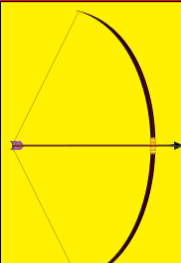


CELEBRATING OUR INDIGENOUS HERITAGE



First Nation News

Founded 2013

Recognition → Restitution → Restoration

September 2026



Table Mountain, the King Protea and the fynbos collectively tell a broader story about the Cape — a place where geology, biodiversity, culture and identity are inseparable. Now this extraordinary natural heritage is immortalised in a new prestigious 2026 UNESCO World Heritage coin series. More about this on page 3.

Our heritage *shapes* our future

ZENZILE KHOISAN

There needs to be a concerted effort to ensure that the true story of all South Africa's people is reflected in the history books that are used by learners within the country's school system because failure to change the skewed version of history presented within the basic education department's history curriculum would rob our young people of the knowledge of their roots.

This is the view of veteran educator and avid sportsman Clive Solomon who was one of several speakers who participated in a Heritage Day program of reflection at the First Nations Heritage

Centre at Riverlands, Observatory.

The occasion was also convened to pay homage to many stalwarts of the Khoi and San resurgence who had participated on the perilous fight to achieve a permanent anchorage for First



CHIEF JOHN JANSEN

Nations culture and heritage within the Riverlands development complex but sadly passed on before they could realise the true essence of this vision becoming a reality.

Father Oswald Cloete, rector of the Church of the Resurrection Anglican Church in Bonteheuwel, called on those present to accept that we were preceded by dedicated and committed people whose selfless sacrifices open the path for us to search for, discover and celebrate our heritage.

He compared numerous of the figures on the wall of heroes to Jesus Christ as described in the Holy Bible.

Continued on page 2

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Heritage Day celebrated at First Nations Centre

"I have been a priest for many years and after all these years of serving the cross at Golgotha where Jesus Christ was crucified is about love. He lived in an era where the brutal Roman empire hunted down people of principle. The cross is therefore about the love that Jesus Christ and many of the heroes had for their fellow human beings. From ancient times to those who laid down their lives during the anti-apartheid struggle, they were prepared to pay the ultimate sacrifice because they loved their people," Fr Cloete stated.

This theme also came through in the message from Chief John Jansen, trustee of the Western Cape First Nations Collective Trust.

"We had to sacrifice immensely to realise this vision of having a permanent anchorage at Riverlands. Here we must come to find ourselves, to celebrate and shape our future from the rich heritage that was gifted to us by our forefathers," Chief Jansen said.

Solomon described the current period in South Africa as "a time of chaos" when clear actions need to be taken to shift the unjust paradigm that had severely dispossessed and disenfranchised the descendants of South Africa's Khoi and San.

"If you know where you are coming from and where you are going to, you are on the right track. It's like driving on a road and suddenly the road splits in two at a Y-junction and you have to



CHIEF MARY JANSEN



FATHER OSWALD CLOETE



CLIVE SOLOMON



GOAS CHANTAL REVELL

make a decision which way you are going. "If you are a purpose driven person, you won't make a mistake. Despite the many battles we are facing, it is time for us as a people, descendants

of the KhoiSan, to arise and reclaim our heritage," Solomon stated. "As an educator with experience of many years I have drafted a 10-page document for high school learners because I discovered that history text-

books fall short when it comes to telling the full story.

"My invitation to school principals to address the History Curriculum Review, which is sorely lacking in substantive information on South Africa's foundation nation, has been met with delays, with only Bonteheuvel High School on the Cape Flats willing to give us an opportunity to engage them," he explained.

As a clear example of what he believes are the distortions and omissions that need to be addressed and told more fully is the story of prisoners on Robben Island, where political prisoners who opposed apartheid were imprisoned.

"They will speak about the iconic Nelson Mandela who was imprisoned on Robben Island for 18 years, but do not say that Autshumato, a Khoi Chief, was the first man imprisoned on Robben Island and the first to escape from there," the veteran educator stated.

The gathering was also addressed by Chief Mary Jansen, founder of Khoi Indigenous Women in Action (KIWIA) whose remarks focused on the need to address the damage caused by the injustice the First Peoples had to endure in the past.

The KIWIA founder stated that the trauma that our forebears had to endure "seems to have been transferred over generations and therefore we must engage in the healing of inter-generational trauma".

She also stressed the need for unity and stated that we need to be vigilant. She called on First Nation descendants to cultivate positive attributes pointing out that "jealousy, envy, suspicion, gossiping are issues that we should not encourage, as it is now time for us to put our differences aside and foster unity, because "united we will stand but divided we shall certainly fall".

Gaos Chantal Revell, Western Cape representative on the National KhoiSan Council stated that "we have achieved this place of anchorage through tremendous sacrifice. It has been a long struggle to ensure legacy for the generations to come."



REFLECTION: A program of reflection on Heritage Day at the First Nations Heritage Centre in Riverland. The occasion was also convened to pay homage to many stalwarts of the Khoi and San resurgence who had participated on the perilous fight to achieve a permanent anchorage but passed on before they could see this vision becoming a reality.

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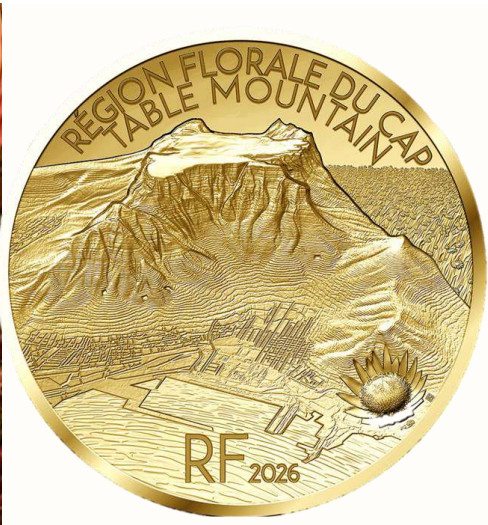


Table Mountain, Cape Floral Region immortalised in prestigious French coin series

South Africa’s extraordinary natural heritage is taking centre stage on the international scene, with Table Mountain, the King Protea and the remarkable biodiversity of the Cape Floral Region featured in a new 2026 UNESCO World Heritage coin series from France’s historic Monnaie de Paris.

The collection turns one of South Africa’s most recognisable landscapes into a miniature work of art in precious metal, bringing together the imposing silhouette of Table Mountain and the intricate botanical world of the fynbos that surrounds it.

Monnaie de Paris’ UNESCO World Heritage Series, the collection celebrates not only an iconic Cape Town landmark, but also one of the most biologically diverse regions on Earth.

According to Cape Business News, the new series places South Africa’s natural inheritance in the international spotlight, depicting Table Mountain alongside the King Protea and other indigenous fynbos elements.

The publication highlighted the launch in the context of South Africa’s Heritage Day celebrations, describing the coin as an international tribute to a landscape that is distinctly South African.

The Cape Floral Region is the smallest of the world’s six recognised floral kingdoms, yet it is exceptionally rich in plant life.

The region contains approximately 8,200 plant species, with about 80% classified as fynbos. Many of these

plants occur nowhere else in the world. The Cape Floral Region Protected Areas were added to UNESCO’s World Heritage List in 2004 in recognition of their exceptional plant diversity and the ecological and evolutionary processes that have shaped the region.

That extraordinary botanical heritage plays almost as prominent a role on the coin as Table Mountain itself. In the foreground is the King Protea, South Africa’s national flower, rendered in intricate detail. Behind it rises the familiar flat-topped outline of Table Mountain, while native fynbos extends across the composition.

The contrast is deliberate: the monumental solidity of the mountain is set against the delicacy and diversity of the Cape’s plant life, bringing the two defining elements of the region together in a single design.

Heritage beyond history

For Rael Demby, CEO of the South African Gold Coin Exchange and The Scion Shop, the significance of the series extends beyond its appeal to collectors.

Demby said Heritage Day offered an opportunity to celebrate South Africa’s natural inheritance as well as its cultural and historical legacy.

“Heritage is not only about what we preserve from the past, but also what we value today and protect for future generations. The Cape fynbos is unmistakably South African, and seeing it immortalised on an international

coin is something very special.” The sentiment captures one of the central themes behind the collection: that heritage is not confined to monuments, traditions and objects from the past. It also encompasses living ecosystems and landscapes whose preservation will determine what future generations inherit.

In that respect, the choice of the Cape Floral Region is particularly significant. Its international recognition rests not merely on the beauty of its flowers, but on the extraordinary concentration of biodiversity within a relatively small geographical area.

Monnaie de Paris has listed several versions of the 2026 Table Mountain and Cape Floral Region release. These include a €10 silver proof coin, as well as gold editions with face values of €250, €500 and €1,000.

The €250 gold edition is particularly scarce, with a reported mintage of only 150 pieces. It is scheduled to become available on 20 October 2026, making it an exceptionally limited release for collectors.

The series will be distributed exclusively in South Africa through The Scion Shop, the retail division of the South African Gold Coin Exchange.

The extremely low mintages of the gold editions are expected to make them sought-after pieces on the international collector market.

Sources:
UNESCO; SANParks; The Scion Shop; News24; CapeTownEtc

SA landscape with international reach

Table Mountain is immense – it dominates Cape Town’s skyline and forms part of a landscape known around the world.

The Cape Floral Region encompasses an ecological treasure of extraordinary scale and complexity.

