

In die stampvol kerk was dit duidelik dat 'n groot boom in Kharkams geval het.

Dit was veral 'n aandoenlike toneel toe Ouma Charlotte, die kinders en kleinkinders die kerse aangesteek het. Hierna het Oupa Links se swaer, Andy Anderson, kortliks die lewensloop van Corneels Hudson Links uitgelê – van sy vroeër jare in Namakwaland, sy tyd in Namibië, as student wat by UWK graad gevang het, tot waar hy uiteindelik op Spoegrivier beland het.

Hulde is ook gebring deur Zenzile Khoisan, wat oor die jare in die KhoiSan-herlewing met Oupa Links, Ouma Charlotte en ander leiers gewerk het.

In sy boodskap het Khoisan gepraat van Koning Links se inspirerende eienskappe, sy waardes en beginsels waarby hy geleef het, en wat van hom 'n uitstekende leier binne die herlewing gemaak het.

Hy het verder Koning Links gevier vir sy rol as bewaarder en beskermers van die inheemse kennisstelsels, asook sy diep kennis van die natuur, spesifiek in die Kammiesberge.

Ds. Loyisa Pota, het in sy boodskap die familie en breë gemeenskap daaraan herinner dat die Nama Khoi mense 'n volk in Afrika is en "ongegagte bedroeftheid, is ons Hemelse Vader aan die stuur van alles".

Na die diens was dit tyd om die laaste eer aan Koning Links te bring en sy oorskot te vergesel op die grondpad, tussen berge, na sy geliefkoosde Spoegrivier, die plek wat na aan sy hart was.

En met die blaasorkes, gesange in Namagowab en gebed is Koning Links sag ter ruste gelê.



Familie Huldeblyk

Geliefde Man, Pa, Broer en Oupa
Ons weet die dood is nie finaal nie,
in Christus het hy rus gevind
en is hy uiteindelik tuis.

Vir ons wat agterbly is dit moeilik
om totsiens te sê,

maar ons weet dat ons mekaar
weer sal sien aan die voete van ons Heer.
Ons gaan jou baie mis.

Jou lag en prettige maniere het ons altyd
amusan gevind.

Jou geloof het ons geïnspireer en ons weet
sonder twyfel waar jy jouself
bevind en in afwagting wag ons vir ons
weersiens in die heerlike
teenwoordigheid van ons
Almagtige God.

Dankie dat jy altyd 'n "Gentleman" was en
vir alles wat jy ons geleer het van
Liefde, Geloof en harde werk.

Mag ons net die mooi onthou en altyd
weet hoe om voluit te lewe en gereed te
wees om ter eniger tyd Huis toe
te kan gaan.

Jy sal nooit uit ons gedagtes
verdwyn nie.

Tot wedersiens voor sy troon!



BO: Koning Links se oorskot word uit sy huis in Kharkams gedra. **BO**

REGS: Ouma Charlotte Links wag met harseer vir haar man se oorskot om by die kerk ingedra te word. Links is Koning Louis. **MIDDEL LINKS:** Ouma Charlotte sê 'n gebed in Namagowab by haar man se kis in die kerk. **MIDDEL REGS EN ONDER:** Aanstek van die kerse. **HEEL REGS:** Die lui van die kerkklok. **ONDER LINKS:** 'n Kleindogter blaas die kerse uit, en **HEEL REGS:** Koningin Katrina Esau van Uptington.

FOTO'S: IFN MEDIA





LAASTE REIS DEUR KHARKAMS: Koning Corneels Links op sy laaste tog na die begrafnisdiens in die Methodiste kerk op Kharkams, vergesel deur die blaasorkes en gemeenskapslede. **ONDER LINKS:** Chief !Garu Zenzile Khoisan bring hulde aan Koning Links. **ONDER REGS:** Familie en KhoiSan-leiers dra Koning Links se oorskot in die kerk. **FOTO'S: IFN MEDIA**



HY HET DIEP SPORE GETRAP: Andy Anderson (regs) swaer van Oupa Links skets sy lewensverloop. Links is Greg Autshomato Links.



LAASTE RUSPLEK: Koning Corneels Links op sy laaste tog na die begrafplaas op Spoegrivier, naby Kharkams.



Thanksgiving, Blessing ceremony at Heritage precinct



PICTURES:
MATTHEW HENDRIKS



Danksegging-seremonie by inheemse Erfenis-terrein



Geestelike betekenis van ons simbole

SONSOPKOMS PILAAR (Soresllhaib)

Ons glo dat die Allerhoogste woon waar die son in die ooste opkom; waar die dag breek. Ons noem dit die Rooi Lig waar die Allerhoogste woon. Die Khoi-Khoi se naam vir God is *Tsui // Goab* en die San/Boesmans: *Ts'u // oa of Huwe*.

Die opening van die leier se hut was daarom altyd in die rigting van die ooste, want dis vanwaar die wysheid en leiding vir die dag sal kom. Die belangrikste is dat ons soggens vroeg, met dagbreek, lofliedere sing – die gewyde */gei* – en bid met die gesig in die rigting van die ooste.

Wanneer ons sterwe word die liggaam in 'n sittende posisie begrawe – gesig na die ooste vir onse terugkeer na God.



