
Media release

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Donation of rare items boosts Freedom Park's collection

On 26 April 2012, Freedom Park receives a sizable donation of rare books, publicity and audio material, magazines and official documents that reflect the history of South Africa and the Diaspora from private collector, Advocate Julialynne Walker. The donation comprises more than 400 rare and out-of-print books dating back as far as the late 1800s as well as promotional materials such as posters and badges for various struggles spanning four decades.

The handing over ceremony takes place at 8:30 at Freedom Park. A list of the publications to be donated, the hand-over programme as well as Advocate Walker's resume have been attached.

The donation will form part of the Pan African Archives in Freedom Park and will be on display in //hapo, where the story of Southern Africa, dating back 3.6 billion years, will be told.

Advocate Walker started her collection of objects and records reflective of that particular time in history, in the 1970s. "Each of the posters, badges, magazines and records I have collected tells an individual story. Together they speak of a history," explains Advocate Walker. "It has become popular to put certain objects in a container as a time capsule reflective of that particular point in time. This collection would then serve as a time capsule of the past four decades. They give an indication of the thoughts, beliefs and opinions at that time."

In terms of promotional materials, Advocate Walker's donation also includes more than 100 struggle badges and buttons collected since the early 1970s. "Throughout the years, people wore these as a means of identification, of showing their support and participation in a specific cause or struggle," says Advocate Walker. "By wearing a specific badge or buttons, those around you would know who you are and what you believe in. The collection is thus a visual reflection of how people have identified with the various struggles and how these struggles presented themselves to the world."

Official records that form part of the donation include a document that the South African government circulated to the United States of America. “Documents such as these tell us how South Africa promoted itself as a country at that time.”

“It is critical that we know our histories, that we understand where we come from. The only way in which that history can be known and understood is by collecting the stories that make up that history and then making that accessible to all,” says Advocate Walker. “By donating this part of the history to Freedom Park, it will become accessible to national and international visitors alike. It is my hope that people will use this collection to learn from our past and apply this knowledge to the contemporary issues we face today.”

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