

# Mandela's Legacy

## Reflections on Mandela

To reflect on Mandela, is to reflect on greatness...

Not to mourn his death but to celebrate his life.

His passing gives us all pause to take the measure of our own lives...

The measure of our love, our stability, our loyalty, our dedication and our capacity to rise above the mundane and aspire to give meaning to our lives.

*Be not afraid of greatness: some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them.*

– Shakespeare

Nelson Mandela is one of the few people on this earth who truly achieved greatness. Greatness uncontested by friend or foe. Greatness that evoked awe at the nature and magnitude of the achievement, but that also elicited love and affection for Mandela the human being, in addition to admiration and appreciation for Mandela the political leader. He was a unique leader, in whose actions countless souls found inspiration.

Determination, commitment, deeds and words fused into an indissoluble entity... a life lived in greatness, marked by the

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tenacity of commitment to principles and beliefs in the face of an implacable foe, first in open conflict, then in his refusal to abandon his principles for 27 long years in prison, 27 long years of a determined spiritual resolve, a lifetime and more, and onward to dismantle Apartheid, establish democracy and bring about the reconciliation of his people and lead his nation to greatness...

He belongs to a pantheon of greatness that few stars inhabit: People who fought, but whose names shine not because of military victories but by the power of their example and their moral and political decisions. From Umar ibn Al-Khattab, who protected the pluralism of Jerusalem in the seventh century, to Lincoln who gives a blanket amnesty to his opponents after leading the Union forces to victory and ending slavery in nineteenth century America, to Nelson Mandela who withstood conflict and ordeal to achieve the spiritual and political transformation of a nation of many peoples, and inspired the world.

He recognized the call of duty and in so doing responded to the call of destiny, for himself and for South Africa. For it is through the living labours of public persons that societies become nations, and nations become great. For in the action of these public figures, if they are sound, society will prosper, but if they are inspired and inspiring, societies will rise above what they thought themselves capable of, nations become great, and lay the foundations for continued future greatness. And through such inspiring deeds and words, do public persons lay a claim to immortality.

Nelson Mandela was undoubtedly one of those immortal leaders. He now belongs to history, but we are fortunate to have lived in his time and to have been witness to his magical allure, his saintly demeanour, his twinkling mischievous eyes, his humour and his wisdom. We have witnessed his mind and his heart at work, and admired his unique combination of political genius and human warmth, his vision of the 'Rainbow Nation' and how to make it a reality.

In affection, and admiration, we say our farewell to you, Madiba, our teacher, by word and deed. May you rest in Peace, and may your legacy live forever.

### The Place of Work in African Childhoods / La place du travail chez les enfants

Edited by Michael Bourdillon & Georges Mulumbwa

Dakar, CODESRIA, 2014, 252 p., ISBN: 978-2-86978-597-7

This volume is about how work enters and affects the lives of children and young people in Africa, taking for granted neither the traditional values surrounding children's work, nor international standards against it. The discussions focus on empirical observations of the lives of African children, the work they do, its place in their lives, and what the children say about it. Many African societies run their affairs on the ingrained notion that children must work as part of their process of growing up. Children, thus, participate in their families and communities through the work they do in the house, in the fields, in crafts – in whatever their families do. Their work is perceived as part of their education in the broadest sense. Such views are, however, antithetical to the dominant views in Europe and North America which see childhood as a time of learning and play; a time of freedom from responsibility and economic activity.