DIE KAAPSE WILDEHOND

Ons glo dat die Skepper ons Beskermer is. As jagter-versamelaars en veeboere het ons God vertrou om ons en die kudde te beskerm teen gevare. Selfs as die dood intree word ons beskerm en terug begelei tot in die Rooi Lig. Die Kaapse wildehond is die simbool van daardie goddelike eienskap: om wat syne is te beskerm.

Ons glo dat dit God is wat ons dwarsdeur die wrede koloniale en apartheid-era's beskerm het en as Sy eerste nasie sal ons altyd bewaar word.



DIE KAAPSE ROOI DISA

Ons glo dat hierdie pragtige, driepunt-orgidee, wat die Trots van Tafelberg genoem word, die verhouding tussen die Allerhoogste, die mens en die natuur simboliseer. Dit is waarom hierdie pragtige rooi disa in die skadu van *Hoeri'kwaggo* (Tafelberg) groei. Ons glo dat bokant alles en almal is God, wat die mens en natuur liefdevol bewaar.

Die Rooi Disa beeld hierdie liefdes-driehoek uit om ons te herinner om respek te toon vir God, die medemens en die natuur. Daarom is die voortdurende uitbuiting van mense en die natuur 'n gruwel omdat dit hierdie beginsel skend.



DIE BIDSPRINKAAN

Ons glo dat die Bidsprinkaan (*/kaggen*) met sy biddende houding 'n baie spesiale geestelike betekenis het – beide as bedrieër en draer van seëninge. Ons het van die Bidsprinkaan geleer om versigtig te wees – selfs vir hulle wat na aan ons is. Is dit nie vreemd dat die wyfie na paring die mannetjie opvreet nie?

Dit het ons verwonderd gelaat, soveel so dat Europeërs tot die belaglike slot-som gekom het dat ons */kaggen* aanbied en dat dit onse "hottentotsot" is.

Dit is bloot onwaar. In ons geloofstelsel aanbied ons net die een lewende Opperwese. As 'n kulturele simbool waarsku */kaggen* ons om versigtig te wees, want selfs mense ná aan jou, kan jou bedrieg of verraai. Aan die anderkant verwag God opregtheid, integriteit en die waarheid.



Dr Willa Boezak, tydens die Seën en Danksegging-seremonie by Riverlands. Hy haal aan uit sy boek **So Glo Ons**, waarin hy verduidelik wat die geestelike betekenis is van die Khoi en San simbole, wat op die muur by die Erfenis-sentrum aangebring is.



DIE KHOI POT

Ons glo dat die Skepper Moeder Aarde aan die mens beskikbaar gestel het om daaruit te kan leef. Dit moet egter met dankbaarheid gepaard gaan.

Wanneer ons uitgegaan het vir veldkos soos bessies, veldvrugte en bolle, het ons dankgebede opgesê en gewyde liedere gesing.

Wanneer 'n wildsbok platgetrek word, is God eers geloof en dan is die dier bedank wat sy of haar lewe opgeoffer het. Die Khoi pot is dus 'n simbool van dankbaarheid, maar ook een van verantwoordelikheid. Daar is nooit meer as wat nodig is vir *die pot* – met ander woorde die stam – uit die natuur geneem nie.

Meer nog, die Khoi pot trek ons na sy warmte, wat simbolies is van God se warmte.



DIE PLEK VAN SAMEKOMS

Ons glo dat God mense gelykwaardig geskape het. Die Khoi-San glo nie dat die leier alleen besluite soos 'n diktator kan neem nie.

Veral binne die gemeenskap van jagter-versamelaars is gelykheid gehandhaaf. Die verkryging van vee het egter tot sosiale ongelikheid gelei omdat sommige baie vee besit het en ander min of geen.

Ons voorouers was daarvan bewus en die feit dat die kraal in 'n sirkel van matjieshuise gebou was, het samesyn en gesamentlike besluitneming beklemtoon.

Al was daar leiers soos stamhoofde, kon hulle nie sonder inspraak van die

hoofvroue en hoofmanne – wat hul mense verteenwoordig het – besluite neem nie.

Dis daardie orde of protokol – gebaseer op goddelike gelykwaardigheid – wat tot vandag toe gehandhaaf moet word, soos uitgebeeld in die sirkelvormige *Plek van Samekoms*.



DIE SKILPAD-DOP

Ons glo dat God ons nie net die rooidisa gegee het as simbool van respek vir die Skepper, medemens en natuur nie, maar ook die skilpad-dop as simbool vir selfrespek.

Ons weet dat respek verdien moet word, wat net sal gebeur as ons die oergeloof en waardes van onse voorouers handhaaf, wat selfrespek gehad het sonder arrogansie.

Die skilpad simboliseer innerlike krag en waarde. Elke hokmeisie word ingelig oor die waarde van selfrespek en ontvang 'n skilpaddop-hangertjie met lekkerruik boegoe-poeier vir haar gesig. Maar meer belangrik: daardie skilpaddoppie is 'n simbool van selfrespek wat haar gedurig daaraan herinner dat sy haarself moet beskerm, en versigtig moet wees vir menslike wolwe.

