

Media release

Pretoria, 26 February 2013

Freedom Park honours Robert Sobukwe

Freedom Park will be honouring Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe in a seminar entitled *Unsung Patriot: Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe*, this Wednesday 27 February 2013.

According to the Chief Executive Officer of the park, Mr. Fana Jiyane, the purpose of the seminar is to celebrate the life and contribution of Sobukwe to the freedom that we enjoy today.

“Many South Africans, young and old, are shockingly unaware of the massive contributions of this unsung hero of our struggle. Robert Sobukwe stands as an iconic political figure in the struggle for a democratic South Africa.” says Jiyane.

Sobukwe was born in Graaff Reinet in the Eastern Cape on 5 December 1924. He was the first president of the Pan Africanist Congress. His message of empowerment was instrumental in creating the 1960s Black Consciousness Movement. On March 21, 1960, he was at the head of a nationwide protest against the pass laws, which culminated in the Sharpeville massacre which left 69 people dead and led to his arrest for incitement.

Sobukwe was sentenced to three years imprisonment after which he was subjected to the General Law Amendment Act of 1963, which allowed the Minister of Justice to renew his imprisonment every year at his discretion. The “Sobukwe Clause” in this legislation, which was never used on anyone else, was used to intern him for a further six years. He was released in 1969 and banished to Kimberley where he lived with his family and died of lung cancer in 1978.

Jiyane says Sobukwe was an impressive personality who had considerable political influence on South African politics. “His philosophy of Black Awareness was one of, if not the, major source of inspiration for the Black Consciousness Movement of Steve Biko. Sobukwe's great contribution was in his bravery and capacity to inspire a people to revolt as manifested in the Sharpeville protest which exposed once and for all the brutality and fascism of the apartheid regime. Furthermore, Sobukwe's Pan Africanist ideas, including his promotion of the anti-racist declaration that “there is only one race, the human race”, were major breakthroughs and linked South Africa to the broader African reality,” Jiyane says.

Discussants featuring in the seminar include: Mr. Thami ka Plaatjie, Director of the Pan African Foundation; Prof. Gilingwe Mayende, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Resources and Operations at

Central University of Technology; and Mr Zamikhaya gXabe (sic), author of *Serve, Suffer and sacrifice: The Story of Robert Sobukwe*.

Mr. Thami ka Platjje will discuss Sobukwe's personal life, Prof Mayende will deliver on his political life and Mr gXabe will share his ideas on the above mentioned book.

ENDS.

Additional Information:

Date: 27 February 2013

Time: 14:00 – 16:00

Venue: The Sanctuary, Freedom Park, Pretoria

For more information:

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