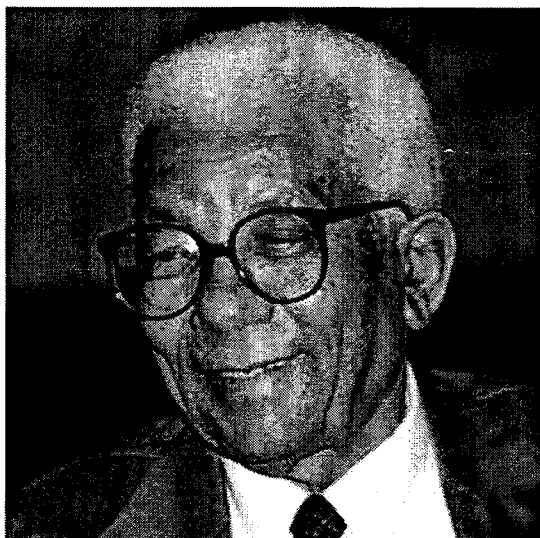


A TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE  
OF  
WALTER SISULU

1912-2003



Thursday, 22 May 2003  
Canaan Baptist Church  
132 West 116<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York

# Walter Sisulu - A Brief Biography

## Architect of the Liberation Movement

It is not widely known that Sisulu's mother Alice Sisulu was a domestic worker and his father, Victor Dickenson, was a white civil servant.

Born on May 18 1912, Sisulu and his elder sister Rosabella were brought up in Ngcobo, Transkei, by his mother, his uncle Dyantyi Hlakula and his grandparents. Sisulu learned a great deal about Xhosa culture and the laws of society from his influential uncle, who was the headman of the village and a lay preacher.

At 14 Sisulu left mission school to work. Between 1928 and 1940 he held many jobs: as a delivery man for a dairy; in the masonry and carpentry department, then as a miner, of the Rose Deep Mine in Germiston; as a domestic; as a baker for Premier Biscuits; as a paint mixer for Herbert Evans in Johannesburg; as a packer for a tobacconist; as a part-time teller at the Union Bank of South Africa, and after 1938 as an advertising salesperson and real estate agent.

He joined the African National Congress in 1940, using his organizing drive to work for the founding of the African National Congress Youth Leagues, which, sought to broaden the base of the ANC and to engage young men and women in political action. Youth League links led to his attending conferences of the Federation of Democratic Youth in Romania and the International Union of Students in Poland. He also traveled to the USSR, China and the UK. He became ANCYL secretary. He published a book on African nationalism commissioned by the government of India in 1954. In the '50s and early '60s he also wrote numerous articles for New Age, the Guardian and Liberation. He developed close friendship and working ties with Nelson Mandela, was elected Secretary-General of the African National Congress in 1949 and played a central role in major campaigns such as the Defiance of Unjust Laws in the '50's.

His vital role was recognized by the apartheid state, which sentenced him to life imprisonment along with other Rivonia trialists in 1963. He spent 26 years in jail, much of that time on Robben Island. He used his time to deepen his links with many fellow freedom fighters and also completed a BA in history and anthropology.

Sisulu's wife is Albertina Thetiwa Sisulu and also a political activist. They have five natural children who have all contributed to the South African struggle: Max, Anthony Mlungisi, Zwelakhe, Lindiwe and Nonkululeko. In addition they have four adopted children: Jonqumzi, Gerald and Beryl (whose biological mothers are Sisulu's sister and his cousin) and finally Samuel, a former Robben Islander who begged to be part of Sisulu's family and has now been formally adopted.

Sisulu was released from prison on 15 October 1989. He was elected Deputy President at the ANC national conference in July 1991 but did not accept a post in

the first democratically elected government in 1994, continuing to work within the ANC.

He became a patron of the UDF, the Omhle Trust and the Twa Twa Trust, and an honorary chancellor of the University of Venda. He holds four honorary doctorate degrees.

He has been awarded the Isitwalandwe by the ANC on the 80th Anniversary of the ANC, Bloemfontein on 8 January 1992.

# PROGRAMME

Welcome by Presiding Pastor Greg B. Jones

Multi-denominational invocation

Participating:

**Rev Dr Forbes / Rev Dr Perry Hopper/ Barbara Aires, S.C. / Imam Izak El Pasha / Pre-recorded message from Rev Wyatt Tee Walker / Rabbi Michael Feinberg**

Music rendered by the Church Choir

Tributes to the life of Walter Sisulu

**Mr. David Dinkins**

**Mr. Danny Glover**

**Mr. George Houser**

**Amb. Dumisani Kumalo**

**Ms Nakia Sellers – South African songs**

**Ms Nomazizi Sokudela**

**Ms Cicely Tyson - Poetry Reading**

**Dr Mary Louise Patterson**

**Mr Elombe Brath**

**The Appeal by Pastor Greg Jones**

**Acknowledgements**

**Mr. Steven Klinsky Founder of Victory Schools  
(Walter Sisulu Children's Academy)**

**The Offering**

**Ms C. Virginia Fields**

**Dr Bojana Jordan**

**Vote of Thanks by the South African Consul General  
Ms Thami Ngwevela**

**The National Anthem  
Karma SA Artist**

# Speakers

## David Dinkins

The 106<sup>th</sup> Mayor of the City of New York. He is Professor at in the Practice of Public Affairs at the Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs. He also serves as a Senior Fellow at the Barnard-Columbia Center for Leadership in Urban Public Policy.