Net soos 'n wolf nie 'n skilpad in haar dop kan beseer nie, net so dien dit as beskerming dat die wolf haar nie kan verslind nie.

Sara Baartman, wat in die vroeë 1800s as 'n frats uitgestal was in Londen en Parys, het altyd geweier om heeltemal naak te verskyn. Sy het altyd haar skilpaddop-hangertjie gedra. Daarom is sy vir ons 'n ikoon – iemand wat waardigheid uitstraal selfs onder erge swaarkry en onderdrukking.



DIE AALWYN

Ons glo dat God die Groot Geneser is wat verskillende kruid op Moeder Aarde geplaas het vir elke kwaal en siekte. Vir ons kruidokters is dit dus 'n goddelike roeping om die medisinale eienskappe van ons inheemse veldplante te ontgin en aan te wend.

Hul inheemse kennisstelsel van die meer as 22,000 inheemse veldplante is besonder.

Dit was daarom vir hulle verskriklik toe 'n Hollandse amptenaar in 1713 klere, wat met uitlandse pokke besmet was, in die Kaapse slawelosie laat was het.

Hierdie siekte was onbekend aan ons mense, en onse kruidokters kon nie die regte kruid betyds vind om die dood van honderde Khoi-San te keer nie.

Hoewel die aalwyn 'n simbool van genesing is, is dit ook 'n simbool van daardie bitter geskiedenis.

Vir ons hedendaagse bruidspaar word aalwyndruppels op die tong gesmeer sodat hulle bewus kan wees van moontlike uitdagings en dat daar dalk bitter tye kan voorlê.



DIE PROTEA

Ons glo dat God die protea gemaak het om op 'n unieke manier te wys hoe mooi die skepping is. As ons planeet se eerste moderne mense (*homo sapiens*) het dit vir ons voorouers lank geneem om te beseft dat daar 'n Opperwese is wat alles so perfek in mekaar laat pas het.

Die protea is 'n simbool van die visuele skoonheid van die skepping, maar dis verder 'n teenoorgestelde simbool van die bitter aalwyn, want dit staan ook bekend as die suikerbos. Uit die suikerbos se blomkelk word stroop afgekook. Ja, belowe God, die lewe het ook soet tye.



DIE ELAND

Ons glo dat hierdie groot, sterk wildsbok 'n simbool is van God se krag. Naas die genesers was daar die *!giten*, wat ons voorgangers of sjamane noem. Terwyl ander die dans van genesing uitgevoer het, was daar in die San/Boesman-gemeenskap die sjamaan wat in 'n beswyming (trans) gaan waartydens die krag (n/um) van *Huwe* gevra word.

Die siekte word in die duisternis gewerp waar die Bose (*//Gaua*) dit moet terugneem. Siekte is boos en sleg (*//gau*) en kom nie van die Groot Geneser nie, maar van *//Gaua*.

Wanneer sjamane uit die trans ontwaak, teken hulle dikwels die eland as 'n simbool van die genesingskrag wat hulle ervaar het – wat van God ontvang is.

Die eland beeld dus die ervaring van genesingskrag uit. Die eland verskyn meer as enige ander dier in ons rotskuns, vanaf die Drakensberge tot aan die Weskus. Oral.

Onse energie, vasberadenheid en toegewytheid kom vandag van die Opperwese se krag en die Eland is die simbool daarvan.

Spiritual significance of our symbols

SUNSET SENTINEL (sores+gab)

We believe that when the sun sets, we begin to see another wonder of God's creation: the firmament (IA+uisab).

We call the milky way the Great Bear, the Southern Cross is the male Lion, Orion is the Hartebeest cow, and the morning star is Khunuseti.

A hunter will look up to Venus before a hunt in the evening and pray: "O, star that's far away, let me see a springbok tomorrow..."

Stars and celestial bodies, however, were seen as signs of the Creator's presence and were never worshipped because beyond the firmament and starry sky is God. Shooting stars and meteors were considered to be against the natural order and sent by //Gaua.

Each tribe had a specific star, and a mother would stretch her baby's arms toward it. When thunder approached, we danced the /khâbara (riel), and sang "Songs of the Thunder". It was a musical drama, called the IGurub – with a solo singer and choir.

THE MOON

We believe that just as the sun as Red Light is the symbol of the Supreme Being's presence, as is the moon as Black Light. Children are told that for humans a new life after death awaits, an afterlife. Our seasons we calculate with the phases of the moon.

From full moon to full moon is a month. ('Month' is derived from moon). To thank God for the blessings of the past moon, our ancestors always gathered during the new and full moon, sang and danced with hands extended to the sky. A lunar eclipse was therefore regarded as against nature.

Blood moon was feared because it the belief was that it comes from //Gaua, who lives in a dark, unknown underworld. The moon for us is "the face of God", which is a symbol of the Creator's eternal presence.

THE RIVER

We believe God is the Great Provider who places water even in field fruits like the tsamma and Inara (wild cucumbers). Over many centuries, tribes have agreed who had custody and stewardship over which water source, be it a marsh, pit or river. For example, our first recorded contact with Europeans occurred in 1488 at the Gourits River in the Southern Cape.

