

SPECIAL PROVINCIAL OFFICIAL FUNERAL SERVICE FOR

Thabo Maemo Masebe



25 August 1964 - 18 April 2022

Programme

Saturday, 23 April 2022 | 8h00
Kempton Park Civic Centre

Special Provincial Official Funeral Service for
Mr Thabo Maemo Masebe
25 August 1964 - 18 April 2022
Programme

PART 1: PRIVATE SERVICE - HOME

07:00

Private family prayer

07:30

Family leaves for Kempton Park Civic Centre

Programme Director

Mr Panyaza Lesufi, Education MEC

PART 2: TRIBUTES BY FAMILY AND FRIENDS

National Anthem

SAPS Brass Band

08:05 – 08:20

Opening prayer and sermon

- Reverend Frank Chikane

Musical Item

08:20 – 08:30

Reading of the Obituary - Mr Joe Mathebula

08:30 – 08:40

Tribute by Family Representative - Ms Mahlodi Chauke and Musanda Tshilaphala

Family choir

08:43 – 08:50

Tribute by Sibling - Mr Homolang Masebe

08:50 – 09:00

Tribute by children - Chamaano

& Moitshepi Masebe

09:00 – 09:10

Tribute by Sibling - Ms Florence Masebe

09:10 - 09:15

Tribute by Ms Marie-Louise Moodie

- Acting Director General, Office of the Premier

Video

PART 3: POLITICAL TRIBUTES

09:20 – 09:30

Tribute by Young Lion Generation

- Ms Febe Potgieter

09:30 – 09:45

Tribute by African National Congress – Former

Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe

Musical item

PART 4: OFFICIAL SERVICE

09:50 – 09:55

Citation by the South African Police Service

- Reverend Mashiane

09:55 – 10:10

Eulogy - Mr David Makhura, Premier of Gauteng

10:10 – 10:15

Announcements

10:15

Cortege departs for the Thomas Nkobi Cemetery

PART 5: BURIAL SERVICE – THOMAS NKOBI

Opening Prayer by SAPS Chaplain Mashiane

Ceremonial Service by SAPS

Handing over of the SA flag to Mr Chamaano Masebe

Burial Rites by
Inter-faith prayer by SAPS

Chaplain Mashiane
Chaplain Mashiane and
Reverend Chikane
Moleboge Masebe, Moelelwa
Masebe, Monthati Masebe &
Nkhangweleni Mashau
Dr Phophi Ramathuba

Wreath Laying

Vote of Thanks by

Thabo Masebe the People's Servant



It is a deadly dark cloud
Saturated to the brim with thunder and lightning waiting for the ideal moment
to arrive
To flood pathways and highways
Just to add to the pain the nation endures
Because of vengeance
Of the Saturated dark
No wonder these heavy dark clouds hang a stone throw above our heads
The land takes a drubbing
Friend and family succum to the demonic wish of the Saturated dark. Some
watch in disbelief others don't
Thabo watched and saw
The destructive power of a natural
Who knows perhaps the power of a natural force
Was just too much to watch and unable to help
How much of that pain was cause of the resurgence of a rage in his inner body.
Because of the distance between him and the victims
Tman, a towering soul
Never touched from head to toe by opulence
Always on the march on the strait and narrow
To serve
To suffer
To sacrifice
Even when the dark saturated cloud hung inches above his head

OBITUARY

THABO MASEBE - AN ICON OF THE GENERATION OF YOUNG LIONS OF OLIVER TAMBO

During the early evening of 18 April 2022, our beloved Comrade Thabo Masebe suddenly and unexpectedly left us. Not surprising, Masebe died with his boots on, with his principal tool of trade, the laptop, close by.

The outpouring of grief and tributes by all who came into contact with him is testimony to the impactful life of a leader of our people who was well respected and loved.

Thabo Masebe represented the best of a generation, an age cohort which then ANC President, Oliver Reginald Tambo named "the Young Lions of the Struggle." It is a generation born at the height of apartheid, who instead of being yoked by its oppressive system, chose to define their generational mission as that of defeating this crime against humanity and the ushering in of "freedom in our life time".

Early Life

Thabo Masebe was born at Elim hospital, the 3rd born of the late Reverend Elias Chamaano and Mrs Elsie Tshililo Masebe on the 25th August 1964. The family stayed at Mashau village until they relocated to Shingwedzi and then Moletlane where he started his primary school at Matshumu Primary School and proceeded to Shikoane Higher Primary School, then Chita Kekana Junior Secondary and matriculated at Matladi High School, respectively.

A Pioneer and organiser of the Congress Movement

He studied at University of Venda, where he soon became conscientised and politicised, joining the then Azanian Student Organisation (AZASO), now known as SASCO. A towering intellectual, he was able to combine the theory learnt in classes with the concrete conditions of a country that was fast changing. The mid-to-late-eighties was a time when universities were in turmoil. Students were frequently persecuted for fighting for their rights and their political activities in opposition to the evil system of apartheid, but they were not deterred and they put up a formidable resistance.

Cde Thabo was part of the machinery that ensured apartheid government and its Bantustan administrations, were rendered ungovernable.