## Danny Glover

In 1993 Glover starred as a police officer in the powerful drama "*Bopha!*," based on the life stories of children of black South African police. The film also starred Alfred Woodard, and Malcom McDowell, and was executive produced by Arsenio Hall and directed by Morgan Freeman.

## George Houser

An activist in the U.S. civil rights struggle, George Houser participated with James Farmer in the formation of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) in 1942 and was appointed its first Executive Director. Learning about the planned ANC Defiance of Unjust Laws Campaign he began to mobilize support in the U.S. and after a 1954 visit to South Africa during which he established close ties with many anti-apartheid leaders he left CORE to become the first Executive Director of the newly formed American Committee on Africa (ACOA). ACOA sought to build U.S. support for the growing African struggle to end colonialism and white supremacy, and campaigned to end all U.S economic and political support for apartheid. More than thirty years later, he returned to South Africa to begin, with Herb Shore, a long series of interviews with Walter Sisulu, to put on record an oral history of the life of this giant of the freedom movement This history has been published in South Africa under the title "I Will Go Singing."

## Amb Dumisani Kumalo

Dumisani Shadrack Kumalo has served as South Africa's Ambassador to the United Nations since April 1999. While in exile, he was attached to the African National Congress Mission to the United Nations where he was responsible for supporting the work of the Special Committee Against Apartheid. As Projects Director of the American Committee on Africa/Africa Fund, he played a key role in the U.S. divestment movement which led 26 states, 24 counties and more than 90 cities to divest from U.S. banks and companies which were doing business with apartheid South Africa.

## Ms Cicely Tyson

One of America's most respected dramatic actresses, **Cicely Tyson** has worked steadily as a television, film, and stage actress since making her stage debut in a Harlem YMCA production of **Dark of the Moon** in the 1950s. The daughter of Caribbean immigrants, **Tyson** was raised in Harlem. After working as a secretary

and a successful model, she became an actress, landed her first jobs in off-Broadway productions, and eventually made it to Broadway in the late '50s.

**Elombe Brath**

Chair of Patrice Lumumba Coalition & Producer at WBAI in New York

**Dr Mary Louise Patterson**

Committee of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism

**Nomazizi Sokudela**

Former chairperson and secretary of the ANC U.S. Regional Political Committee and Women's League. She has also served as a Director of Shared Interest, the South Africa Development Fund, the African Solidarity Committee of WESPAC, and the South African-American Organization.

**Ms Virginia Fields**

The story of C. Virginia Fields is a story of courage and determination. Virginia came of age at a time when a commitment to justice could be dangerous. Throughout her successful career as an activist, social worker and political leader, C. Virginia Fields has energetically and effectively spearheaded wide-ranging efforts to improve the lives of New Yorkers of all ages and incomes. From her earliest days in public service, Borough President Fields' priorities have been education, economic development, affordable housing, seniors' issues and health care.

## Condolence Messages

### Christian Frost

I wish to extend my condolences to Shiela and all of the great nation of South Africa for the loss of one of your fathers, Walter Sisulu. A nation and its history go through many transitions and Mr. Sisulu proved that belief in a better life could happen. There is much work to be done in many places near and far to create a better world, but having had the opportunity to meet him, gave me an sense of how he was able to contribute his efforts. And special wishes to Madiba as I know he has lost his closest of comrades.

### United Young Leaders of the World

United Young Leaders of the World pay tribute to the late Mr. Walter Sisulu

### Edward Moloane

The passing away of Mr. Sisulu has taken most of us by surprise. However, the mere mention of his name, illicit some very joyful and courageous feelings. I grew up being told by my grandmother how powerful & courageous. Mr. Sisulu was in fighting apartheid system that at the time was wreaking havoc in the lives of my family that was forcefully removed from their house in Lady Selborne, Pretoria. His efforts in fighting the system of apartheid touched on every South African. May God welcome him into paradise as a real Hero for his humanitarian accomplishments on this temporary dwelling place.

### Marilyn Glover

My sincere condolences to the Sisulu family. Mr. Sisulu will be dearly missed but always remembered by fellow South Africans both local and abroad, that includes my family.