Under the leadership of Bartholomeu Diaz the Portuguese took water from that river without the local Gourikwa's permission, which led to a skirmish that ended in the death of a herdsman.

For the Khoi-Khoi the annual rain-making ceremony was the most important religious festival on the calendar – the guri-fab. The elders, who could read the weather, calculated when the rainy season would begin and then organised the festival near the chief's kraal – preferably near a stream. After that, all the families came together.

In our belief system droughts mean suffering – the work of //Gaua. The San/Bushmen shamans "make rain" in the trance, while the rest of the community



pray and perform the rain dance. They sing about the wonder of rain and the strength of the "water animal".

It's noteworthy that many clans, even strangers, hired our rain-making shamans in times of droughts, who always relied on the n/um of God. The Kalahari Bushmen of the Northern Cape still perform the rain dance.



ROCK ART

We believe that rock art is the sacred narratives of shamans who had acquired the power (n/um) of the Most High when they wanted to heal the sick or pray for rain. Near Oudtshoorn, in Chief Poem Mooney's Attqua-region, are rock paintings of mermaids – mysterious Water Women. We also find engravings on rocks and large stones, as at Wildebeest Kuil near Kimberley – called petroglyphs.

Not all rock art has spiritual significance but depicts ordinary hunting scenes or history. Prof. Colin Johnson found at the Sevilla Rock Art hiking trail at Clanwilliam a drawing of a Phoenician ship from the Babylonian era.

Rock paintings in the Drakensberg are about 73,000 years old and prove that we have lived alone in South Africa for millennia. Dr. Hendrik Theys calls it our "signatures" which, along with DNA, provide indisputable proof of this historical fact. What a pity that many do not understand its spiritual significance and have defaced these priceless treasures with graffiti!



THE BOW AND ARROW

We believe that God created us with a humanitarian spirit. We made the bow-and-arrow for hunting animals and not fellow human beings. This is a life-affirming principle. We call the Supreme Being Tsui//Goab or Ts'u //oa, which is derived from two words: "wounded" and "knee".

We believe that the Creator and the Evil Being were embroiled in a primeval struggle. That battle lasted a long time before the latter was dealt a final blow. Tsui//Goab finally overcame, but was wounded in the knee. Thus, the name means "The Wounded God".

He is never aloof when droughts occur, or whirlwinds destroy the kraal or infectious diseases strike our livestock and ourselves. Because God is "wounded" He understands when life is wounding us. The same mindset is expected from us: to suffer with those who suffer.

When a hunter wounds an antelope, he limps after it until the animal dies, to show his compassion. He then thanks the Great Provider for the food provided and the animal that had sacrificed his or her life for the clan.

This is the crux of our faith: God seems far away in the Red Light when the day breaks in the east and sets in the west, but He's always close by when we experience pain and difficulties – because He cares, and his nature is compassionate.



THE LION

We believe that God is the Ruler of the universe and the lion symbolises that belief. It's not surprising that it's referred to as the "king of the jungle". Look at that lush mane! When they have cubs, the female is more dangerous than the male. Together, however, they enforce authority with mighty roars.

The Griqua Royal House and the Cochoqua Tribal Council have chosen the lion – the symbol of rulers. The first colonial occupation, under the rule of the most powerful economic giant of the 17th century – the United East India Company (VOC) – was brutal.

We were the first South Africans who bore the brunt of that colonial onslaught, which led to the first Khoi War of Resistance from 1659-60. The Goringhaiqua's Nomaä-Doman was their commander-in-chief, followed by the guerilla tactics of the Cochoqua's co-leader, Ngongnomoa, from 1673-77.



THE QUAGGA

We believe that it's God's will that humans should live in a respectful relationship with Mother Earth. We never took more than necessary from nature. Unfortunately, the Europeans came with a completely different attitude and annihilated the Quagga, which was an indigenous South African animal. The last herd was killed in 1878.

Some quaggas were taken overseas as rarities in zoos and the last one died in Amsterdam, 1883. Paramount Chief Reggie Boesak of Montagu, after prior conversations with prof. Henry Jatti Bredekamp, was ordained as the tribal head of the /Heisiqua in 2000 by the late Archbishop Daniel Kanyiles (/hà or hei means tree). Their other symbol is the wild pear tree.

The Tree-people bring the extinct quagga back to life. Each Quagga's stripes are unique. No two Quaggas are precisely alike. They enhance individuality like fingerprints do. Therefore, it symbolises the fact that the Most-High granted us unique personalities and talents to strengthen our communities.



THE SNOEK (SEA PIKE)

We believe that the Creator grants humans access to the oceans. All along our coasts there have always been KhoiSan fishing communities for thousands of years, who make a living on shellfish, penguin eggs, larger fish and even seals.

Joyful dances and praises to the Most High would peak among fishing communities shortly after the full and dark moon, because the sea then rises high and lots of fish find themselves in the fish traps during spring tide.

That an ignorant European observer exclaimed: "Look, they worship the moon!", was not only disrespectful regarding our culture, but insulted us as believers.

Our fish traps were built with care. As shown at Still Bay and at numerous other places where these ancient fish traps were erected: semi-circles built with larger and smaller rocks and stones so that small fish could escape through the openings.