Yet both have now been distilled into a small piece of precisely engraved precious metal.

What prevents the coin from becoming simply another depiction of a famous landmark is the prominence given to the environment around the mountain.

Table Mountain, the King Protea and the fynbos collectively tell a broader story about the Cape – a place where geology, biodiversity, culture and identity are inseparable.

Through the craftsmanship of one of the world’s most historic mints, that story will now travel far beyond South Africa.

The new coin is therefore more than a souvenir of Cape Town’s famous skyline.

It is a miniature tribute to a landscape whose significance lies as much in the thousands of species growing across its slopes and valleys as it does in the unmistakable mountain towering above them.

And as South Africans celebrate their heritage, the series provides an international reminder that some of the country’s most valuable inheritance is alive, growing and worthy of protection.

Created in Paris, inspired by the Cape

The coin was designed by Joaquín Jimenez, Chief Engraver and Director of Artistic Creation at Monnaie de Paris.

Remarkably, Jimenez developed the design from Paris without having visited South Africa while working on the composition.

Instead, he conducted detailed research into the geology, vegetation and distinctive character of the Cape landscape.

His task went beyond simply reproducing a recognisable image of Table Mountain. The ambition was to create a design capable of conveying something of the experience of the Cape itself — its scale, its botanical richness and its position at the southern edge of the African continent.

Jimenez has reportedly expressed a desire to experience the landscape personally when he

eventually visits Cape Town, including seeing the famous “tablecloth” of cloud descend over Table Mountain and experiencing the scent of wild fynbos.

Depth created entirely in metal One of the most distinctive aspects of the coin is the way depth



Joaquín Jimenez, Chief Engraver and Director of Artistic Creation at Monnaie de Paris.

and texture have been created.

Rather than using colour gradients to distinguish between the mountain, vegetation and surrounding landscape, Jimenez relied on the physical relief of the metal.

Raised and recessed areas interact with light as the coin is moved, producing changes in texture and giving the composition a sense of distance and perspective.

The technique allows the King Protea, fynbos and Table Mountain to emerge at different visual levels while retaining the character of a traditionally engraved coin.

The result combines modern design with the centuries-old art of minting, transforming a vast natural landscape into a composition measured in millimetres.

Reclaiming our Heritage, Shaping our Future

CLIVE SOLOMON
veteran educator and avid sportsman

Amid the chaos that we find ourselves in this Heritage Month, there can be no greater time to be alive in South Africa. If you know where you are coming from and where you are going to, you are on the right track.

It's like driving on a road and suddenly the road splits in two at a Y-junction and you have to make a decision which way you are going.

If you are a purpose-driven person, you won't make a mistake. Despite the many battles we are facing, it is time for us as a people, descendants of the KhoiSan, to arise and reclaim our heritage.

On Heritage Day I went to buy some rolls at Checkers and the cashier at the counter said to me "Happy Heritage Day" to which I responded "What is that?"

I always look for an entry point to confront people about things that matter – in this instance it was: "Who is she?" and "What is she celebrating?"

At the end of the conversation she was relieved and prepared to find out more about her past.

As an educator with experience of many years I have drafted a 10-page document for high school learners because I discovered that history textbooks fall short when it comes to telling the full story.

Journalists and tour guides get mileage out of presenting the iconic Nelson Mandela who was imprisoned on Robben Island for 18 years, but do not say that Autshumato, a Khoi Chief, was the first man imprisoned on Robben Island and the first to escape from there.

Many people on the Cape Flats would say they know about the KhoiSan because they learnt about it in the history class.

However, ask them if they are KhoiSan they would either shy away from answering the question or openly say No.

My invitation to school principals to address the History Curriculum Review, which is sorely lacking in substantive information on South Africa's foundation nation, has been met with delays, with only Bonteheuwel High School on the Cape Flats willing to give us an opportunity to engage them.

As a sportsman I take great pride in the achievements of our national sports teams, especially "players of colour" like Chester Williams, Cheslyn Kolbe, Paul Adams, Vernon Philander, Wade van Niekerk, amongst others.

I used to play for Thistles Rugby Club in Bonteheuwel, but was denied a chance to play for the Springboks. The closest I could come was a lapel badge of the South African Airways in the form of a springbok that my mother got from the 'madam' she worked for in Rondebosch.

Since sports has immensely contributed to social cohesion in South Africa, I suggested that the Heritage Day should be more interactive by including some Indigenous games.



KNOW YOUR ROOTS: Clive Solomon, former lecturer and rugby player for Thistles.

There are many other heroes in our ranks that have made their mark in various sectors of society. These inspiring figures and the legacy they have left us has been given strong recognition on the walls of the main gallery and other exhibition rooms of the First Nations Heritage Centre at Riverlands, Observatory.

Here one will find displays of Ancient Cultural Heroes such as Krotoa, Dawid Stuurman, Sarah Baartman and Adam Kok). Another section of the heroes wall features Resurgence Heroes such as Regopstaan Kruiper, Jatti Bredekamp, Joyce Katz



The writer takes great pride in the achievements of "players of colour". From left is Chester Williams; Cheslyn Kolbe, Vernon Philander and Paul Adams.

and Harleen Sassman.

Another section celebrates Anti-Apartheid Struggle Heroes including Ashley Kriel, Dulcie September, Johnny Issel and Cissie Gool.

In the section featuring Musicians, Writers, Poets, Artists and Academic Heroes one will encounter Adam Small, Neville Alexander, Jakes Gerwel, Taliep Petersen and Shaleen Surtie-Richards.

In order for us to gain a deeper understanding of the rich heritage, history and indigenous knowledge of the Khoi and San it is critical that

we read insightful books such as *So Glo Ons*, by internationally acclaimed historian Dr Boezak.

In one section of this book Dr Boezak discusses the unity that was in the KhoiSan community and the separation of the different branches of the foundational peoples that, he writes, occurred after an argument (gestryery).

The trauma that our forebears had to endure seems to have been transferred over generations and therefore we must engage in the healing of generational trauma as communicated by Chief Mary Jansen, the founder and leader of Khoi Indigenous Women In Action (KIWIA).

In her address to us at our Heritage Day celebrations, she pointed out that jealousy, envy, suspicion, gossiping are issues that we should not encourage, as it is now time for us to put our differences aside and foster unity, because "united we will stand but divided we shall certainly fall".

What we are doing is not for ourselves, but for posterity, carrying through a legacy to our children and our children's children, so that they can enjoy the fruits of our labour.

I was conscious of this recently when I bought my granddaughter a broom and cut a piece off so that she could handle it easily to sweep the house.

The part that was left I shaped into a baton, varnished it, handed it over to her and asked her to run with it and hand it over to her children.

Drawing from this lesson I am reminded that Nelson Mandela, the first post-apartheid president of our country was a great statesman, but unfortunately the baton he handed over to his successors has been dropped.

Despite the challenges we are facing, we must

continue to 'fight the good fight, run the race and keep the faith'. Heritage Day and Heritage Month will come to an end, but we should ensure that our journey to true freedom becomes a lived reality.

Just looking at Hoerrikwaggo (Table Mountain) should remind and encourage us that the same Creator who made the mountain rise out of the sea, will cause the Foundation (first) Nation to arise and take their rightful place in transitioning from the tip to the top of Africa.

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Birchwood All Inclusive Convention

Khoi and San Leaders at the All Inclusive Convention of KhoiSan Communities, convened by the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) in February 2025 at Boksburg, Gauteng. It is here that the government, led by Minister Velenkosini Hlabisa of CoGTA brought together, what on face value, was a widely representative group of Khoi and San leaders from around the country, to discuss frustrations with the slow pace of recognition for Khoi and San leaders and communities.



Serious concern over new Trad Bill

Several senior Khoi and San leaders have expressed serious concern over the new Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Bill (B11-2026), currently before Parliament for public comment and consultation.

The leaders say it is “not fit for purpose in its current form” and could create significant problems for Khoi and San leaders and communities seeking constitutional recognition.

The proposed legislation was deliberated over two days in Cape Town by senior leaders of the National Khoi and San Council (NKSC), and the newly elected national leaders of the Nama, Cape Khoi, Korana and Griqua peoples.

The leaders resolved to urgently undertake intensive consultations within Khoi and San communities to ensure that people understand the contents and implications of the Bill.

They also identified several provisions they believe could undermine the interests and representation of Khoi and San communities.

A central demand is the call for separate legislation for the Khoi and San, based on fears that their voices could be overwhelmed within proposed national and provincial houses combining traditional and Khoi-San leaders.

“There is a danger of having our voice undermined through a process of hegemony, in which we will always be subject to the decision of a majority in the proposed national and provincial houses of traditional and Khoi-San leaders,” the leaders said.

National Khoi and San Council secretary Frans Kraalshoek said the council was consulted in the development of the new legislation.

“We have looked at the challenging points that are then being tabled in the Bill, but from the offset we were not part of this new shape of the Bill that has been developed.

“When we looked at the stakeholders that have been consulted within this new document, the National Khoi and San Council has never been consulted,” Frans Kraalshoek said.

“If the Bill in its current form is not going to serve the best interests of our indigenous communities, we would rather see a separate Khoi and San tradi-

tional Bill that properly represents Khoi and San communities,” he added.

The leaders described the decades-long campaign for legal and constitutional recognition of the descendants of the Khoi and San in South Africa as “a truly disturbing path of broken promises, bureaucratic dithering and hopes dashed by legal setbacks”.

