

## VISIONARY LEADERSHIP AND PASSION

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY MR. WELCOME "BHODLOZA" NZIMANDE ON THE OCCASION OF HIS HONORARY DOCTORATE AWARD BY THE DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY (DUT) FACULTY OF ARTS AND DESIGN AT THE GRADUATION CEREMONY HELD ON THE 7<sup>TH</sup> OF SEPTEMBER 2018 AT FRED CROOKES SPORTS CENTRE, STEVE BIKO CAMPUS (DUT) IN DURBAN.**

Programme Director;

Madame Chancellor, Nonkululeko Nyembezi;

Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Thandwa Mthembu;

Executive Deans of faculties present today;

Academic staff, students and parents;

Corporate and industrial leaders from various sectors;

Government officials and diplomats;

Graduates, Ladies and gentlemen.

Greetings, and thank you for lending me your ears this afternoon.

I am overjoyed to be counted amongst the illustrious recipients of the DUT Honorary Doctorate such as Doctors Kumi Naidoo, Richard Maponya, Wendy Luhabe, Anant Singh, Sizwe Nxasana and the late Ahmed Kathrada, to name a few. I am delighted and flattered to have been awarded this honorary degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Arts and Design alongside cultural icons as Siphon Mchunu and Johnny Clegg of Juluka fame noMama u-Esther Mahlangu who is respected globally for her indigenous Ndebele paint artistic designs. It is a special honour and privilege to share this occasion with them. I congratulate and salute them. I sincerely thank the Durban University of Technology for this award, and the Faculty of Arts and Design in particular.

None would have thought that one day an ordinary fellow from Richmond would be honoured with an honorary doctorate. Mina, mfokaNzimande; UmfokaGencane, uGencane kaMaduma nezithole zihamba ziyenkengeni,

ukobh'onkalala, inzingizane akade beyizikiza abasemzini nabasekhaya, oMduli, oGwala, OMphephethe!

This award has opened my mind to new possibilities and opportunities, and it has strengthened my courage and conviction to proceed with purposeful pursuits. As a country we have come a long way, yet we still have a long way ahead of us. Graduates, in your various career pursuits you must understand that leadership and excellence worthy of doctoral awards does not need any podium or elevated perch. To lead and excel is a quest and passion applicable anywhere even if unnoticed, away from the glare of publicity, and without a podium. But then again do not lead and excel because you seek rewards; lead and excel because you seek best results.

My early schooldays began at Phatheni Reserve Primary School in Richmond, which is a little over 100km from here. My leadership experience intensified during my high school days at Kwa-Dlangezwa High School in Empangeni where I was the head-boy and received awards for Leadership and Boy of the Year during the Speech and Prize-giving Day. Often, I would hold meetings to discuss leadership issues of the school, with Professor Sibusiso Bhengu who was our school principal, in later years he became the first Minister of Education in President Nelson Mandela's Cabinet. From a young age I was hungry for knowledge and success and I associated with visionaries who saw beyond the schoolyard issues. For instance, we almost shared a nickname with my dear friend Dr. Zweli Mkhize - the National Minister of COGTA - who was known as *Bhidliza*, whilst I was *Bhodloza* and our third mate was *Phihliza*. Kwa-Dlangezwa High School provided us with platforms that sharpened and shaped our future careers. My high school leadership experience made me understand and appreciate the value of education and its role in the life of any leader.

In 1975 I lost my father when I was still in matric. I spent several years in the teaching profession but later on moved to Richards Bay Minerals. Although my finances improved but I still had a yearning for the airwaves. This yearning led me to challenges and failures, that taught me that in life “the cross precedes the crown’. Having failed my first audition, I knew that I was knocking at the right door, but maybe not the right way. The outcome of the second interview paved the way for me to join Radio Zulu as it was then known; Ukhozi FM nowadays.

I was appointed as a radio Announcer, Translator and Producer. Back then we were not called DJs. We were newsreaders, programmers, researchers and everything else. Our news reports were in Afrikaans, which we needed to translate into isiZulu before broadcast.

I was eager to learn and grow, and took a keen liking on umaskandi music. It was a genre that was not popular to the listeners and often derided by colleagues. Nonetheless I took on the challenge of popularizing umaskandi music through innovation. I introduced umaskandi competitions, which brought public attention to the genre, and thoroughly engaged listeners and artists. Amongst other strategies I declared 1982 “The Year of uMaskandi”.

Suddenly umaskandi music had public appeal and enjoyed fair airplay. Leading umaskandi artists like NganZiyamfisa noKhambalomvaleliso noMzikayifani Buthelezi reached gold-disc status with sales of over 25 000 LPs as early as in 1982. I also promoted other traditional music genres like uMbhaqanga neScathamiya also known as ‘acapella’. In 1987 Ladysmith Black Mambazo won their first Grammy award; and 30 years later they have recently won their fifth Grammy award in February of this year. It is very pleasing and reassuring to experience international recognition for our traditional music that I promoted passionately through Radio Zulu, Ukhozi FM and SABC1. Our traditional musicians have matured into our cultural

ambassadors. In 1987 in partnership with the University of Natal I led the station in launching traditional music talent searches. In 1988 I made a public call to women to get involved in umaskandi. Groups like uBuhle Bezintombi sprang up on the mainstream music scene. In everything I have achieved I have dedicated my time and worked with passion for the promotion of traditional music through radio and TV. The energy that carried me beyond the call of duty came from passion and family support.