The snoek (pike) was made so famous by us that there is an Afrikaans proverb: "The snoek are running!" (*Die snoek loop!*) We were wary of dangers like the great white shark. However, the main danger today is South Africa's Black Economic Empowerment Act which makes sure that large companies as far as Gauteng acquire licenses for large-scale fishing on the West Coast.

Those newbies are neither poor nor do they have intimate knowledge of marine life, while some of our experienced fishermen, who have made a living there for generations and just want to survive, don't even get quotas. The ordinary snoek is the symbol of this struggle.



THE ROOIKAT

We believe that the Creator in His wisdom included the cat family with a particular purpose, as their disposition is completely different from that of the wolf family. The domestic cat and dog as pets therefore differ according to their nature. Our life principle is khoi-/namxa-sib, which means neighbourliness or sharing.

The word nama comes from na-i-ma: bite-and-give. We'll take a freshly baked ash loaf and everyone will break off a piece and then pass the bread – including to strangers who are visiting.

More than any other animals, the dog and cat have become lovable pets, but unfortunately there's a saying: "to live like cat and dog". Leaders and members behaving like that deviate from a crucial aspect of our spirituality.

The ears of the rooikat are sharply pointed and their hearing is extraordinary. God wants us to listen better to one another and not always cling to fixed ideas, but to hear other viewpoints.



BEADS (Necklaces)

We believe that humans were created by the Supreme Being to develop via four phases, namely, birth, puberty (adolescence), marriage and death. We thread all our years like beads in a necklace, but those four stages stand out like shiny diamonds.

Each phase constitutes a critical time, a n/au, and the person must be assisted by elders with rites of passage. That happens in seclusion and originally lasted about a month. Today it is much shorter. A newborn's umbilical cord is buried nearby, with the thought that it'll be there where she or he will one day be buried.

In days gone by the second ritual commenced after a girl's first menstruation and a boy when he shows the signs of growing up. Today they are still secluded as "hut maidens" and "hut young men" and taught everything about our culture, values and practical things like musical instruments. A couple wishing to get married learns about the responsibilities of married life and parenting.

Investigation into Khoi-San Heritage sites

Report: Research trip to Italy, 17 – 23 March 2025

The Municipality of Ravenna, Italy, specifically the Department for Decentralisation, Labour, Immigration, Gender Policies and Culture, Associationism and Voluntary Work, and Animal Rights, invited Prof. Magda Minguzzi from the School of Architecture of the Nelson Mandela University to serve as the keynote speaker at the "Festival delle Culture 2025: Beyond the Conflict."

Joining her were two Khoisan chiefs from her research group, Chief Margaret Coetzee and Chief Zenzile Khoisan.

This invitation followed a meeting Prof. Minguzzi had in July 2024 with representatives from the Municipality of Ravenna and Casa delle Culture (House of Cultures).

During this meeting, she presented her research projects and outcomes developed in partnership with the First Indigenous Peoples of South Africa at the School of Architecture of Nelson Mandela University.

Her projects have received support and endorsement from several significant institutions, including the National Research Foundation of South Africa (NRF), where Prof. Minguzzi is a Rated Researcher; the Oxford Brookes University Endangered Wooden Architecture Programme (EWAP); the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordination Committee (IPACC), and the International Committee on Archaeological Heritage Management.

The Municipality representatives found the research projects particularly relevant because of the support to the Indigenous communities to reconnect with their tangible and intangible heritage and to re-write their story and narratives.

For this reason, Adv. Federica Moschini, Councillor of the Municipality of Ravenna, and her team proposed to the Nelson Mandela University Professor and research group to contribute with two events at the "Festival delle Culture 2025: Beyond the Conflict".

The events would have included the screening of Prof. Minguzzi's documentary entitled "ORIGIN: Khoi-San heritage sites and sense of belonging", realized as creative research output after three years of NRF research.

The documentary contains the interviews of the 10 Chiefs that are part of the NMU research group in their territory of custodianship, and it's a document of inestimable value because it's the first time that the KhoiSan Leaders could freely express their opinions and view on what is the meaning of sense of belonging and indigenous heritage in the South African context today.

Note that the full version of those video and audio interviews recorded in 2022 have been transcribed by Prof. Minguzzi under the Chief's guidance and will soon be published in a book by Mandela University Press-MUP.

The first contribution at Festival delle Culture was on the 20th of March at Palazzo Verdi, Aula Gershevitch, Department of Cultural Heritage, University of Bologna.

This event was specifically targeted for scholars and university students.

The second one was on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the 21st of March, at Casa Delle Culture (House of Culture).

The audience here was mainly composed of community socio-cultural and immigration operators and community engagement specialists.

In addition to the two above-mentioned events organised by the Municipality of Ravenna, Prof. Minguzzi also received an invitation by the Municipality of Alfonsine, Arts and Culture Department, to present and screen the same documentary to the community there and to engage with them about themes related to the Indigenous Peoples of South Africa.

The experience in Italy for the three presenters has been incredibly meaningful. They received a warm welcome from both the Municipalities and the University, and the audience showed a strong interest in and support for their work, both past and ongoing.