This campaign, they believe, has now been placed at peril because parliament itself had not meaningfully consulted the directly interested and affected parties.

Parliament has also not substantively canvassed the views and opinions of indigenous leaders and communities before the crafting of the new Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Bill (B11-2026).

The bill follows the Constitutional Court’s landmark ruling declaring the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act (Act 3 of 2019) unconstitutional.

The previous Act had provided the principal legal pathway for the recognition of Khoi and San communities and leaders.

After extensive deliberation the Khoi and San leaders resolved that, in its current form, the new Traditional and Khoi-San Legislative Bill (B11-2026), now out for public input, could impede recognition for Khoi and San leaders and communities. This is because it is not “fit for purpose” and “sets up conditions that could plunge the process into chaos”.

Griqua Volkspresident Andrew le Fleur, a member of the legal fraternity, and head of the Griqua National Conference, also participated in the deliberations, and provided insight into the constitutional requirements governing Parliament’s response to the court ruling.

He explained that while Parliament has discretion over how it fulfills its constitutional obligation of public participation, the process must be reasonable.

In determining whether Parliament and the provincial legislatures had previously failed in this duty, the Constitutional Court considered the significance of the legislation, its impact on affected communities, the standard Parliament had set for itself

and the lack of urgency in passing the legislation.

“The court held that the deficiencies in the public participation process demonstrated a substantial failure of their constitutional obligation to facilitate public participation,” Le Fleur said.

The court suspended the declaration of invalidity for 24 months, allowing Parliament time either to re-enact the legislation in a constitutionally compliant form or to adopt alternative legislation that meets constitutional requirements.

The leaders also raised concerns about provisions that, they believe, fail to take sufficient account of the unique historical circumstances of Khoi and San communities, whose cultures, land, governance structures and institutions were severely disrupted through colonialism and apartheid.

Of particular concern is the introduction of leadership positions that may have no basis in the historical governance traditions of Khoi and San communities.

Part 3 of the Bill, under clause 7(2), provides for the recognition of kingships and queenships among Khoi-San leadership positions.

Clause 5 establishes a mechanism through which two or more communities could apply to the President to be recognised as kingships or queenships, subject to specified conditions.

Le Fleur questioned the appropriateness of this provision, pointing out that the bill refers to Khoi-San communities rather than kingdoms or queendoms.

“Have we ever heard of a community with a king or a queen?” he asked, warning that the provision could create serious disputes over succession and leadership.

“Just imagine the struggle for succession should a king or queen die or become incompetent.

“This is a very dangerous absurdity and a contradiction which should be removed from the Bill.”

He further warned that the provision could fuel competition and conflict between communities over senior leadership positions, particularly where different positions could carry different remuneration levels.

Restoring & Rebuilding communities

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Restoring, remembering knowledge of forebears in building Matjieshut



Chief Jean Burgess of the Ghonaqua People in the Eastern Cape, guided the ceremonial component.

The Matjieshut – !Hau Oms Restoration Workshop – organised by the Indigenous Knowledge Systems of the Built Environment Unit (IKSBEU) and hosted at Nelson Mandela University's School of Architecture, continued the knowledge-sharing process initiated during the 2025 Heritage Month workshop, when the Matjieshut was first built on South Campus.

Returning to the structure one year later, the 2026 workshop focused on restoration, maintenance and, importantly, the continuity of Indigenous building knowledge.

Led by Associate Professor Magda Minguzzi, the initiative brought together First Nations Knowledge Holders, Indigenous youth, university students, academics and staff from different institutions and disciplines, creating a collaborative space around the safeguarding and transmission of this important Indigenous knowledge.

Central to the workshop were Chief Jean Burgess of the Ghonaqua People, who also guided the ceremonial component; the Indigenous storyteller and cultural practitioner Jason Jacobs and Manfred Adams as workshop facilitators; and the knowledge holders, Margaretha Ida Cloete, a skilled matjie weaver, and Hendrik T. Brandt, whose expertise includes harvesting, weaving and structural construction.

Their participation ensured that the knowledge they hold was transmitted through direct practice, demonstration, conversation and collective work.

The broader IKSBE UNIT project team reflected once again a collaborative and constructive work environment approach together with the transdisciplinary nature of the Unit: Lucy Vosloo, Lecturer at the Architecture Technology Dep; Nii K. Botchway from the Faculty of Humanities, Visual Arts Department; Godfrey Damons from the Horticulture Department; and Professor Subeshini Moodley from

the Faculty of Humanities, School of Language, Media and Communication, together with students involved in documentation and communication activities.

The intergenerational transmission was at the centre of the workshop, ensuring that these practices are not only documented but learned, embodied and carried forward by younger generation.

The workshop also connected Indigenous knowledge with formal education and academic exchange.

Participants included second and third-year History of Architecture students from the Department of Architecture, Media and Communication students, Dr David Eduardo Morocho Jaramillo Postdoctoral Fellow at the School of Architecture NMU; Relebogile Mphahlele Master's student from Tshwane University of Technology, and Dr Janeke Thumbran, Head of the History Department at Rhodes University.

Their participation expanded the workshop beyond the School of Architecture, creating a fertile dialogue and multidisciplinary perspectives.

The restoration itself revealed the importance of maintaining living structures through continued engagement. Parts of the timber framework had been affected by termites, requiring damaged elements to be identified and replaced.

Suitable natural material was collected from areas surrounding the university campus, allowing participants to experience the complete material process: from identifying and harvesting resources to preparing and incorporating them into the structure.

A central activity was learning how to prepare and weave the matjies.

Rather than encountering Indigenous construction as an abstract subject of study, students



learned directly through observation, repetition and participation. This process demonstrated how knowledge is embedded in gestures, materials, skills and relationships, and how learning by doing becomes a fundamental means of transmitting ancestral knowledge.

More than a restoration exercise, the workshop brought together Indigenous communities, knowledge holders, younger generations, students, academics and different university departments around a shared responsibility for cultural continuity.

The Matjieshut therefore functions not simply as a structure to be preserved, but as a living site of knowledge exchange, where restoration becomes an opportunity to strengthen relationships, transmit skills and ensure that Indigenous building knowledge remains active across generations.

In this sense, the 2026 workshop represents a natural continuation of the initiative begun in 2025: from building the Matjieshut together, to learning how to care for it, restore it and pass on the knowledge required to build it again in the future.



Adoption of code of Ethics and Conduct

The Inauguration Ceremony of the Signing of the Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct, held on 05 September, during the SAJAH Conference 2026 at Nelson Mandela University's School of Architecture, was an incredibly successful and profound occasion.

The event marked a defining milestone for the Indigenous Knowledge Systems of the Built Environment Unit (IKSBEU), reflecting both the Unit's values and the University's broader Vision 2030.

Indigenous Leaders from across South Africa travelled to Nelson Mandela University to formally sign the Codes, which were co-designed and written collaboratively by the Unit members, both Indigenous and University representative.

This act was more than symbolic: it embodied trust, respect, and a collective commitment to honour the principles guiding ethical engagement. Being together was itself an act of dedication, commitment, love and recognition that the Unit's work matters deeply to all involved.

For over a decade, Prof Magda Minguzzi, Team Leader of the IKS Built Environment, has collaborated in research and engagement projects with First Nations Leaders and their communities.

Since the Unit's establishment, the need to co-create and adopt guiding

principles became clear. Rooted in Indigenous protocols, the Codes affirm values of mutual trust, accountability, consultation, reciprocity, and shared benefit in both research and project outcomes.

The SAJAH Conference 2026, themed *Place, Practice, and Knowledge: Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Arts and Architecture*, provided the perfect platform for the Ceremony.

By situating the signing within a gathering of national and international scholars, the event highlighted the global relevance of Indigenous epistemologies and their role in shaping sustainable, culturally grounded approaches to the built environment.

The ceremony was graced by distinguished leaders who travelled from across South Africa to take part in it, like Queen Gail Baatjies, King Dr Vivian Kok, Paramount Chief Gert Cornelius Steenkamp, Chief Zenzile Khoisan, Chief Eugene Damons, Chief Wallace Williams, Yardin Booysen.

The signing included also the Nelson Mandela University academics and students namely Nana Botchway Ntow, Apesemakahene Pakro Traditional Area, Prof Alethea de Villiers, Godfrey Damons-First Nation descendant, Lucy Vosloo, Dr David Morocho Jaramillo (Post-Doc), Kawthar Rashid Jeewa (Darch student) and Mohau Setlhako. Their presence un-



The First Nations Leaders representing the four indigenous houses that is part of the Indigenous Knowledge Systems of the Built Environment Unit. From left, Chief Zenzile Khoisan, Cape Khoi; San Nation, under the leadership of Paramount Chief Gert Steenkamp; Prof. Magda Minguzzi (Unit Team leader); Queen Gail Baatjies, Koranna Kraal Peoples, and Dr King Vivian Kok, Griqua Nation (Adam Kok III).

derscored the unity and shared vision of the Unit.

The Codes were officially witnessed by Prof Sudesh Rathilal, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, the Built Environment, and Technology, and Prof Tirivavi Moyo, Faculty representative for the Research Ethics Committee. Their endorsement reinforced the institutional significance of the adoption.

Gratitude was also extended to the Direction of the School of Architecture, Andrew Palframan; Prof Subeshini Moodley; Dr Yolanda Van Der Vyver; Heidi Botha; and the many colleagues and SAJAH delegates who bore witness to this historic moment.

