

Transcript – Themba Mpetha Talking about his Mum Rose Mpetha

[rough edit]

OK, well. Eventually they got married before Oscar and without the permission of her family, her family did not agree on that marriage, and then they told my mother that well. You go and leave you do your own things and we will. Your mother will not be blessed by us. We will not allow you to marry this man, but my mother decided that now I will marry this man.

They got married and although she didn't have blessings, but she continued with Oscar. Getting married with her and then they had a first child. Harold was their first child and then followed by Esther Mpetha. My sister. And then after my sister, followed by my brother Carl Nkuleko Mpetha, better, who is late. Harold is also late now and then my mother continued with. Then I was born as the last born of that marriage, which did not have blessings. And my mother did not have bear grudges with her family. And she had her own. Mental problems and she was admitted at Falconback. And the family went to visit her. All the time. Until she was discharged at Falconback Hospital and we, we accepting the fact but. It had problems.

Our problems started when her family did not agree. Allow her to marry my brother. My, my, my, my father. But. Later in life. The family of the Scwebu was succeeded by her brother who came. To visit my father. My my mother's funeral. And she had one of the biggest funerals, which was never seen in South Africa. Thousands and thousands of people turned up to bury my mother, and the funeral was banned. And it was led by Archbishop the late Archbishop Desmond Mpilo Tutu. And that was the funeral. Flooded the whole of Cape Town and thousands and thousands of people turned up to attend that funeral and my uncle. My mother's brother attended the funeral and he went to see my father in Pollsmoor prison. My father was. Involved in political struggle. He visited. My father.

And he realised that they made a mistake. His father and him. You will apologise for his father and for his own action that they thought my father was not the right person for my mother. But he was shocked to see thousands and thousands and thousands of people attended the funeral saying that no, Scwebu were along and my anger realised that they've made a biggest mistake. And they want to apologise for the mistake of not allowing my father to marry my mother back. My mother decided to marry my father on her own right. And nobody will stop her. And. In the funeral.

My mother was the first to say to the ANC look, we are the women of these people, of these men and we are not going to beg for our husband to give us permission. To be part of the struggle. And the women formed a women's struggle. Which gave birth to the. ANC Women's league. The path of ANC Women's League, which my mother contributed with other women in Johannesburg to be part of the struggle and not to get permission from their husband or husbands prescribing to them what to do, they felt. That now it is the role of the women to participate in the struggle with their own right and bad right. Is not. Coming from. Their husband and they are there to liberate themselves and participate in the struggle as they are as they are as women.

And that's why they gave when the women. Struggle was started if my mother was not there and the experiences that she got from her family, they wouldn't have had a right to marry their husband, who will give them the right. It is them who must decide that they have. Are the ones who can determine their future, and that is why the women formed the women's organisations like FEDSAW Federation of South African Women. [unknown] That's what they said to Strijdom. In Pretoria my mother was part of the struggle of those women who said we are here, we fighting for our children,

we fighting for our families, but nobody must have a right to stop us. Our struggle is our struggle, and our struggle will be joined by our husbands and our man to liberate South Africa.

My mother stood very firm, even in the olden days at old location where we used to stay. My mother led women. And formed the political organisation to stand for the women long before the 50s and the women stood firm to operate in their neighbours to be part of the struggle. Not to stand to get husbands representing them in their struggle. They said no. We are here to fight for our struggle.

That is why in 1956. [unknown] they were young and she included them. The first women in Cape Town who got recruited [unknown]. That is why today you talk about Women's federation, that Women's federation. If my mother did not contribute to them and stood firm, nobody would have talked about women in their struggle.

My father learned a lesson from her. And she said. Well, [unknown] we've got your light. Not in the 60s, she was. In the 50s, leading the women to liberate their own family and liberate their own marriages and feel free to participate. And win the struggle of their families and the struggle of liberation. That's what we've learned from my mother, and we feel that her role and her kindness must not be forgotten, and nobody will ever forgot to see their resistance.

They threw away their [unknown] their ID saying they will not. Have 80s. My mother never take an ID. Don't pass, she refused. Indeed, a struggle, she said. It will not be part of her, and she will never carry the ID, and she protested with other women refusing to carry their ID, their sound, their voice was heard. They stayed or where? [unknown] when she was raised by women? Of South Africa for refusing to carry the passes. My mother was very strong on that and she said I will never carry the dcompass I have is this to the dcompass and no woman will ever accept to carry it on. Us and that dcompass was never carried.

These are the lessons that we have learned from Mrs Mpetha, who became Mrs Mpetha, defying her family of deciding whom to marry, my mother said. I'm not going to be told by my family whom I must marry, or irrespective of whether Oscar was from a poor family. Poor family background. But he was my husband and he fought for them and in the 50s they decided that they will form part of the family unit. And marry this man and Oscar's marriage was blessed by his own kids and defying the laws that were prescribed by her family.

Let those sleep in peace and let South Africa remember that the struggle of women, if those was not participatory. Did not participate in the struggle of women. Women struggle wouldn't have come up and promised, but, they were the participant of their struggle. The women had equal say today with men.