This enthusiastic response left the presenters feeling thrilled and energised to continue their commitment to the research projects.

It is important to mention that the research on Indigenous heritage and knowledge will be soon hosted at the newly established Indigenous Knowledge of the Built Environment UNIT.

It is located at the School of Architecture of Nelson Mandela University-Faculty EBET, coordinated by Prof. Minguzzi, and composed by several School of Architecture scholars – including the long-term collaborator Arch. Lucy Vosloo – and KhoiSan Chiefs at national levels.

The invitation to present at the "Festival delle Culture" held special significance for the South African group. It not only provided an opportunity to discuss indigenous rights and explore future research collaborations, but it also marked the first time that two KhoiSan leaders from the successful partnership and research group under the School of Architecture were invited to present their work alongside Prof. Magda. This was viewed by the group as a historic moment and a significant paradigm shift.

The contributions were structured by Prof. Minguzzi as follows: After the general introductions of the group, Prof. Minguzzi introduced the research initiative, explaining how the partnership started, the research projects that have been completed, the ongoing projects.

She provided a brief historical background on the repression and dispossession experienced by the First Indigenous Peoples of South Africa.

This was followed by an introduction to the specific NRF research that led to the documentary the audience would watch after the Chiefs' contributions.

Chief Zenzile KhoiSan, a journalist and international expert on human rights, presented after Prof. Minguzzi.

His meaningful presentation connected with the previous discussions, focusing especially on the historical and contemporary indigenous struggle for land rights among the First Nations.

He highlighted successful land claim projects regarding territories that were dispossessed with the arrival of the colonists.

Chief Margaret Coetzee, the leader who began the collaboration with Prof. Minguzzi in 2014, and who constantly positively contributes to knowledge production at the School of Architecture, presented and shared a powerful and meaningful poem she composed.

Chief Coetzee also conveyed a message from the Indigenous leaders, emphasising the importance of the younger generation becoming custodians of Mother Earth and its resources.

*** Prof. Minguzzi is Associate Professor, School of Architecture at NMU**



Report from Casa delle Culture

For its 18th edition, the Festival delle Culture marked the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination with two special events featuring Prof. Magda Minguzzi, Chief Zenzile Khoisan, and Chief Margaret Coetzee. These events included the screening of the documentary *Origins: An Investigation into Khoisan Heritage Sites*, a powerful exploration of identity, cultural heritage, and historical resilience.

True to its mission of strengthening social cohesion, combating discrimination, and promoting intercultural dialogue, the Festival organized the first screening for students of the Master's degree program in International Cooperation for the Protection of Human Rights and Intercultural Heritage, while the second was dedicated to professionals working in the cultural and immigration sectors.

The research presented by the speakers served as a powerful catalyst for reflection on the importance of respecting and preserving cultural diversity. The experiences of the Khoisan community, and their long struggle to reclaim their cultural identity, stand as a compelling testament to a human rights battle that too often goes unheard.

In this context, Chief Zenzile Khoisan and Chief Margaret Coetzee played a pivotal role, bringing with them the richness of Khoisan traditions and the depth of their cultural and spiritual knowledge.

Through their narratives, music, dances, and ancestral stories, as depicted in the documentary *Origins*, they forged a meaningful bridge between Africa and Italy, fostering a profound intercultural exchange with the city of Ravenna. Their presence enriched the Festival with moments of authentic sharing, highlighting the vital importance of preserving and celebrating indigenous cultures.

The contribution of Professor Magda Minguzzi was fundamental to the success of this initiative. Her ability to coordinate, organize, and act as both a cultural and linguistic bridge was key in creating a space for genuine dialogue and understanding.

"I would describe my experience as unique. Even though I come from an African country, Algeria, I had never met people from South Africa—let alone individuals as extraordinary as Chief Zenzile and Chief Margaret.

We exchanged cultural and spiritual insights, and I had the honor of guiding them through Ravenna, introducing them to every corner of the city. They were constantly in awe of the Italian architecture. One particularly moving moment was when they visited Dante's tomb for the first time. That encounter was profoundly significant.

*** Ibtissem Beldi, member of the organizing committee of the Festival delle Culture**



A POWERFUL MESSAGE: From left is Chiefs Margaret Coetzee and Zenzile Khoisan with Prof. Magda Minguzzi, during the trip to Italy.





ZENZILE KHOISAN

It is the work of Mexico's most famous muralist, internationally acclaimed Diego Rivera that was the inspiration for the construction of a large imposing wall in front of an understated building which is intended as a space where First Nations history, heritage, language, culture, indigenous knowledge will be showcased and celebrated.

This unique space, which is the first of its kind in South Africa, both for the who it will serve and what it represents, is thus foregrounded by a massive 9m by 43m wall on which a most impressive mural has been mounted.

The themes explored on this wall (explained below) were widely discussed with First Nations elders across the country and then distilled into a clear concept. Then, working closely with Jo Noero of Noero architects, the brief was developed. It was assigned to historian and artist Dr Willa Boezak, who, in delivering on the art brief, was advised by exhibitions specialist Lara Wesson.