The signing of the Codes resonates strongly with Nelson Mandela University's Vision 2030, which emphasizes ethical leadership, inclusivity, transformative engagement with communities together with a transformative, inclusive, and socially responsive

higher education.

By embedding Indigenous Knowledge Systems into academic and professional practice, the University demonstrates its commitment to shaping a future grounded in respect, sustainability, and shared responsibility.

This ceremony will be remembered as history in the making, a landmark in South Africa's journey toward integrating Indigenous epistemologies into the built environment, and a shining example of how NMU's Vision 2030 is being realized in practice.

While arrangements will be made for additional signings to include leaders unable to attend, the Codes of Ethics and Conduct are now formally adopted.

This achievement represents not only a procedural milestone but also a profound affirmation of values that will guide the Unit's work into the future.

Indigenous Knowledge in Arts, Architecture

The 2026 Annual Conference of the South African Journal of Art History (SAJAH), an accredited journal in the fields of visual arts and architecture, was hosted at the School of Architecture on 4–5 September 2026.

Held under the theme "Place, Practice, and Knowledge: Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Arts and Architecture", the conference brought together scholars, practitioners, creatives and Indigenous representatives to engage critically with the spatial, cultural and creative dimensions of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS).

The conference was organised through collaboration between the Faculty of Engineering, the Built Environment and Technology (EBET), the School of Architecture, the Faculty of Humanities, the School of Visual and Performing Arts, and the Indigenous Knowledge Systems of the Built Environment Unit (IKSBEU).

The conference was opened by Prof Sudesh Rathilal, Executive Dean of EBET, followed by Dr Yolanda van der Vyver, Editor of SAJAH, and Prof Magda Minguzzi, Team Leader of IKSBEU. Indigenous participation formed an important part of the opening programme, with the presence of Paramount Chief Gert C. Steenkamp and the Oeswana's Children, as well as

Chief Zenzile Khoisan as keynote speaker of the day two of the conference.

The programme also included a ceremonial signing associated with the inauguration of the IKSBEU.

Across the two-day programme, the conference featured 22 contributions from scholars across South Africa, alongside international presenters from Australia, England and Spain.

Presentations explored craft and knowledge transmission, community and spatial practices, Indigenous architectures, climate resilience and adaptation, pedagogy, memory and international perspectives on Indigenous knowledge.

The conference also hosted the exhibition Under the Same Sky: Dwelling with the Ancestors, curated by Dr David Eduardo Morocho Jaramillo, POST Doc at the School of Architecture.

Through stories, interviews, songs and documentation from the Am-

azon, the exhibition created a space for dialogue between the SAJAH conference delegates and the Indigenous Knowledge Holders.

The 2026 SAJAH Annual Conference underscored the importance of IKS in advancing scholarship across arts and architecture.

Through interdisciplinary collaboration, international contributions, the

exhibition and Ceremony by IKSBEU, the event highlighted the role of Indigenous epistemologies in shaping resilient, ethical, and community-engaged futures.

By integrating academic discourse with creative practice, the conference positioned SAJAH as a critical platform for inclusive dialogue and global scholarly exchange.



ABOVE: Chief !Garu Zenzile Khoisan was the keynote speaker at the Annual Conference of SAJAH. **BOTTOM:** Dr. David Morocho presenting the exhibition Under the same sky to Chief Zenzile.

PICTURES: RENE HEUNIS

Erfenisdagvieringe by Coachman's Cottage Museum



Prinses Vanessa Hermanus van die Koninklike De Kuilenrivier Raad in Bellville (heel voor) met die leierskap van die Cochokwa-stam voor die Coachman's Cottage Museum.



David Marthinus, speel die Khoiboog.



Gamiedah Maarman voor die matjieshuis.



Prof. Harold Herman, bestuurder van die Museum.



Mandy en Nick Thysen.



Mnr. en mev. Romeo de Lange, van die Stad Kaapstad, en stamhoof Nick Thysen.



Daniel Hermanus en Nick Thysen.

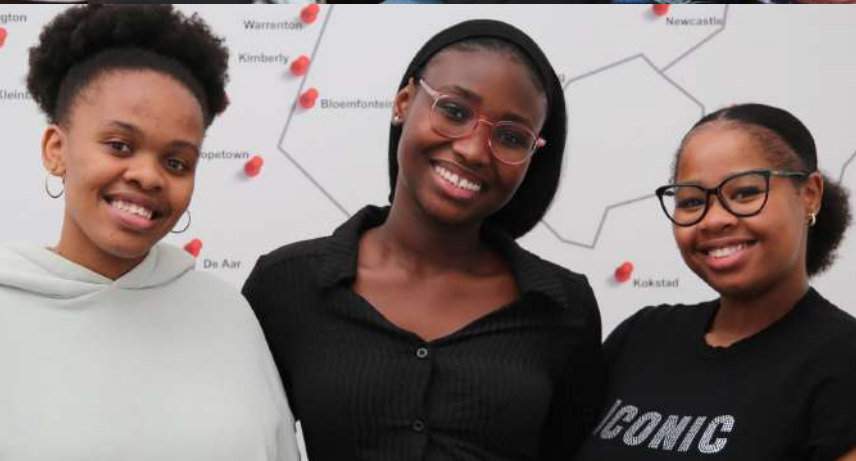


Khoi-historikus Elzane October dra haar gedig voor.



Godfrey Thomas.

Celebrating Heritage Day at Riverlands



Kruie vir die herstel van liggaam en gees

In die uitgestrekte Groot-Karoo, aan die voet van 'n berg sonder 'n amptelike naam, het 'n besondere verhaal hom afgespeel: dié van 'n bejaarde Griekwa-kruiedokter wat sy lewenslange kennis van die veld aan 'n bekende Afrikaanse aktrise oorgedra het.

Oom Johannes Willemse was reeds in sy negentigs toe Antoinette Pienaar uiteindelik by hom aankom. Hy was half verontwaardig dat dit haar byna 40 jaar geneem het om haar weg na hom te vind. Volgens hom het hy al jare lank gedroom van die vrou aan wie hy sy kennis sou leer en wat sou help om dit vir toekomstige geslagte te bewaar.

Toe Antoinette in 2001 op Theefontein, die plaas van haar kleinneef Jacques Pienaar, aankom, was sy ernstig siek. Tydens 'n besoek aan Mali in Wes-Afrika het sy serebrale malaria opgedoen en byna gesterf.

Haar liggaam was erg verswak en sy het by haar ouers in Beaufort-Wes gaan herstel. 'n Toevallige besoek aan Theefontein sou egter haar lewe in 'n totaal nuwe rigting stuur. Daar het sy en Oom Johannes se paaie uiteindelik gekruis.

“Nou eers kom Madam,” was sy ietwat ongeduldige eerste woorde aan haar.

Oom Johannes het lank op hierdie ontmoeting gewag. Sy eie afstammeling het daardie tyd min belangstelling getoon om die ou kruietradisies voort te sit, en daarom was Antoinette se koms vir hom van besondere betekenis.

Vir jare het hy gedroom van 'n vrou in 'n rooi bakkie wat eendag die fakkel by hom sou oorneem. Nou het sy, siek en verswak maar gretig om te leer, voor hom gestaan.

Antoinette het toe op Theefontein kom bly. Sy het in 'n werkershuisie oorkant Oom Johannes s'n ingetrek en haarself stadig maar seker begin verdiep in die kennis van kruie, die veld en 'n eenvoudiger leefwyse.

Volgens Antoinette het dokters haar gewaarsku dat die skade aan haar lewer en niere ernstig was en dat sy haar op 'n vroeë dood moes voorberei. Sy skryf haar latere herstel toe aan die kruie wat sy gebruik het en aan die lewe in die Karoo.

Sy vertel dat sy eerstehands ervaar het hoe kruie die liggaam kan ondersteun en versterk. Vir haar was dit nie bloot 'n fisieke herstelproses nie. Sy het geglo dat kruie ook 'n mens se emosionele welstand kan beïnvloed en dat die rustige ritme van die Karoo 'n belangrike rol in haar herstel gespeel het.

“In hierdie proses het die son warm op my kop geskyn en die blou hemel die mantel geword wat ek elke dag gedra het,” vertel sy. “Om só deur die natuurlike balans omring te wees, het my gehelp om ook weer balans in my binnelandskap te vind.”

Die lewe wat sy saam met Oom Johannes geleef het, was eenvoudig. Hulle het op 'n koppie naby die plaasopstal gewoon, in werkershuisies sonder elektrisiteit of lopende water. Rondom hulle was diere, voëls, oop ruimtes en stilte.

In Antoinette se klein wit huisie op die koppie het stories soos rivierklippies begin uitrol. Voor die klein kombuisvenster, op 'n ou tikmasjien, is die bekende boek *Kruidjie roer my Kruidjie roer my – Die antieke helingskuns van die Karoo-veld* geskryf.

Die boek sou later een van die belangrikste maniere word waarop die kennis wat Oom Johannes deur sy leeftyd versamel het, vir 'n groter gehoor bewaar is.

Oom Johannes was onder baie name bekend: siener, kruiedokter, geneser, storieverteller en leermeester.

Hy is op die plaas Breekkierie in die Kenhardt-



BESONDERSE VRIENDSKAP: Oom Johannes Willemse, die Griekwa kruiedokter, en Antoinette Pienaar wat sy nalatenskap voortsit.