### Dubravka Harries

What a great man! How lucky we are to have had him to pave the way for the new Proud to be South African.

### Maggie Hite

I was saddened to hear of the passing of such a great man. He is a hero to many of us. This is a time to celebrate the life of Walter Sisulu but please also send my condolences to the family and the nation.

### Aladdin Pojhan

As a friend of the people of South Africa, an admirer of the brave freedom fighters of this great nation I extent my sincere condolence to Mrs. Albertina Sisulu and the entire Sisulu family. I do this on behalf of my foundation the Voice of Innocents. Our mission is to instill in the young generation of all countries cultural pride, awareness and tolerance. They will look up to heroes among heroes such as Walter Sisulu.

### Ann Fuhrman

I share in the sadness of your country's loss.

### **Zeg Fanta**

I read the short story about Dr. Sisulu who passed away recently. I was greatly moved by this giant of giants in the land of Africa. Very sad time for Africa without Dr. Sisulu, and Africa does not have the reservoir to replace the depletion of these giants of the 20th century. My sympathy to South Africa and to his survivors.

### **Lorna Parris**

I would like to send condolences to the family of Walter Sisulu. We praise God for giving us this great man. I know his soul is at rest.

### **Jennifer Davis**

Like many, both at home in South Africa and across the world, I grieve the loss of Walter Sisulu, as an inspiration, a model and a profoundly human friend with a frequent twinkle in his eye.

### **Evangeline Kim**

For Walter Sisulu's Beloved Country and Citizens and Family: Let us not mourn the passing of one of history's greatest sons, whose lifetime dedication and love for all of humanity spanned the passage of the 20th to the 21st century. Let us celebrate his legacy of equity and justice for all. We remain committed to his destiny. His soul is with us eternally. Peace and blessings.

### **Stewart Ting Chong**

I was deeply saddened to read of Tata Sisulu's death. I was privileged to have met him while on the staff of Archbishop Desmond Tutu in Cape Town. My sincere condolences to Mrs. Sisulu and her family. May the Peace of our Creator bring them much comfort. With all my very best wishes.

### **Shared Interest**

Our deepest condolences to the Sisulu family. As we grieve, we also celebrate the life of Walter Sisulu, whose spirit accompanies us still. He will always be a North Star for those who continue the unfinished work of building an equitable South Africa, and a just and peaceful world

### **Nadine Hack and Jerry Dunfey**

Along with the remarkable history of Tata Sisulu's central role in South Africa's struggle for freedom and justice – inextricably connected to the very existence and mission of the ANC's striving for these goals – anyone who knew him and Mama Albertina was also profoundly affected by their utter dedication to family in the broadcast sense.



## National Anthem of South Africa

Nkosi sikelel' iAfrika  
Maluphakanyisw' uphondo lwayo,  
Yizwa imithandazo yethu,  
Nkosi sikelela, thina lusapho lwayo.

Morena boloka setjhaba sa heso,  
O fedise dintwa la matshwenyeho,  
O se boloke, O se boloke setjhaba sa heso,  
Setjhaba sa South Afrika - South Afrika.

Uit die blou van onse hemel,  
Uit die diepte van ons see,  
Oor ons ewige gebergtes,  
Waar die kranse antwoord gee,

Sounds the call to come together,  
And united we shall stand,  
Let us live and strive for freedom,  
In South Africa our land.

## Contributions in Memory of Walter Sisulu

Dear Friends,

As you know organising the memorial service required a large effort and generous contributions from friends of both the family and the historical struggle of the South African people. We thank you for your support in kind, cash and for joining us at this memorial service. Walter Sisulu's work and legacy can be kept alive through donations to a special fund that has been established in his memory.

Tax-deductible contributions for this purpose can be sent to Shared Interest, 121 W. 27th Street, Suite 905, New York, N.Y. 10001. Checks can be made to Shared Interest "For Sisulu Memorial Fund"

*Please note: All forms of payment are accepted, For further information, please contact Alexandra Kenneough at 212-337-8547. Donations will be acknowledged by Shared Interest.*

Consul General Thami Ngwevela  
and Ambassador Dumisani Kumalo  
would like to thank the Committee Members  
for making this Memorial Service possible.

Jennifer Davis  
Donna Katzin  
James Ferrari  
Diane Stevens  
Lenora Taitt-Magubane  
Denise Pease  
Nadine Hack  
Nomazizi Sokudela  
Frank Ferrari  
Bojana Jordan  
Sholeen Mooljee  
Avic Tablante  
Linda Maso

**With Sincere Appreciation for the  
Generosity of the  
Canaan Baptist Church**

The Rev Dr Wyatt Tee Walker  
Pastor Greg Jones



**We would like to thank Ms. Laretta Bruno  
of Gramercy Partners for her kind contribution of  
flowers.**