Reflecting now on the intense discourse, at the very beginning of discussions on the type of building we sought to create, how its footprint would rest upon the ancient lands where the First Nations were its original custodians and how it would telegraph its message to the world brought us to look at the message this building should send to the world.

In these discussion took place over a long period of time in the Woodstock offices of the Western Cape First Nations Collective. They were focused on the artist that we both believed could pertinently represent what we sought to achieve in a foregrounding mural.

Imposing in both the scale and themes explored in his work, the audacious Mexican artist Diego Rivera sought the harmonious integration of art and architecture.

His view was that he was aiming for murals to "complement and enhance the building's structure" with "art as a tool for public expression and social commentary" which would "inform and inspire the people".

Rivera saw art as a tool for social change, capable of exposing injustice and promoting awareness.

After the brief to the artist, the material was conveyed eventually to the design, manufacturing and mounting team, comprised of Etherington Aluminium, Machete and Fesco Trading.

This building housing First Nations Heritage Centre at Riverlands in Observatory, Cape Town, has a layered history that incorporates many facets. Most notably, that within this very unique structure that is set within a mixed-use modern commercial development there is a narrative of an indigenous struc-

ture seeking redress for injustice, an exceptional gifted and celebrated architect and a collective desire to leave a legacy that will inspire many future generations to reach for excellence.

This incredible story of how a first-of-its-kind place of memorialisation and anchorage for South Africa's foundational peoples came about has been widely covered in the public domain.

From the intensely contest applications process before numerous government departments to the court cases, where this development had to survive a most gruelling public interrogation of its intent and motives, Riverlands made headline.

That is now, for the most part, a thing of the past, as the development is already functional, with a strong corporate contingent having taken occupation of office space and many of the commercial facilities doing brisk trade.

The ecological footprint of the development has also now been steadily established with the vegetation within the eco-corridor beautifully flourishing and the rehabilitated river manifesting its new status as host to indigenous vegetation and healthy bird and aquatic life.

In is specifically in this thriving ecological corridor that the newly completed First Nations Heritage Centre holds pride of place, an exquisitely designed building that reflects the aspirations of the peoples who advocated for its construction. The WCFNC with the architecture, design and construction team seamlessly brought this project from a concept to a space that is truly fit for purpose.



DIEGO RIVERA, painter from Mexico

Heritage Centre Mural wall explained

One of the most prominent features of the First Nations Heritage Centre at Riverlands is the iconic foregrounding wall that incorporates five critical elements that underscore the objectives of the centre.

The narrative begins with an image of an indigenous ancestor and Hoerikwaggo (Table Mountain), depicting a time when there was balance between indigenous peoples and the ancient territory where they were stewards and custodians.

Next is the assault on indigenous custodianship with the Battle of Gorinhaiqua in 1510 where the Cape Khoi peoples successfully defended themselves against the forces of the Portuguese militarist Francisco D'Almeida and later in the First Khoi-Dutch war of 1659 to 1660, which followed the first colonial dispossession of land in the Cape.

The third phase is a period of brokenness and destruction

caused by dispossession, depicted by images of a crying child and a representation of Sarah Baartman, a Khoi woman abducted from Cape Town and horrifically abused in Europe.

The fourth phase represents resurgence, with images of Queen Katrina Esau, preserver of the ancient //Nuu language, Khoi poet laureate Diana Ferris and Professor Jatti Bredekamp, patron of the movement demanding recognition, restoration and restitution for the Khoi and San.

The fifth phase of the mural is the vision for the future of our restored and recognised peoples, where a jubilant anthem is heralded, our children rise to their full potential and our indigenous culture flourishes.

This restoration of our ancient indigenous values and principles is captured in the cultural symbols depicted across the base of this iconic mural.

Muurskildery by Erfenis Sentrum verduidelik

Een van die mees prominente kenmerke van die Eerste Nasies Erfenis-sentrum by Riverlands is die ikoniese muurskildery op die voorgrond, wat vyf belangrike elemente van die doelwitte van die sentrum beklemtoon.

Die verhaal op die muur begin met 'n beeld van 'n inheemse voorouer en Hoerikwaggo (Tafelberg), wat 'n tyd uitbeeld toe daar balans was tussen inheemse mense en hul omgewing, waarvan hulle die bewaarders en opsigters was.

Hierop volg die aanslag op die inheemse volk met die Slag van Gorinhaiqua in 1510, waar die Kaapse Khoi hulself suksesvol verdedig het teen die magte van die Portugese militarist, Francisco D'Almeida, en later in die Eerste Khoi-Nederlandse oorlog van 1659 tot 1660.

Dit was die eerste koloniale onteiening van grond in die Kaap.

Die derde fase is 'n tydperk van gebrokenheid en ver-

nietiging veroorsaak deur onteiening, uitgebeeld deur 'n huilende kind en 'n voorstelling van Sarah Baartman, 'n Khoi-vrou wat uit Kaapstad ontvoer en grusaam in Europa mishandel is.

Die vierde fase verteenwoordig herlewing, met beelde van Koningin Katrina Esau, bewaarder van die antieke //Nuu-taal; bekroonde Khoi-digter Diana Ferris, en Professor Jatti Bredekamp, beskermheer van die beweging wat erkenning, herstel en vergoeding vir die Khoi en San eis.