FOTO'S EN ARTIKEL MET VERGUNNING VAN ANTOINETTE PIENAAR

distrik gebore en was die oudste van twaalf kinders.

Sy kennis van die Karoo se kruie, asook die verhale en wysede wat daarmee saamgegaan het, het hy by sy oupa Hansie geleer.

Sy lewenspad het hom uiteindelik na die skaapboer Jacques Pienaar se plaas gebring, waar hy as jagter gewerk het. Diep in sy negentigs het Oom Johannes steeds gereeld die berge agter die plaashuis uitgeklim en kilometers ver deur die veld gestap op soek na kruie en diere.

Vir Antoinette was sy merkwaardige lewenskragtigheid 'n lewende bewys van die leefwyse waarin hy geglo het. Wanneer mense haar gevra het of sy werklik glo dat kruie kan werk, het sy, volgens haar eie vertelling, dikwels aan die geharde ou man gedink wat tot op 'n baie hoë ouderdom nog deur die Karoo kon stap. Vir haar was hy die beste advertensie vir die eenvoudige, natuurlike lewe wat hy verkondig het.

Antoinette self was ook 'n kind van die Karoo. Sy is in Carnarvon in die Noord-Kaap gebore en het reeds as jong meisie geweet dat sy eendag stories

oor elke happie nie.

Daarteenoor lyk dit vir haar asof die moderne mens dikwels letterlik én figuurlik sukkel om die lewe te “verteer”. Mense kla gereeld oor spysverteringsprobleme, voedsel-intoleransies en 'n verskeidenheid leefstylkwale.

Vir Antoinette vorm die spysverteringstelsel 'n belangrike deel van 'n mens se algemene welstand, en sy glo daarom dat mense nie net moet let op wát hulle eet nie, maar ook op hóé hulle eet. Die eenvoudige ritueel om saam om 'n tafel te sit, het volgens haar in baie huishoudings verdwyn. Mense is haastig, eet voor 'n televisie of rekenaar, of probeer 'n maaltyd tussen ander take inpas.

Sy meen egter dat 'n maaltyd reeds begin voordat die eerste happie geneem word. Die liggaam moet die kans kry om op die kos voor te berei, en 'n mens se aandag behoort by die ete te wees. Wanneer jou gedagtes en hart elders is terwyl jy eet, sê sy, kan dit voel asof die maaltyd jou nooit werklik versadig nie.

Vir haar is die gesindheid waarmee kos voorberei word net so belangrik. Sy verwys graag na die rolprent *Like Water for Chocolate*, waarin 'n jong vrou hartseer huil terwyl sy 'n troukoek bak. Haar tranne beland in die beslag, en wanneer die gaste later die koek eet, word hulle almal deur 'n diepe hartseer oorval.

Hierdie kombinasie van stories, veldkennis en tradisionele raad vorm die hart van die nalatenskap wat sy by Oom Johannes ontvang het.

Een van die eenvoudige volksrate wat in die oorspronklike oorlewering voorkom, is vir brandende voete en pynlike bene. Vier blokkies kamfer word volgens die resepte in 500ml brandspiritus gekrummel en goed geskud voordat dit met watte aan die voete of bene gesmeer word. Volgens die ou mense moes die voete altyd van bokant die enkel af ondertoe gevryf word en nooit na bo nie – hulle het grappenderwys gesê 'n mens “vryf die siekte deurmekaar”. Dieselfde beginsel is op die bene toegepas, van bokant die knie af ondertoe.

Sulke resepte vorm deel van 'n veel groter mondelinge tradisie waarin kennis, stories, rympies en waarnemings van geslag tot geslag oorgedra is. Antoinette het hierdie reis later verder gevoer in die boek, *Die lang man sonder skaduwee*.

Daarin bou sy voort op haar jarelange belangstelling in die genesende tradisies van die Karoo, 'n onderwerp wat sy ook vir baie jare in haar weeklikse program op RSG met luisteraars deel. Lesers het haar en Oom Johannes ook deur *The Griqua's Apprentice – Ancient Healing Arts of the Karoo* leer ken. In hierdie werke verweef sy praktiese kruiekennis met die ou verhale, raaisels en rympies van die Griekwas. Vir haar lê daar nie net betekenis in die plante van die Karoo nie, maar ook in die stories van die mense wat daar woon.

Oom Johannes is sowat drie jaar gelede oorlede, maar die kennis wat hy aan Antoinette oorgedra het, leef voort. Vandag dra sy steeds die fakkel van die ou man wat dekades lank gewag het vir die vrou in die rooi bakkie.

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Jean Burgess: Van storiebewaarder tot digter

SAAMGESTEL DEUR
DEBBIE HENDRIKS

Wanneer mense vir Jean Patricia Burgess vra wie sy is, wonder sy dikwels of hulle werklik gereed is om na haar verhaal te luister.

Want vir Jean is die vraag “Wie is ek?” nie ’n eenvoudige vraag wat met ’n naam, beroep of plek van herkoms beantwoord kan word nie. Haar verhaal is verweef met dié van haar mense. Wie sy is, is onafskeidbaar van wie hulle is.

Jean beskou haarself as deel van die Eerste Inheemse Nasie van hierdie land. Sy dra haar voorouers in haar, en hulle geskiedenis, kennis, oorwinnings en lyding vorm deel van haar eie identiteit.

Volgens haar is die Eerste Inheemse mense van nature diep spirituele mense. Hulle identiteit word nie slegs deur uiterlike merkers, gebruike of geskiedenis bepaal nie, maar word diep binne-in hulle gedra.

Daarom glo Jean dat identiteit nooit volkome vernietig kan word nie. Mense kan van hul grond ontnem word; hul verhare kan verdraai word; hul tale, gebruike en kultuur kan onderdruk word. Tog bly daar iets binne die mens wat nie so maklik uitgewis kan word nie.

Maar onderliggend aan al hierdie fasette van haar lewe is dieselfde diep spirituele bewussyn.

Hierdie bewussyn vind nou ook op besondere wyse uitdrukking in haar poësie.

In haar digbundel **My Oorlogskreet** kom Jean se verskillende wêreld bymekaar: die opvoeder, denker, gemeenskapsmens, spirituele leier, storiebewaarder en kunstenaar.

Die titel self dra iets van haar lewensbeskouing. **My Oorlogskreet** suggereer nie bloot konflik nie, maar ’n stem wat weier om stilgemaak te word – ’n stem wat onthou, noem, getuig en oproep.

Temas na aan haar hart soos identiteit, voorouers, die aarde, vroue verlies, verdeeldheid en die noodsaaklikheid van onthou, vind weerklank in haar gedigte.

Deur haar poësie word die storiebewaarder ook digter. Ervaring word beeld; herinnering word taal; en dit wat vir geslagte diep binne mense gedra is, kry ’n hoorbare stem.

My Oorlogskreet bring Jean se kreatiewe kunstenaarskap, intellektuele denke en spirituele kennis bymekaar.

Dit is ’n stem wat uit die verlede put, maar na die toekoms praat. En miskien is dit juis die kern van Jean Patricia Burgess se boodskap: dat ’n volk wat onthou wie hy is, sy verhaal weer aan die volgende geslag kan toevertrou.

Een van die mees betekenisvolle ervarings wat hierdie oortuiging vir haar bevestig het, het tydens ’n besoek aan Peru plaasgevind



JEAN BURGESS

Jean het haar in Puno, hoog in die Andesgebergte en naby die Titicacameer, bevind. Die landskap het ’n diep indruk op haar gemaak, maar dit was ’n ontmoeting met die Inheemse mense van Peru wat haar verstaan van identiteit en spiritualiteit ingrypend sou verdiep.

Sy het die geleentheid gekry om ’n oeroue heilige seremonie by te woon, wat deur ’n Inheemse moeder gelei. Terwyl dié vrou in haar moedertaal is met die voorouers gepraat het, het Jean iets beleef waarvoor daar vir haar geen gewone verklaring was nie: hoewel sy die taal nog nooit vantevore gehoor het nie, het sy verstaan wat die vrou gesê het.

Vir Jean het die ervaring ’n waarheid bevestig wat veel dieper as gesproke taal strek. Sy het ervaar dat ’n antieke spirituele verbinding tussen mense

Die besoek aan Peru het ’n intense bewussyn van haar identiteit as ’n Eerste Inheemse mens wakker gemaak.

Dit het haar verder oortuig dat identiteit nie in die eerste plek iets uiterliks is nie.

Jean tref ’n sterk onderskeid tussen innerlike en uiterlike mag. Uiterlike mag soos status, beheer, geld, politieke posisie of gesag oor ander, kan maklik verkeerdlik as werklike mag beskou word. Maar ware mag ontstaan wanneer ’n mens weet wie jy is, sê sy.

Wanneer ’n gemeenskap weer insig kry in sy eie wese, begin baie ander dinge volgens Jean ook sin maak: waarom familie so belangrik is; waarom gemeenskap sentraal staan; waarom mense histories die bietjie wat hulle gehad het met ander gedeel het.

Dit help ook om te verstaan waarom koloniale stelsels dikwels juis familie- en gemeenskapsverbande probeer verbreek of verswak het. Vir Jean is mense meer as ’n stam. Hulle is deel van ’n groter volk. Daarom beskou sy eenheid, herinnering en die herstel van gedeelde identiteit as noodsaaklik. Niemand van buite behoort te kan bepaal wie ’n volk is wanneer daardie volk sy eie verhaal ken nie.

