

Speech to be delivered by the Acting Head of
Department Mr CM Mashaba at the occasion of the
Memorial Service for the Late Ms AP Nhlabathi on the
17 August 2005

Programme Director
Regional Director, Mr. MJ Lushaba
Members of the bereaved family
Colleagues from the Education fraternity
Organised Labour
Association of School Governing Bodies
All Protocol observed

Today we have gathered here to remember and celebrate a life of service and dedication.

We have out of God's will assembled to pay homage to an outstanding character, a humble individual and a visionary leader.

Ms Nhlabathi represented our hope, vision and aspirations of a commitment that has added more meaning in changing the lives of our people for the better.

She was an educator, a principal and I personally interacted with her directly after she was appointed as a circuit Manager in 2000. Head Office was in Middelburg then.

I must without fear indicate that I found her to be passionate, assertive, humble and highly knowledgeable.

She knew what she wanted to achieve in life and she also knew the means to achieve her objectives.

I am aware that she was instrumental in enhancing teaching and learning within the Barberton Circuit.

This she did by engaging stakeholders proactively and progressively.

She was served in the Board of Directors in the Resource Centre that was recently launched in this Area. She among other things was able to unite all principals and was able to establish an effective circuit Management Committee. The list of her noble endeavours is endless.

Today we must all admit that Ms Nhlabathi was a true angel from God. She has served our people outstandingly.

We must pray to God to embrace us with her spirit because it is only people like her who can enable our country to respond to the needs of its citizens.

She was there when we needed her wisdom, advice and altruism.

I am told that on Monday the 8th August 2005, she attended a Special Senior management meeting that started from 08H00 to 18H00. Tuesday the 9th of August 2005, it was a public holiday and on Wednesday morning on her way to visit one of the schools, she met her untimely death. She died at work. ***May her soul rest in peace.***

Let me take this time as I pay tribute to the Nhlabathi family and request colleagues to respect her by taking form where she left and patriotically advance the struggle for building an education system that truly belongs to all.

Let us find courage from this character by denouncing all forms of social ills that still prevail in our work place.

I urge everyone to appreciate her role and contribution by standing side by side to each other.

She supported her subordinates and that must be a lesson we all must learn.

She encouraged those who were weak and she strengthen those who had focus extra courage.

In essence, she lived a balanced life. She was everywhere yet people appreciated her ways of doing things.
Ms Nhlabathi was a real mother, assertive, firm yet highly loving.

Let us all appreciate her life, by making a pledge that in her honour, we will make decisive advances towards the realization of the goal of a better life for all.

It is also fitting that, during the national Womans' months, as the country celebrates the contribution to the struggle for democracy, we honour Ms Nhlabathi's contribution, life of service and dedication.

She will be joining other exemplary freedom fighters, whose life was cut short while struggling to set all of us free.