

Eulogy by Geraldine Fraser Moleketi

As a family we feel this moment has come too soon. We will celebrate the life, of our mother, and we will do so over a period of time and in different ways, notwithstanding.

What can I say about our mother who has been a mother, a friend and confidante to us and to so many?

Let me start with the virus: she kept reminding me, in recent weeks, that I was born in the year of the State of Emergency and that I am turning sixty during what may be seen as the "year of COVID-19". She was very sad about the lock down. "Stuck here all be myself." Phoning people and connecting them to each other she tried to remain in touch.

We also wonder whether the flat may have been a bridge too far as she was stuck there ... coming to terms that her life was coming to a close.

Our mother loved people and loved her children and grandchildren. Loved all her siblings and nieces and nephews and the larger community of family that she had formed. All of us are grieving today.

When asked about the importance of family, she replied, "Why family is so important you are asking? I think it is to me because by family I mean community, a big community; the children and the parents and all of us form one community. We help each other. We support each other. That's all I can say about it. It was hard to survive in those years. We did not have a lot of money...." This captured the essence of her life

Our mother did not live by the rules, and I would wish to believe that this is in the way she left us, it was by her rules, she would chart it. COVID - 19 added to the complexity as we did not have the opportunity to see her whilst in hospital or say a final good bye.

Mummy always focused on what had to be done and looked at whom she had to work with to get it done.

Tough, firm and giving advice either through a story or directly with the response that we did not always acknowledge or even wish to accept at the time ...yet, it was honest and unpretentious and in most instances spot on or accurate. "I will not tell you what you would like to hear ..." was her famous introduction...

She made many sacrifices and she endured a lot of stress at different points of her life, but she navigated it and did it well.

In many instances we did not even realise the extent of stress that she and my late father endured because they dealt with it whilst shielding us when handling it, philosophically and, in most instances, very practically. You just need to get on with it and deal with the here and now, and in so-doing hope that it impacts positively and in an enduring manner on the future.

We could talk about our mother as mother, aunt, sister, cousin, daughter, granny and great granny ... and we will do so over the days, months and years to come.

We could talk about our mother as the community worker and we could go back in time when she distributed pamphlets and a copy of the Clarion in Klipfontein along with the Christmas stamps.

We could talk about her as the active member of the Methodist Church, the Women's Association (WA) and as the President of the Kleinvlei Women's Association from 1978 to 1980.

We were regaled with the stories of the WA's convention that attended in Liliesfontein in Namakwaland. There endeavors to raise funds and one such was the first ever 'garden party' for the Kleinvlei church and WA. It became a feature on the annual social calendar of the small Church community.

We could talk about all the voluntary work Cynthia in which immersed herself which includes the NPO "Reable" in the disability sector.

We could also pause and look at her work with Child Welfare. When Child welfare was experiencing financial and other difficulties, she was 'strategising and plotting' on how to best overcome this to ensure the best outcome for the children. She was always thinking how the sale of assets could ensure higher returns as she did not want Child Welfare to be swindled out of its assets.

We could reflect on her work with youth and children at risk in communities on the Cape Flats.... And we will do so over the days, weeks and months to come.

The mother of the Minister ... in the words of one former senior public servant "Equally exhausted and exhilarated we would make our way to the evening budget vote reception, and as I watched the community disembark from the bus I was profoundly reminded of how you have not forgotten your roots. Ma Fraser became our mother as we competed for her attention...". The link with "my roots" was our mother who organised participation across communities in the Cape Flats. People who never imagined that they would come to a parliamentary sitting... now a Peoples Parliament and sometimes they even ventured to engage from the balcony and had to be reminded by the Presiding Officer that it was not an interactive session ... such is the Cape Flats.

We can talk about Mom's travels, she had gone to the Netherlands and Switzerland in the late 1980's. Post 1995 as the mother she travelled Australia, Brazil, India, among other countries and told stories about ordinary people in every place including, as she referred to them, the 'invisible' people, the Dalits in India.

The girl from Klipfontein went to different parts of the world, she was comfortable in a banquet with President Commandante Fidel Castro, at Tuynhuis, whilst celebrating her eighty fifth birthday, at the School of Industries in Ottery, in style, with family, friends and members of the Parkwood community.

We could also talk about my mother the activist and underground worker. We could talk at length about the mother, along with my dad, who worked quietly in the support structures, part of the unsung and unmentioned activists.

The antique/second hand furniture shop, close to the station, in Bellville comes to mind. It was established to eventually generate an income for the underground structure/unit and serve as a front where messages could be dropped without detection or as a rendezvous point. ... and 'Bricks' (Christopher Manyi) comes to mind. A story for the weeks, months and years to come.

We could talk about the mother who had to arrange accommodation, for a few days, for a comrade/underground operative who had been infiltrated back into the country ...and she took her to Auntie Shirley(her sister) to put her up. The pretext being that this young woman was a niece of Arthur (our father). There are endless such stories of her work in the the support structures to the ANC underground ...: but these are part of the stories for the weeks, months and years ahead.

We could talk about the Rue Emmy home, in Glenhaven, with many a comrade passed through

She, along with our Father, straddled the internal and external structures of the movement.

We could talk about the mother who went to 'Spek en Ham' to buy 'offcuts'. Mind you, this was before offcuts became a delicacy. We privately joked that the family had to eat from the head to the tail of the pig or if there was carrots on special that was the vegetable on the daily menu because money was short, and they also wanted to save some of the little, to go to Zimbabwe once a year or once every second year.

There are many more aspects to our Mother's multifaceted life bit time does not permit us today or in one single tribute.

However, I must refer to the anger and anguish suffered by this mother when salacious claims were made by those who clearly were interested in "one dominant set of core beliefs" not interested in the cost or one "single narrative" that did not allow facts to come in the way of a 'good story' at a given point in time. Such purveyors of "fake news" or "alternate facts" could spin narratives not caring whom they cast aspersions upon, not appreciating the integrity of my mother and what she lived for ... probably because they never walked in her shoes and they will never will because they cannot even if they would wish to do so... This is still unfinished business... Mom!

There is so much more to say about our mother, the avid reader, the mother who always had the radio or television on, listening to the news and calling each one of us in the event we missed a particular item that she considered important....the ever critical analyst about this and that and not shying away from saying so.... And then calling and querying, "what does

Jabu say about this ..." even if she had already formed her own opinion... such was our mother.

Mummy we will miss you but go easy Mummy... rest easy and give Daddy a big, big hug from "Daddy's girls and Mummy's boys".

And have that foxtrot with Dad... as the two of you smile down.

Mummy, may this be a send-off that would make both of you proud.