

Honouring Enos Mafokate for his role in the management the Soweto Equestrian Centre

19 October 2010

Speech by the Executive Mayor of Johannesburg, Clr Amos Masondo, on the occasion of honouring Mr Enos Mafokate for his leadership and the role he is playing in the management of the Soweto Equestrian centre, Elkah stadium, Rockville/ Moroka, Soweto – Johannesburg

Programme Director

MMC for Community Development: Clr Bafana Sithole

Members of the Mayoral Committee

Fellow Councillors

Managers and Officials of Council

Chairperson of the Soweto Equestrian Foundation: Mr Enos Mafokate

Members of the Soweto Equestrian Foundation Board

Distinguished Guests

The Media

The Greater Soweto community

Ladies and Gentlemen

Programme Director, thank you for allowing me this opportunity to say a few words. I am honoured to be here today, as we acknowledge the wonderful work being done by Mr Enos Mafokate, the Chairperson of the Soweto Equestrian Foundation, as well as the work done by the Board of Directors, at this Soweto Equestrian Centre.

It is important to state that there are very few countries in the world that have done more to promote equestrianism, amongst the poor in general and in the black community in particular. Very few indeed, have been able to change the image of this sport from being an exclusive pastime for the rich and the privileged, than Enos Mafokate has done.

Today, we are celebrating a lifetime of achievement, another first in this community and an illustrious career of service. Mr Mafokate, in a career spanning more than forty years, is, through this centre, giving us a living monument, a demonstration of a great accomplishment.

In 2006, the City made available 28 hectares of land [ERFs 1679 and 1680], to help establish the 1st Soweto Equestrian Centre.

Over the past four (4) years this centre has grown and expanded to the point where:

a stable block for twenty horses and accommodation for forty (40) people have been constructed; and

The youth development programme has been put in place to train about fifty (50) young adults in the finer arts of show jumping, dressage and vaulting.

Programme Director, Mr Mafokate's passion for the welfare of animals has resulted in providing assistance to Soweto horse owners through advice on treatment, feeding, inoculating, de-worming and shoeing. In the past two years alone, more than thirty (30) people have been trained here in the age-old traditions of becoming farriers and saddlers.

Through the Equestrian Foundation, therapy is also provided to the disabled communities at Honeydew, where horses are being used to assist in the rehabilitation of patients.

In a country where sporting achievement is celebrated in the media and in communities, it is, indeed, a travesty, that Enos Mafokate has remained an unsung hero.

His first opportunity to break through the "mink and manure ceiling" of equestrian sport came as early as 1962 when he won his first show jumping competition. From there it was a tough rise through the ranks in a sport which not only requires a high level of technical expertise but also significant financial resources to be able to compete successfully with the best local and international riders.

His talent and his tenacity has enabled him to be placed second in the 1976 Rothmans Derby and to win prestigious titles at the Constantia Show Grounds the following two years. His pioneering role was confirmed in 1978 when he was the first black rider in 127 years to compete at the Pietermaritzburg Royal Agricultural Horse Show.

His talent was soon recognised in international equestrian circles and in 1980 he became the first South African rider in twenty (20) years to compete outside the country where he came fifth out of thirty one (31) riders at the London Royal International Horse Show.

In 1992 he was part of the South African development team that attended the Olympic Games in Barcelona and five years later he successfully completed a sports management course in Belgium.

Programme Director, the outstanding aspect of Enos Mafokate's career is that he continued to contribute to the growth and development of the sport he loves, even after his own competitive career came to an end. The development of this Soweto Equestrian Centre can largely be attributed to his vision and hard work. To this day, he has had the privilege of seeing a new generation of young black riders moving into the foreground.

Only last week he returned from Kentucky in the United States where he accompanied one of his students, Khensani Maluleke, who represented South Africa in a Vaulting World Championship Competition.

I have no doubt that some of the graduates of the Soweto Equestrian Centre will, in future, continue to represent South Africa with pride and distinction at international events. When they do, it will in no small measure be thanks to the pioneering work done by Enos Mafokate.

Programme Director, the City of Johannesburg remains committed to the growth and further development of this Equestrian Centre. Obviously, it still requires significant funding and support to evolve into a truly national facility. We believe that we are on the right track and that this Centre has the potential to play a big role within the community in the foreseeable future.

Programme Director, during the 2010 FIFA World Cup, we witnessed the Equestrian Unit of the JMPD assisting with crowd control and crime prevention.

Programme Director, our responsibility in this City, includes:

by-law enforcement;

attracting sponsorship or donations;

monitoring equestrian development as prescribed in our lease agreement

serving the centre as a strategic partner; and

ensuring that our youth are properly trained and equipped with meaningful skills that enable them to become responsible members of society.

Programme Director, government cannot achieve this on its own nor does it have the capacity to embark on these programmes of development in isolation. What we need is a partnership with civil society organizations and communities.

Let us together, celebrate a lifetime of achievement, another first in this community and an illustrious career of service. Let us celebrate Ntate Enos Mafokate. This is an example truly worthy of being emulated.

Thank you

Nthatisi Modingoane

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