Die vyfde fase van die muurskildery is die toekomsvisie van ons mense wat herstel en erken is, waar 'n jubelende volkslied weerklink en waar ons kinders hul volle potensiaal bereik en ons inheemse kultuur floreer.

Hierdie herstel van ons oeroue inheemse waardes en beginsels word vasgevang in die kulturele simbole wat aan die onderkant van hierdie ikoniese muurskildery uitgebeeld word.

'Difficulties facing Indigenous Peoples an affront to dignity and justice'

Indigenous Peoples are still excluded from decisions regarding "the very foundation of our identity, survival, and self-determination," said Aluki Kotierk, Chair of the 24th United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII).

This year's theme was focused on implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and addressing associated challenges – emphasising the need for Indigenous Peoples to be included in governance processes.

Representing the largest international annual gathering of Indigenous Peoples with around 1 000 participants, the 24th session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) opened at UN Headquarters in New York, putting a spotlight on some of the most urgent and interconnected issues facing Indigenous Peoples today.

Bringing together Indigenous Peoples, government representatives, UN agencies, and civil society from around the world, the Forum ran until 2 May 2025.

For two weeks at UN Headquarters in New York, Indigenous leaders, Member States, UN officials and civil society groups are meeting to try and make the declaration a reality.

The session began with a violin performance by two Kichwa Indigenous youth, honouring the memories of the Indigenous Peoples who came before them, followed by a ceremonial welcome by the Chief of the Onondaga Nation, Tadodaho Sid Hill.

Indigenous leadership

The forum sheds light on how Member States' actions on native lands impact Indigenous Peoples, while decisions which bypass Indigenous leaders too often impact both their ways of life and food security.

Despite progress, the UNDRIP implementation remains inconsistent and insufficient, challenged by the lack of recognition of Indigenous Peoples, political resistance, and economic interests, among other issues.

This year's UNPFII aimed to encourage debate, promote cooperation, and build solutions to address these challenges, inspired by examples of good practice and Indigenous-led initiatives.

In his speech at the opening, UN Secretary-General António Gu-



Indigenous groups from around the world attended the 24 Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

terres urged governments and institutions to recognise and act upon the leadership, rights and needs of Indigenous Peoples.

"The difficulties facing Indigenous Peoples around the world are an affront to dignity and justice," said the UN chief, "and a source of deep sorrow for me personally."

"Indigenous women face particular challenges – including barriers to political participation, economic opportunities, and essential services," he added.

During the two-week long forum, discussions focused on the principles of sustainability, equity and social justice, while simultaneously empowering Indigenous Peoples's governance systems.

"Member States must ensure that Indigenous Peoples are fully respected in decision-making processes, with their governance systems and rights upheld in every aspect of policy and government, said Ms. Kotierk."

She said the UNDRIP is not a document that must be celebrated once a year.

"It is a living framework that must guide how we govern, how we invest and how we treat other human being on this shared Mother Earth. Its full and effective implementation is not optional. It is a moral, legal, and collective obligation," she said.

Speaking up for women

From the persecution of Indigenous women to the non-regulated extraction of mineral resources on their own land, their human rights overall are constantly being infringed upon.

"These persistent disparities demand urgent, sustained attention," said Philemon Yang, President of the General Assembly during the opening session.

Indigenous women stand as cultural leaders and agents of change. Yet, across the globe, Indigenous women stand at the crossroads of gender-based discrimination, colonial violence, and systemic marginalisation.

With the growing threat of climate change, it is essential to ensure climate solutions do not come at the expense of Indigenous Peoples. Their rights must be upheld and that their contributions recognized and valued.

Extractive activities, happening on or near Indigenous Peoples' lands and territories, can cause devastating impacts on nature, livelihoods, culture, and practices of Indigenous Peoples.

As the push for the energy transition accelerates the mining of critical minerals, Free, Prior and Informed consent (FPIC) represents a fundamental principle to guarantee that Indigenous Peoples' rights are being respected.

As stated by the Chairperson of the Forum: "We are not anti-development, but development must be on our terms and must be just."

"It must respect our governance systems, uphold environmental safeguards, and include equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms."

"However, Indigenous Peoples continue to have their lands and ways of life threatened, their contributions overlooked and receive only a fraction of climate and biodiversity funding."

Source: UN News; Pics: UN Media

Be aware of policies trying to erase indigenous identity

In her closing remarks, Permanent Forum Chair Aluki Kotierk (Canada) thanked delegates for a powerful session. It was an opportunity to understand the systemic challenges Indigenous Peoples face and the solutions they are generating, "grounded in our worldviews, rights and strengths".

She highlighted the importance of culturally appropriate education, noting that many systems of education are assimilationist. Instead of empowering, they ignore or erase Indigenous cultures, languages and ways of life.

Reaffirming the importance of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, she said it has influenced the drafting of constitutions and laws and contributed to policy reforms. "But, implementation is uneven and in many places symbolic."

"Marginalization and exclusion persist, not as remnants of the past, but as results of deliberate policies designed to erase Indigenous Peoples' identities."



ALUKI KOTIERK



Guests from near and far at Blessing & Thanksgiving Ceremony