Therefore I do not mind being recognised for radio and TV programs such as Ezodumo, Sigiy'Ngengoma, Vuk'uKhanye Africa, Ezidlubhedu, including the chat show Phumele'Shshalazini, which also provided a public platform for *political dialogue*. In these programs I prioritised incorporating listeners/viewers' views because I was sensitive to the needs of our content consumers and aimed at exceeding their expectations.

My unforgettable professional experiences began when I was thrust into managerial and leadership positions within the SABC. It was the leadership acumen of Rev. Hawu Mbatha who was the station manager then and later became the SABC CEO that had a greater impact on me. I took over the Vuk'uKhanye Africa breakfast show and instigated the promotion of traditional music and musicians countrywide.

My leadership skills were not honed only on-the-job but also through self-help materials where I learned about effective leadership methodologies propounded by authors like Kenneth Blanchard, the author of "One Minute Manager" and "Leading at a Higher Level." One of my favourite quotes from his literature says: "*People who feel good about themselves produce good results*". This helped me to keep my staff motivated, confident and to take pride in the quality of their work. I learned to engender strong self-belief systems and institutional values amongst colleagues. I have followed leadership examples of Dr. Mahathir Mohamad who at 95 has been sworn-in

as the Prime Minister of Malaysia again. I have also been impressed and influenced by Mr. Ruel Khoza's Attuned Leadership.

During my tenure as a station manager of Ukhozi FM as from 1997, the station was able to move from 3,7million listenership to 6,7million. This was as a result of the effective application of different management principles and strategies learned from relevant literature such as the "DELTA Principles", which mean Develop, Excellence through Leadership, Teamwork and Accountability. My commitment to this model led to the appointment of individuals who have shown dedication to their work, and who exceeded their set targets. My visionary leadership formula consisted of 4'Ps. **Position leadership**, i.e. to humble myself to a level such that I am approachable. **Permission leadership**, i.e. the team's acceptance of your leadership. **Production leadership** i.e. this is for results and performance outcomes, which lead to organizational pride. **People Development:** Leaders need to nurture talent for succession, and not hog positions.

Today I wish to dedicate this award to my colleagues at Radio Zulu, especially Thokozani Nene (Igxaba Lembadada), Kansas City Mchunu, (Umfana omuhle kunabo bonke abafana emhlabeni), uJoshua Mlaba, (Umfana waseNkwezela) Usjula seMkhonto, Hubert Sishi (OweNkosi), noGuybon Mpanza and many more who in their different ways were my mentors and inspiration. I also salute my own protégés namely Tshath'Ugodo, Ngizwe Mchunu, Thuso, Linda Sibiya, noDudu Khoza, nabanye. This award belongs to the legends of traditional music, such as uMfazomnyama noDavid Masondo, Shwi Nomntekhala, lhashi Elimhlophe noPhuzekhemisi. And the ancestry of umaskandi uPhuzushukela, uJohn Bhengu mudumlungu, muduzibukwana ejenene; and to the ladies of maskandi – uBuhle Bezintombi. I also dedicate this honorary doctorate to Ukhozi FM for putting many musicians, old and new, on the map and developing traditional music further.

I wish to say to the graduates that from my professional journey I have experienced that passion makes good leaders and that indeed a journey of a thousand miles begins very humbly, even on the back of a mule. Lead passionately wherever you are. Much later in life somebody will notice your pedigree and award you publicly, maybe with a philosophical doctorate. I urge all of you that as from today work on your personal vision that may one day bring you onto this podium later on in your lives.

The late Dr. Hugh Masekela during his honorary degree award ceremony called on all of us to become pioneers of our African heritage. He said: "We need to study, learn and teach our traditional music, otherwise in a decade or two from now, African society will be the first in human history to have abandoned its native tongues if we do not reinstitute our own languages back into our homes, schools and social interactions with each other".

Culture defines our identities, "*ngeke usishiye isithunzi sakho*". Just like all successful nations we have to follow and develop our own cultural heritage. This is the cardinal rule for radio and TV leaders. Attach value to your culture because culture is the foundational stone that anchors respect, values and identity.

My vision involves the establishment of a Centre for Traditional Music boasting programs including talent searches for umaskandi musicians, seminars and joint performances with veteran musicians, theory and research, etc. In time, this Centre could easily incorporate programs involving Drama, Crafts, Izimbongi (praise-singers) nokunye. If you did not know it is Bhodloza who was Ugonondo ongabhekwa ngamehlo owayethi "Bathathe Sgidi" "Amakhekhe Mntanami" kwidrama yakwaRadio Zulu eyayibizwa ngokuthi "Yize Uvalo" which means "Fear is Nothing".

When well-managed and nurtured culture and the arts become a sophisticated industry capable of employing a range of professionals including producers, engineers, managers, designers, agents, promoters, administrators, etc. Internationally the music industry is a vast empire. Youth unemployment poses a challenge to us all to set up new industries that can absorb the talent we honour and recognise today. By developing culture and the arts we can create a sustainable new industry and provide jobs and growth opportunities for the youth while defining our identity and preserving our national heritage.

I am from Richmond. In case they have forgotten who I am, when I get back home I will remind them again.

NgiwumfokaNzimande; UmfokaGencane, uGencane kaMaduma nezithole zihamba ziyenkengeni, ukobh'onkalala, inzingizane akade beyizikiza abasemzini nabasekhaya, oMduli, oGwala, OMphephethe!

Madame Chancellor

Vice-Chancellor and Principal

Ladies and Gentlemen

I thank you!

NGIYABONGA!