“Ons ken ons verhaal omdat ons dit geleef het,” is die uitgangspunt wat onder baie van haar denke lê.

Mense dra volgens haar die verhare van hul voorouers se ervarings én oorwinnings binne hulle. Daardie verhaal is deel van hul identiteit,

moet elke geslag om dit te vertel. Dit is waarom Jean soveel waarde heg aan storiebewaarders. Hulle dra nie bloot interessante herinneringe oor die verlede nie; hulle help ’n volk om homself te onthou.

Vroue is die draers en voortbringers

Dieselfde geld vir vroue, hulle bring lewe voort en behoort nie tot kommoditeite of voorwerpe gereduseer te word nie.

Waar dit gebeur, sê Jean, is daar iets wat genees moet word.

Genesing is trouens een van die belangrikste temas in haar denke.

Sy gebruik die beeld van ’n wond. Wanneer ’n wond ernstig is, kan dit nie bloot toegemaak en geïgnoreer word nie. Dit moet oopgemaak en skoongemaak word voordat genesing kan begin. Die skoonmaakproses kan nuwe pyn veroorsaak, maar sonder daardie proses kan die wond aanhou etter. Só verstaan Jean ook die historiese en kollektiewe wonde van haar mense. Die pyn van die verlede moet erken word. Dit moet nie ontken, verklein of weggesteek word nie. Daar moet die moed wees om te erken dat opeenvolgende aanslae op mense, gemeenskappe en identiteite werklike pyn veroorsaak het.

Tog is haar boodskap uiteindelik nie een van magteloosheid nie. Sy glo mense gee om vir mekaar; hulle het die kennis; hulle het genesers; hulle het die krag en die volharding wat uit geslagte se oorlewing voortkom.

Jean se Komvandaan

Jean Patricia Burgess is in Gnutuma in die Oos-Kaap gebore as die dogter van Gladys Mavis September Burgess en Theodore Eustace Burgess. Sy is een van 14 kinders en het in ’n besonder kreatiewe familie grootgeword.

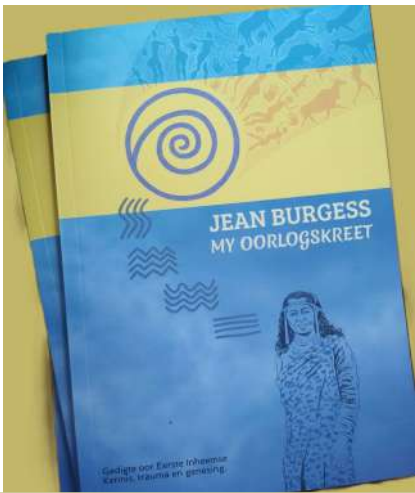
Jean se talente en belangstellings is uiteenlopend. Sy is onder meer ’n meesterbakker en lekkergoedmaker, ontwerper en kleremaker, skrywer en beoefenaar van die vegkunst.

Sy het reeds gedurende haar skoolloopbaan akademies uitblink. Haar tersiêre opleiding in pedagogiek, tesame met haar betrokkenheid by die politieke en gemeenskapslewe, het haar denke verder gevorm en haar filosofiese belangstelling verdiep.

Jean het deur die jare bekend geword as opvoeder, filosoof, gemeenskapsleier en Eerste Inheemse leier. Die gedigte wat saam met hierdie profiel verskyn, behoort daarom nie los van Jean Burgess se lewensverhaal gelees te word nie.

Hulle is ’n voortsetting daarvan. Deur haar poësie word die storiebewaarder ook digter. Ervaring word beeld; herinnering word taal; en dit wat vir geslagte diep binne mense gedra is, kry ’n hoorbare stem.

My Oorlogskreet bring Jean se kreatiewe kunstenaarskap, intellektuele denke en spirituele kennis bymekaar.



Vryheid word deur ons geneem

Met wette en wreedheid wil julle ons uitmoor
Julle het lankal die stryd verloor
Vraatsug en mag wat onversadig bly
Is julle selgs ’n skoppende perd wat lê en lei

Ons in tronke stop tot uitbarstings toe vol
Om ons te breek e nait die weg te ruim
Sodat julle ons land in besit kan neem
Dit ook moet tot ’n einde kom.

Kinders wreed van hul ouers weggenem
Hesin vernietig het julle gemeen
Kultuur vervreemding was ook ’nplan
Maar julle het nie ons vasberandenheid verstaan

Vernietig hul taal, dan is dit finaal
Selfs in daardie onmense poging het julle gefaal
Niks kon dti wat in ons gegraveer is met wette en wreedhied ommer net uitwis

Julle wonder nog steeds hoekom bly ons behoue
Selfs toe julle eksperimenteer op ons vroue
Breine oopsny om die gees te herstel
Skokgolwe en mishandeling in ’n wrede hel

Probeer om ons te assimileer
Alles aan ons doen om ons te onteer
Wannee sal julle begin verstaan
Die Eerste Inheemse Mense sal nie vergaan

Julle praat van Vryheid wat slegs julle verstaan
Vir julle is ons vry solank ons skape bly
Leë beloftes maak is permanent verby
Ons weet net ons kan onself bevry

Vryheid word aan geeneen gegee
Dis ’n skim wat slegs die skape bly glo
Vryheid word vir ons deur ons geneem
Nooit sal ons dit kry van geen een

Niemand kan namens ons probeer
Om ons Vryheid goedkoop te adverteer
Ons is hier en hier sal ons bly
Net ons kan onself van die kennis bevry.

ONS ERFENIS IS ONS STORIE

In die dorp waar ek grootgeword het, en vernoem is na Lord Charles Somerset (daai Kaapse goeweneur wat sowaar Afrikaans wou verban) is Erfenisdag by die Coachman's Cottage Museum gevier.

Die museum is in 1835 geopen en is vandag 'n Nasionale Erfenisterrein.

Die briljante prof. Harold Herman, wat my Biologie-onderwyser in matryk was, bestuur dit, en hy het stamhoof Niklaas Thysen, sy eggenote, Mandy, leier Rudiger Rossow 100% bygestaan.

Hulle het ook besoek gaan aflê by die Genadendal Historiese Museum.

Hul Erfenisdag se tema was: "Ons erfenis is ons storie, wat generasies aan mekaar verbind".

Nick is in 2025 ingehuldig as Senior Tradisionele Leier van die Cochokwa Koninklike Raad, De Kuilenriver, Somerset-Wes.

In Van Riebeeck se tyd was die Cochokwa skatryk aan vee, met hul hoofkwartier in Saldanhabaai met hul gebied wat deur die Boland gestrek het, tot teen die Hottentots-Holland berge en tot by Valsbaai.

Die museum se ruimte is klein binne maar indrukwekkend versier, hoofsaaklik deur die Khoi-historikus, Elzane October.

In die netjiese matjieshuis is 'n mooi kulturele uitstalling. Op Erfenisdag het alle teenwoordige leiers begin met 'n prosessie en die sing van onse bekende pryslied: "Gangan tsi..." (dankie Allerhoogste), waarna opperhoof Daniel Hermanus die gebeurtenis met gebed geopen het.

Daarna weerklink die uitroep



"Amase, amase!" deur luidsprekers, wat 'n feestelike atmosfeer skep.

Op die heerlike sonskyndag het verskeie sprekers opgetree, en hul het telkens luide applous van die besoekers ontvang.

Stamhoof Thysen het almal verwelkom, waarna prof. Herman die omstandighede van die eerste nasie

geskets het, en verduidelik het hoe ons geleidelik onderdruk was deur die Hollanders en later die Engelse.

Daarna het ek daarop uitgebrei en toe my skildery onthul van 'n Khoi-khoi-gesin.

Die dag het hierna 'n amptelike kleur gekry toe 'n Subraadsbestuurder van die Stad Kaapstad, Romeo de Lange, die mikrofoon neem, en sy kantoor se ondersteuning belowe.

Dinge het hierna meer tradisioneel begin raak met Goab Godfrey Thomas wat 'n oorsig gegee het van die Cochokwa en hulle verhare.

Hy is gevolg deur Goab Trevor Koopman se lewendige vertelling oor onse waardes.

Soos 'n vars bries het die helder

stem van Elzane October opgeklank en sy het met trots haar bloedlyn verduidelik, en daarna haar roerende gedig voordra.

Die museum is in Victoriastraat – die straat waarin ons familie vir jare gewoon het, voordat ons in die 70's uitgesmyt is

vanweë die gehate Groepsgebiede Wet.

In die skadu van die ou rietdakgebou word 'n lint amptelik geknip en daarna deel Dr. Phillip sy kennis van kruiemedisyne.

Hierna kon ons peusel aan die lekker verskeidenheid van kos, koel-drink, en koffie.

Ekselst het ingelegde kerrievis as barakat (losweg vertaal: kos waarmee ek geseënd was) huistoe geneem.

Die musiek was aansteeklik en selfoonnommers is uitgeruil.

Vreemdelinge word vriende. Intussen bewonder almal Liam Mitchel van Sacrest Site Stigting sy welige, wit baard.

Ondanks die raserige verkeer in die agtergrond, kon ons luister na die unieke klank van David Marinus op sy Khoiboog.

Prinses Vanessa Hermanus van die Koninklike De Kuilenrivier-raad in Bellville, het die heuglike Erfenisdagvieringe afgesluit af met inspirerende woorde en bedankings.

