

## **National Freedom Party Heritage Day Speech**

Madam Speaker

Hon Chairperson

Hon Members

All guests,

It is said that a person's heritage is made up of different practices and traditions that are passed on from generation to generation. In the past the 24<sup>th</sup> September was celebrated in the former KwaZulu Homeland as Shaka Day, to mark the day King Shaka was assassinated in 1828. This is an important feature of our heritage as Zulu people and as a country.

Honorable Members, each of us have our own individual and unique stories to tell and equally, our country's heritage is long and complicated. It is a story of tragedy and victories. We have indeed come a long way and it is important for us to preserve our heritage so in order for coming generations to learn from history because as the saying goes, you cannot know where you are going unless you know where you come from".

For us in the NFP, it is particularly important that the young people of our province learn more about where we come from as a people and for them to be proud of those who came before them and fought for their freedom. We should therefore commit to making heritage studies an integral part of our education curriculum. Today, I would like to remind everyone of some of the many faces of our heritage.

This generation needs to stand tall and be proud of our forefathers who fought and won in a bloody war against the British in the Battle of Isandlwana in 1879. They also need to understand the pain and

humiliation faced by the Zulu people when they were deprived of their ancestral land in terms of the 1913 Land Act and how this has resulted in the controversial debates about land reform today.

But we are also a country of hope. We need to continue telling our children the story of how we fought an oppressive system and brought Apartheid to its knees. The story of how in 1994; the majority of people in this country were able to vote for the very first time. This all forms part of our heritage.

Who can forget how proud we were as a nation when in 2002, Mark Shuttleworth became the first African to travel in space or how in 2006 'Tsotsi' became the first African Film to win an Oscar? In 2010, we became the first African country to host the FIFA World Cup and this year last month, Lieutenant Commander Zimasa Mabela made history by becoming the first black female captain of a vessel in South Africa's navy. Indeed, South Africa has a rich heritage to speak of.

But honorable members, heritage is always changing and we should always take time to reflect and ask ourselves what history will say about us. When the next generation looks back, will they feel that we continued to fly the flag high or will they feel that we have failed them? What is our legacy going to be?

Will it be the increasing rates of youth unemployment? Will it be a legacy where grandmothers no longer feel safe as they fear being raped by people young enough to be their grandchildren? Will it be a legacy where people no longer have faith in the criminal justice system, a system in which police brutality is the order of the day as we witnessed in Marikana?

In which direction is our heritage headed? Are we moving backwards or are we creating even greater stories to tell? In the past, we have faced

many giants and time after time, South Africans have conquered. We have to face today's challenges with the same level of zeal and commitment that sustained King Shaka, the same level of courage that enabled us to throw Apartheid into the dustbin of history and the same enthusiasm we carried when we cast our very first votes.

As the National Freedom Party we believe the greatest mark of our heritage will reflect in how we can create a better standard of living for the young people in our country. We have to make sure that we leave things better than when we found them. That is the heritage I want to see. I am encouraged by the passion I see in our young people and I know that in their hands, our history and our future are safe. I would like to conclude by quoting from a poem written by one such young person, Sandile Dikeni who wrote about his love for this country and his vision for us all.

**“My country is for love,  
so say its valleys.  
Where ancient rivers flow,  
the full circle of life.  
Under the proud eye of birds,  
adorning the sky.**

**My country is for unity  
feel the millions,  
  
see their passion  
their hands are joined together.  
There is hope in their eyes;  
We shall celebrate.”**

**Presented by: Honorable Vikizitha R Mlotshwa**