

## Comrade Skhumbuzo Mthembu's funeral

23 January 2012

Speech delivered by Ruby Mathang, MMC for Development Planning & Urban Management during the funeral of comrade Skhumbuzo Mthembu on 20 November 2012

Good Morning

To the Mthembu family, Tshidisehang.

It is with great sadness, I stand before you today. Comrade (Cde) Skhumbuzo was a great man and his imprint has been made in all of our hearts. Great men live to leave a legacy; they rise beyond the ordinary, to be recorded in the history books of our culture and heritage. Cde Skhumbuzo was one such man, his efforts in our struggle will forever stand tall.

Skhumbuzo had lived an amazing life, as a comrade that ultimately was like a friend to some of us with his humanity, he was the kind of a Cde that would stand by you when you need somebody to be there. He took instruction from the African National Congress (ANC) with grace and never argued for a better task. He was sent to many tasks in our branch of the ANC, and executed almost all with perfection. I had a fortune of serving with him on many delegations sent by the ANC, and in his company I drew valuable lessons in life.

A true compatriot, a giant in his own right, he could turn very difficult tasks to easy and achievable. He will be surely missed by the ANC and its Alliance. I think everyone who knows him very well would agree with me on this; it was his sense of humor. He was kind of a person that would make everyone laugh so hard that they would end up crying with laughter, his jokes about football was unending.

To the Mthembu family, please accept our heartfelt condolences, Tshidisehang, hase lona feela ba lahlahetsweng, sechabe kaofela se utlwile bohloko. Your pain is our pain; your loss is also our great loss.

Skhumbuzo Mthembu was one of the best human beings I ever knew. And I do not say this lightly. His selfless love, his love of life, and his love for his community. Today Soweto/Orlando is not the same as it used to be. Skhumbuzo, working within the collective, contributed immensely to the changes that we see around today. He never contested for positions in a divisive way in the ANC. His essential goodness, all made Skhumbuzo a wonderful person whose presence on this earth made a difference to our humanity. Our area Orlando/Soweto /South Africa and the world, our world, would never be the same without his presence.

Skhumbuzo's unwavering commitment to the building of our better society was manifest in every facet of his life. His unwavering commitment to the ideals for which we struggled before 1994 was known to all. Skhumbuzo was the embodiment of the new cadre that the ANC is talking about. Warm, selfless, optimistic and committed and always hardworking but always finding time for others.

Skhumbuzo had a bold and pioneering spirit. He saw opportunities where some Cdes were inclined to languish in doubt and despair. He was one of us (8 of us in total) to see Cde

Kgabisi Musunkutu, the then MEC for Public Works in Gauteng about building this facility, Orlando Communal Hall. He was driven by vision of better human society. The rebuilding of Orlando Stadium to be a world-class facility, there also he contributed.

Cde was a remarkable man who championed the cause for development, particularly the poor and the downtrodden. He was held in high esteem by us all, and always made his presence felt when he was in the company of people because of his self confidence and righteousness. He was truly an outstanding community leader with a glowing personality who made a remarkable contribution to our community.

In sanctifying his memory, we will always value his friendship, his guidance, his frankness and his infectious sense of humor. As we bury Cde Skhumbuzo today, we dare claim that even if it is still at a great distance, yet we can see the outline of the destination towards which he had steered our great ship of struggle, as our captain.

I am therefore honoured to speak for ANC Orlando East and say, thank you Cde Skhumbuzo for what you and the other titans did to restore to us our humanity by teaching us that racism dehumanizes both the perpetrator and the victim.

Today, as we bury Cde Skhumbuzo, we must make a solemn pledge that we will carry on with our struggle and we must make a commitment to our people that we will serve them with no expectation of personal gain or glory, ready to carry out the tasks that needs of the people demand.

I am sure Cde Skhumbuzo would want us to continue to make an unequivocal undertaking to pursue the goals of defending democracy that our people have won, ever loyal to the injunction that the people shall govern, to use the power the people have gained to free our country from poverty, racism and sexism, to build a humane people centered society of which an entire generation of liberators dreamed and fought.

Farewell Cde Skhumbuzo, revered patriot and leader of our people.