He led from the front in mobilising the youth in action against the Venda, Gazankulu and Lebowa Bantustans. He played a key role in the formation of various structures, organs of people's power, in Northern Transvaal, mobilising workers, youth and the communities. He was part of the Northern Transvaal Action Committee, the Northern Transvaal Public Servants Union, Mulweli and many other community-based structures.

Comrade Thabo was able to straddle across various generations ensuring that youth are taught and trained in correct politics of the Congress Movement.

Always a humble cadre, Thabo played an important role in activities of the Peter Nchabeleng Unit, recruiting many young people into the movement. He became part of the Northern Transvaal Youth Congress (NOTYCO) and was central in the activities of the UDF Northern Transvaal.

When it was time to re-establish and rebuild the ANC in Northern Transvaal, again Comrade Thabo proved to be equal to the task. It was a task that required the organising ability and skills of the likes of Thabo Masebe, Mothupi Pharephare, Louis Mnguni, Joyce Mabudafhasi, George Phadagi and many others. Thabo understood his station in society and the role he played in society. Like many young people of that age group, he sacrificed selflessly his own education.

Cde Thabo made it his mission to champion access to education through the Education Aid Program (EAP), particularly for those who were brutalised by the apartheid regime. Comrade Masebe ensured bursary support to many student activists, who today are senior professionals, senior public officials and public servants.

To this end, Comrade Thabo acquitted himself very well in ensuring that branches of the ANC and its structures are launched in the entire Northern Transvaal. He became part of the process of integrating comrades from exile, prisons and underground into structures, and ensuring that the Northern Transvaal becomes a united and cohesive region.

A Leader of the Young Lions

Like others of his generation, Thabo knew that before he could be a student, he was a member of an oppressed community. He became active in building and growing youth and student congresses and was central to the formation of the South African Youth Congress (SAYCO), launched in the heart of the state of emergency in 1987. Cde Thabo rose through the ranks of SAYCO in the then Northern Transvaal. His generation was instrumental in the building and consolidation of the United Democratic Front (UDF), its campaigns and resistance.

Alongside then Young Lions of the North, namely, Jeremiah "Jerry" Ndou, Cassell Mathale, Joe Mathebula, Eugene Masete, Elleck Nchabaleng and others, he was part of the leadership of the Northern Transvaal in the 1990s who, after the unbanning, took forward the debate on the relaunch of the ANC Youth League. It was this debate that saw the SAYCO Congress in April 1990 in Ka-Nyamazane resolve to not only complement the soon to unfold process of negotiations with mass struggles, but also to rebuild the ANC Youth League into a formidable force and voice of South Africa's youth. Comrade Thabo and his peers had to traverse across the country to convince young people to accept the decision of the movement to suspend the armed struggle. This was a difficult call to many young revolutionaries at the time.

The Provisional National Youth Committee, led by Peter Mokaba and Rapu Molekane, with comrades from the Youth Section travelled the length and breadth of the country, to organise and re-launch ANC Youth League branches. In the Northern Transvaal, they found a well-oiled machinery led by Comrade Thabo Masebe and others. Their

comrades also hosted the re-launching Congress of the ANC Youth League, held in Kwa-Ndebele in October 1991.

In his role as a leader of young people in the Northern Transvaal, Comrade Thabo enabled the Congress Youth League to combine both rural and urban struggles. He helped clarify the progressive role that institutions of traditional leadership can contribute to the unfolding liberation struggle in our country. His dynamic involvement in the popular youth work, underground activity, and mass mobilisation, saw him play a decisive role in the establishment of progressive mass organisations across the whole country.

At the historic Congress of the ANC Youth League in 1991, Comrade Thabo was elected to the NEC of the ANC Youth League. The NEC also elected him to serve as a member of the ANCYL National Working Committee, leading with Peter Mokaba (President), Rapu Molekane (Secretary General), Mpho Lekgoro (Deputy Secretary), Ignatius Jacobs (Treasurer General), and as additional members Mnyamezeli Boo, Andrew Dipela, Kgaogelo Lekgoro, Derek Masoek, Parks Mankahlana, Mzwandile Mhlanzi, Thabang Makwetla, Jerry Ndou, and Fébé Potgieter.

The early 1990s were one of the peak moments in the existence of the ANC Youth League. The multi-party negotiations at the time were in full swing, and so was the political and third force violence in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng. This leadership of the ANC Youth League, with Masebe as an integral part, ensured that a youth voice was present in the negotiations, pushing for the leadership to ensure that the people are not left defenseless in the face of violence, by forming self-defense units, and that the tactic of mass mobilisation remains relevant. Together with Parks Mankahlana and Derek Masoek, Comrade Thabo represented the Youth League in the ANC Negotiations Committee. He was also part of those who argued for the meeting between the ANC Youth League and the IFP Youth Brigade as necessary to bring an end to the violence and build lasting peace in KwaZulu-Natal.