Dis verblydend dat in so 'n kort tyd van hul bestaan die leierskap soveel kon vermag met die hulp van prof. Herman, en ryklik geseënd van Bo.

Goeweneur Simon van der Stel, wie se graf onder die Groote Kerk in Kaapstad se kansel is, en teen wie Cochokwa-leier Gonnema vir vier jaar in die Boland geveg het, was sekerlik onrustig op daardie Erfenisdag.

Volgens 'n lekker storie is aan hom gesê: Van der Stel, jy is 'n Hollander, maar onthou: hiërdie gebied is die Hottentotte se Holland!



Willa Boezak, Liam Mitchel van die Sacrest Site Stigting en Nick Thysen

Our heritage is our story

In the town where I grew up, and named after Lord Charles Somerset (the Cape governor who actually wanted to ban Afrikaans), Heritage Day was celebrated at the Coachman's Cottage Museum.

This museum was opened in 1835, and today it's a National Heritage Site.

The brilliant prof. Harold Herman, who was my Biology teacher in matric, runs it, and he assisted Chief Niklaas Thysen, his spouse, Mandy, and leader Rudiger Rossow 100%.

They also visited the Genadendal Historical Museum.

Their Heritage Day theme was: "Our heritage is our story, which connects generations". Nick was inaugurated in 2025 as Senior Traditional Leader of the Cochoqua Royal Council, De Kuilen River, Somerset West.

In Van Riebeeck's time, the Cochoqua were rich in cattle, with their headquarters in Saldanha Bay and their territory stretched through the Boland, up to the Hottentots-Holland mountains – as far as Valsbaai.

The museum's space is small but impressively decorated inside, mainly by the Khoi historian, Elzane October.

In the neat matjieshut is an educational and cultural display.

On Heritage day all leaders present started with a procession and the singing of our famous song of praise: "Gangan tsi..." (thank you Most High), after which Chief Daniel Hermanus opens the event with prayer. Then echoes of "Amase, amase!" reverberated through loudspeakers, which created a festive atmosphere.

Various speakers addressed the audience in sunny weather, provoking applause.

Chief Thysen welcomed everyone after which prof. Herman outlines the circumstances of the first nation, and how we were gradually oppressed by the Dutch.

I expanded on this and reveals his painting of a Khoikhoi family. The day acquires an official colour when a Sub-council manager of the City of Cape Town, Romeo de Lange, receives the microphone and promises his office's support.

Things get more traditional with Goab Godfrey Thomas, who gives an overview of the Cochokwa and their stories, followed by Goab Trevor Koopman's lively narration about our values.

The clear voice of Elzane October sounds like a fresh breeze, proudly explaining her bloodline, and then reciting her moving poem.

The museum is on Victoria Street – the street our family lived on for years, before we were kicked out because of the hated Group Areas Act

in the 70s. In the shadow of the old thatched building, a ribbon is officially cut. Dr. Phillip shares his knowledge of herbal medicine, after which we can snack on the delicious selection of food, soft drinks and coffee.

I myself took pickled curry fish home as barakat. The music is infectious and cell phone numbers are exchanged. Strangers become friends. Meanwhile, everyone admires Liam Mitchel of Sacred Site Foundation's lush, white beard.

Despite the noisy traffic in the background, we listen to the unique sound of David Marinus on his khoibow. Princess Vanessa Hermanus of the Royal De Kuilen River Council in Bellville, closes the event with inspiring words and thanks.

It is gratifying that in such a short time of their existence this leadership was able to achieve so much with the help of prof. Herman, and abundantly blessed from Above.

Governor Simon van der Stel, whose grave is under the Groote Kerk's pulpit in Cape Town, and against whom Cochoqua leader Gonnema had fought for four years in the Boland, must have been restless on that wonderful Heritage Day.

According to a nice story, he was told: Van der Stel, you are from Holland, but remember: this area is our Hottentots' Holland!

When Restitution does not restore: Land, Identity and Injustice in SA

CAPT. AARON MESSELAAR
head of the
Griqua Royal
House was the
keynote
speaker at the
launch of



**BAREND VAN WYK'S book
INJUSTICE OF LAND RESTITU-
TION IN SOUTH AFRICA**

There are moments when a book becomes more than a publication. It becomes a call to remember, question and confront issues that remain unresolved.

The launch of *Injustice of Land Restitution in South Africa: Discrimination against the First Peoples (KhoiSan) of South Africa* is such a moment.

Barend van Wyk's book places before South Africa an important question: when restitution takes place, has justice necessarily taken place?

This question lies at the heart of the book.

For the First Peoples, land has never been simply a commodity measured in hectares. It carries ancestry, identity, culture, memory, livelihood and belonging.

The loss of land therefore meant more than the loss of property. It weakened traditional institutions, fractured communities and disrupted indigenous history and identity.

The democratic transition of 1994 created new hope. The Restitution of Land Rights Act established a legal framework through which historical dispossession could be addressed.

Yet the book reminds readers that legislation alone cannot guarantee justice. Between the law and the community stands an administrative process whose integrity is critical. The book's central concern is what happens when a process designed to remedy historical injustice does not restore the rights of those whose dispossession gave rise to the claim.

The identity of the claimant is fundamental. A land claim has a history, an original community, descendants and a purpose.

The people whose rights were taken cannot become a minor detail in an administrative file. Restitution must ask who the original rights-holders were, what evidence connects them to the land, who represented them, whether they were properly consulted and whether the final settlement remained faithful to the historical basis of the claim.

The experiences surrounding Koegas and Koopmansfontein provide important case studies. They raise questions about claimant identity, representation, verification and community participation. They also show that official files do not always tell the whole story.

Behind every claim are people and histories that must be understood if restitution is to be meaningful. A further theme is the treatment of indigenous historical knowledge.

Much KhoiSan history has been preserved through oral traditions, genealogies, family histories, place names, community memory and customary knowledge. Such evidence should neither be accepted uncritically nor dismissed because it is not contained in conventional written archives.

A rigorous investigation should draw on archival records, genealogical research, oral history, maps,

land records, community testimony, customary knowledge and independent scholarship. The objective must be to establish historical truth through transparent and credible methods.

The book also emphasises administrative justice. Restitution involves public power, and decisions can affect land ownership, identity, cultural heritage and future generations. Transparency, properly reasoned decisions and meaningful opportunities for communities to participate are therefore essential. Where disputes arise, mechanisms for review and challenge must be available.

Procedural fairness is not separate from justice. It is part of justice. The distinction between consultation and participation is equally important.

Consultation may mean informing communities about what is happening. Meaningful participation requires a genuine opportunity to contribute to decisions affecting their rights and interests. In matters involving ancestral land and cultural identity, indigenous communities should not be passive observers.

Traditional leadership also has a role in preserving community history, customary knowledge and identity.

At the same time, traditional authority must operate within the constitutional framework and respect community members' rights.

The consequences of failed or distorted restitution extend beyond land. They may include cultural fragmentation, erosion of indigenous identity, economic exclusion, weakened community structures, loss of historical memory and continuing intergenerational grievance.

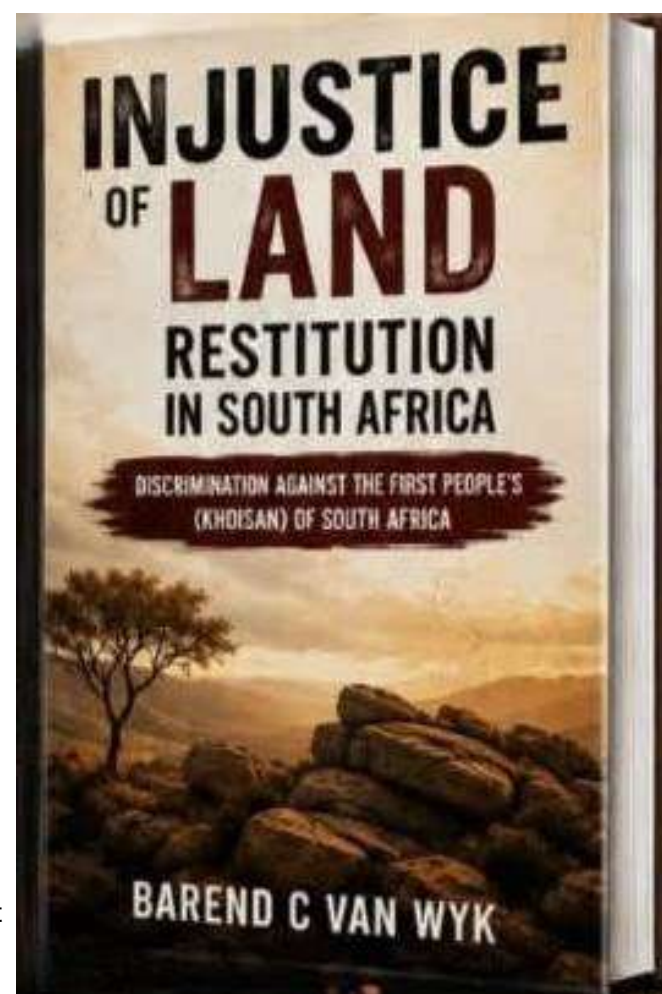
A claim may be recorded as settled while important questions concerning identity, representation and community benefit remain unresolved.

For that reason, the book is also a call to action. It calls on universities and research institutions to deepen research into First Nation's land histories; on legal scholars to examine claimant identity, representation and administrative justice; and on government to strengthen transparency, accountability and meaningful participation.

