

HONORARY GRADUATE

ALBERTINA NONTSIKELELO SISULU

Albertina Nontsikelelo Sisulu was born in 1918 in the Transkei and trained as a nurse at what was then called the Non-European Hospital in Johannesburg. In 1944, having completed her training, she married Walter Sisulu and began work as a nursing sister and community worker in Orlando.

She joined the ANC's Women's League at its inception and was a founder member of and a key figure in the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW), playing a prominent role in its efforts to resist the introduction of passes for African women. She was an active participant in the Defiance Campaign and was the first woman to be detained under the Sabotage Act's 90-day detention clause. Between 1963 and the 1980s she was restricted, detained and spent ten years under house arrest.

In February 1984 Albertina Sisulu was convicted of furthering the aims of the ANC and sentenced to four years imprisonment, a conviction and sentence which were set aside on appeal.

When the United Democratic Front (UDF) was formed, Albertina Sisulu was elected one of its three presidents. She also became an active patron of the Federation of Transvaal Women (FEDTRAW) which was launched in 1984.

In 1988 she played a conspicuous role in efforts to negotiate the end of the Soweto rent boycott and in 1989 she represented the UDF on an official visit to the United States to meet President George Bush. She helped re-establish the ANC Women's League in South Africa in 1990 and serves on its executive committee. In 1994, she was elected to Parliament as an ANC representative.

She is the patron of the Masakhisizwe Women's Empowerment Trust, Streetwise, the Job Creation Trust, the All Africa Games, the Informal Business Training Trust and the Albertina Sisulu Foundation. She is also a member of the board of Johnnic.

A living link between the militant anti-apartheid mass movement of the 1950s and the activist youth of the 1980s, Albertina Sisulu, together with her husband, is a much loved and respected political leader and one of Johannesburg's leading citizens. She is a woman of enormous courage and has devoted her life to the cause of democracy and justice in South Africa.

It is with great pride and pleasure that the University confers upon Albertina Nontsikelelo Sisulu its highest honour, the degree of Doctor of Laws *honoris causa*.