It was during this period that Comrade Thabo started his journey as one of the foremost communicators in South Africa. Along with Parks Mankahlana and Eddie Mabitsetla, they formed the nucleus of the ANCYL Department of Information and Publicity (DIP), promoting the programs and positions of the League and the ANC, and subsequently starting the ANCYL magazine, Horizon. They also invested in training other young communicators in the provinces of the League, to ensure that when the Youth League communicates, it does so with clarity, being unapologetic, but without being populist. This contingent of young communicators played an important role in the ANC's first elections campaign in 1994, the development of its message and engaging the media and public on the importance of these elections, and the ANC slogan of a Better Life for All.

The ANCYL generational transition of 1994 saw Comrades Peter Mokaba, Thabang Makwetla, Ncumisa Kondlo, Rapu Molekane, Jerry Ndou, Ignatius Jacobs, Vusi Mavimbela, Dipuo Peters, Kgaogelo Lekgoro, and others, leaving the ranks of the youth movement. Comrade Thabo was elected as the ANCYL Treasurer General, with Lulu

Johnson as President and Mpho Lekgoro as Secretary General. He continued to lead the ANC Youth League as a member of its National Working Committee until 1998. As Treasurer General, Comrade Thabo Masebe initiated investments by the League, and advised comrades and colleagues on financial literacy. He taught many of us about personal savings, investing in property and other instruments.

His seminal contribution was highlighted when he was part of a team assigned the responsibility to create and immortalise the June 1976 student uprisings. Together with other comrades, they advocated for, and created the Hector Peterson Memorial in Soweto. The memorial still stands at the park and is internationally recognised as a symbol of the struggles of young people and students in our country. It also serves as one of the recognisable political tourist attractions of our country and a source of education about the history of our struggles.

A Communicator of Note

As he exited the ANC Youth League, Cde Thabo Masebe started his career as a government communicator and public servant. At various points during the last twenty years, he served as spokesperson for Gauteng Premier Mbhazima Shilowa, Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe and Premier David Makhura. He was also the Head of the International and Media Liaison Unit of the Government Communication and Information Systems (GCIS).

Comrade Thabo's ability to communicate the positions of government and the ANC was based on his deep knowledge of the society we live in, and the struggle of the people of South Africa. He was thus able to communicate on a range of diverse issues. These include responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report in 1998, the situation in Zimbabwe in 2008, and more recently the difficulties in Gauteng social services with Life Esidimeni, the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) procurement scandal, as well as other complex issues such as the approach to the Gauteng City region.

Premier David Makhura fondly explained: "He would always proceed from the premise that if we want to build trust with the public, we must be honest and frank. When government has gotten it wrong, we must always admit we've gotten it wrong."

In his responsibilities as a communication and media activist, he contributed enormously to the "Battle of Ideas", always putting forward progressive ideas and articulating the principles of the liberation movement. He reached out to many journalists and opinion makers and was central in forging links with progressive media and narrative initiators. He had time for his counterparts in the media, spent hours networking and assisting them in understanding the standpoint and thinking of both the ANC and government on various issues.

Comrade Masebe performed his duties with diligence and commitment, leading and supporting the teams that he was in charge of as a senior public servant, and was always available and accessible. He was highly regarded as reliable, sober, always patient, calm and incorruptible.

Thabo Masebe the People's Servant

There was no task too big or too small to be performed by him.

Following a request by President Motlanthe, he had joined the Presidency at a challenging time after the recall of President Thabo Mbeki. Articulating how government was performing its duties and managing the transition, became his focus. He was able to articulate the responsibilities and work of government with ease, because he understood the policies and programs of both the government and the governing party. As a diligent public servant, he did his own research work on any task given to him and led his team to perform beyond expectations.

He treated and engaged both his senior and junior colleagues with the same attitude and respect. This also applied to all Ministers, Premiers and MECs at national and provincial levels. With him, any statement or pronouncement of government work had to reflect a good understanding of the intent of government and the implications for the public. Thus, he meticulously scrutinised every statement, every paragraph and every sentence without compromise.

Comrade Thabo was concerned and sad about the state of the ANC, the organisation that he grew up in and became his family until his last breath on this earth. He spoke openly about the state of the ANC and the divisions that are evident and its impact on the transformation agenda of the country and service delivery to our people.

Cde Thabo was a loyal patriot and one of the finest cadres of the ANC. He was indeed a servant of the people.

Thabo loved sport and he was an ardent Kaizer Chiefs, Manchester United, Golf and F1 motor sport supporter.

He loved his wine and going to the gym and was passionate about the game of golf.

At the time of his passing, Cde Thabo was the Deputy Director-General responsible for Government Communications and Information Systems in the Gauteng Provincial Government. He was also the Acting Director-General of the Gauteng Provincial Government.

He is survived by his two sons, Chamaano Masebe and Moitshepi Masebe, his three sisters Moleboge, Moelelwa and Florence and his two brothers, Homolang and Bheki Masebe.

Go well Comrade Thabo Masebe. Go well good servant. Go well Comrade Maemo. Your journey is a fulfilled one. You gave the people of South Africa the best that you had.

**Kha vha e ele nga mulalo, Makovhaga a! Gumani nga n e ni vhuye,
phaan a hanga a hu tsheena mu we!**