It encourages traditional leaders and community organisations to preserve genealogies, oral tradi-



THE AUTHOR, BAREND C. VAN WYK



tions and historical records, while urging indigenous communities to remain informed, organised and engaged.

Younger generations should be equipped to become historians, lawyers, researchers, archivists and custodians of their communities' heritage.

Ultimately, the book returns to one defining question: can restitution be considered complete if the historical right has not been restored to the people to whom that right belongs?

The central question of this book is ultimately simple: Can restitution be considered complete if the historical right has not been restored to the people to whom that right belongs?

South Africa's restitution programme is too important to be abandoned. But its processes must remain open to examination and reform.

Let us therefore measure restitution not only by the number of claims settled, but also by asking:

- Were the original claimant communities properly identified?
- Were their histories properly investigated? Were they meaningfully heard?

South Africa's restitution programme remains too important to abandon, but its processes must remain open to examination and reform.

Success should not be measured only by the number of claims recorded as settled. It should also be measured by whether claimant communities were correctly identified, their histories properly investigated, their voices meaningfully heard, their identity protected and the process conducted fairly.

Barend van Wyk's book places these questions firmly before South Africa.

It asks readers, institutions and communities to examine the evidence, continue the dialogue and pursue a restitution system guided by truth, dignity, accountability and respect for human rights.

The hope is that this book will become a catalyst for scholarship, a resource for communities and a contribution to meaningful reform. Above all, it seeks to strengthen the pursuit of justice for the First Peoples of South Africa.

Remembering those who walked the journey with us

Legacy bound to dignity, restoration



DIANA FERRUS

Dr Diana Ferrus (1953–2026) was a celebrated South African poet, writer, storyteller and cultural activist whose work explored memory, identity, dispossession, justice and healing.

Born in Worcester, she wrote in both Afrikaans and English and became an important mentor to younger writers. Her poetry gave voice to people and histories that had too often been marginalised or forgotten.

Ferrus is perhaps best remembered for her deeply moving poem for **Sarah Baartman**, commonly known as *I’ve Come to Take You Home*.

Written while she was studying in the Netherlands in 1998, the poem helped focus international attention on Baartman’s story and is widely credited with contributing to the campaign for the return of her remains from France to South Africa in 2002.

Ferrus died on 30 January 2026 at the age of 72, leaving a literary legacy closely bound to dignity, remembrance and cultural restoration.

Preserving indigenous identity



BENEDICKT KABAB

Benedickt Aloysius Kabab (1950–2024) was associated with Commissioner of the Griqua tribe, a former teacher and well-known in the wider Khoisan community.

On Heritage Day, 24 September 1999, he was appointed as chief and five years later he was appointed as head and provincial leader in the Western Cape.

He was then selected as commissioner in the administration of the Royal House of Adam Kok, and was a senior advisor for the Royal House and served under the Captain’s Council of Capt. Aaron Meselaar.

In 2009 he was listed as the contact person for the Khoisan United Front. Part of his legacy was the preservation and advancement of indigenous identity and community organisation.

His passing in 2024 marked the loss of someone who fought to maintain Griqua, Khoi and San identity and heritage in the Western Cape.

Committed to meaningful change



ARCHIE SYDOW

Armien “Archie” Sydow (1948–2022) was an anti-apartheid activist and member of uMkhonto we Sizwe whose contribution was often carried out away from public attention.

During the apartheid years, he transported food and medical supplies into townships including Langa, Gugulethu, Nyanga and Crossroads when access was severely restricted.

According to former MK colleagues, his activities later extended to assisting underground structures and helping protect senior liberation-movement figures.

Known affectionately as **“Themba”** in some township communities, Sydow was remembered not only for his political activities but also for his concern with education, health, employment and improving people’s everyday lives.

He died at the age of 74 in September 2022. Rashid Lombard, who was his brother-in-law, remembered him particularly for his commitment to bringing about meaningful change in people’s lives.

Dedicated to skills development



DENNIS MCLAURIE

Dennis “Mac” McLaurie was a respected Khoi leader and chairperson of the Cape Khoi Labour Forum, dedicating much of his later life to recognition, skills development and opportunities for Khoi and San descendants.

He was recognised as an elder within the Gorinhaiqua Cultural Council and became particularly involved in representing skilled and semi-skilled workers whose contribution to South Africa’s economy, he believed, deserved greater recognition.

McLaurie was also closely involved in the campaign that resulted in a permanent First Nations Heritage Centre at Riverlands in Observatory.

Those who worked alongside him remembered him as a mentor and an advocate for young people, education and practical skills development. His belief was that cultural restoration should not only honour the past, but should give coming generations dignity, opportunity and a stronger sense of belonging.

Capturing defining moments in struggle



Rashid Lombard (1951–2025) was one of South Africa’s most influential photographers, cultural activists and jazz promoters.

Born in Gqeberha and raised in Cape Town from the age of 11, he became a photojournalist whose camera documented some of the defining moments of the anti-apartheid struggle and South Africa’s transition to democracy.

His photographs appeared in local and international media, including AFP, the BBC and NBC, creating an important visual record of ordinary people and communities during turbulent times.

His passion for jazz became another defining part of his legacy. Lombard founded espAfrika in 1997 and was instrumental in establishing what became the Cape Town International Jazz Festival, which he directed until 2014.

In recognition of his contribution to arts and culture, he received the Order of Ikhamanga in Silver in 2014. He died in Cape Town on 4 June 2025 at the age of 74, leaving behind an extraordinary photographic and cultural archive.

Keeping cultural memory alive



TONY PETERSEN

Anthony “Tony” Petersen (1962–2026) is remembered as a proud son of the Korana community in Bloemfontein.

His life reflects the strength, dignity and enduring spirit of a people whose history is woven into the story of South Africa.

Tony’s connection to his heritage speaks of belonging, identity and the importance of keeping cultural memory alive for future generations.

He is honoured not only for who he was, but also for what he represented: a link between past and present, between family, community and tradition.

His name will remain part of the shared memory of those who knew him and of the Korana people whose heritage he carried with pride.

May his legacy continue to inspire others to value their roots, honour their history and preserve the traditions that give a community its strength and character today.



Erfenis in klip: Die Messelaar-familiebegraafplaas

By Onder Campbell in die Noord-Kaap lê 'n begraafplaas wat veel meer as 'n laaste rusplek is.

Dit is die Messelaar-familiebegraafplaas, wat 'n tasbare deel vorm van die familie se geskiedenis en verbintenis met Griekwaland-Wes.

Die terrein het sy oorsprong in die 1800's en is gevestig op grond wat aan die Messelaar-familie behoort het.

Volgens die familie se oorlewering en geskiedenis word dit beskou as die enigste bekende bruin familiebegraafplaas van sy aard in die Noord-Kaap, waar opeenvolgende geslagte van dieselfde familie oor meer as 'n eeu ter ruste gelê is.

Die geskiedenis van die begraafplaas is nou verweef met dié van Abel Erasmus Messelaar, wat omstreeks 1820 in Griekwaland-Wes aangekom het en as 'n stamvader van die Messelaar-familie in die gebied beskou word. Sy nageslag – onder andere Jan Messelaar, ook bekend as Abel Messelaar II, Hendrik Jonathan Messelaar, en daaropvolgende seuns, dogters, kleinkinders en verdere nageslag – vorm deel van die verhaal wat met hierdie terrein verbind word.

Genealogiese dokumentasie help om dié geskiedenis te bewaar. Die eGGSA Graves Northern Cape-opname van die Onder Campbell-begraafplaas bevat onder meer inskrywings van oorledenes wat met die terrein verbind word.

Vir die Messelaar-familie is die begraafplaas daarom nie

bloot 'n plek van herinnering nie, maar 'n erfenisterrein wat familie, grond en geskiedenis oor geslagte heen saambind.

Die huidige familiehoof en tradisionele leier, Aaron Messelaar II, het 'n belangrike rol in die bewaring daarvan gespeel.

Grafstene is deur hom voorsien om die grafte waardig te merk en die name van die voorouers vir toekomstige geslagte te bewaar.

Vandag staan die Messelaar-familiebegraafplaas as 'n tasbare monument van meer as twee eeue se familiegeskiedenis – 'n plek waar nageslagte steeds hul voorouers kan gedenk en hul verbintenis met die grond en geskiedenis van Griekwaland-Wes kan herbevestig.



Round and about festivities on Heritage Day



!Khwa Ttu San Culture and Educational Centre in the West Coast, hosted a four day festival at its camping and adventure site to celebrate Heritage Day with indigenous Khoi dances and Khoi instruments, like the Khoi bow.

PICTURES: !KHWATTU



CELEBRATING A BREAKTHROUGH: After many years of dedicated work focused on research, practical fieldwork and a formidable body of groundbreaking meticulously recorded in visual and print outputs , the Indigenous Knowledge Systems Built Environment Unit of the Department of Architecture of the Nelson Mandela University set a new standard for collaboration between the formal academy and organic knowledge holders with the signing of a Group photos of the IKSBEU Members together with the witnesses of the signing of the Code of Ethics and Conduct. The signing of the code coincided with the South African Journal of Art History conference convened at NMU on 4 and 5 September. The Oeswana indigenous children’s choir, students, academic staff and several indigenous leaders were who were all part of the initiative were on hand to bear witness to this watershed event.

PICTURES: RENE HEUNIS