

Madiba was ‘energised’ by the people

December 18 2013 at 10:42am



Courtney Africa MADIBA MOMENT: Archbishop

Thabo Makgoba recalls the time he spent with Nelson Mandela as neighbours during a memorial service at the UCT Graduation School of Business at the V&A Waterfront the time he spent with Nelson Mandela as neighbours. Photo: Courtney Africa

Siyavuya Mzantsi

ARCHBISHOP Thabo Makgoba recalls fondly what it was like being Nelson Mandela’s Bishops court neighbour in 2009.

Speaking at a memorial service for the former president at the UCT Graduate School of Business at the V&A Waterfront yesterday, Makgoba said that at the time he had been given the task of writing and reading prayers for Mandela and his family.

“It was an honour to do that. I remember when I went to his house to visit. There were lots of people wanting to see him because he was not well. I asked him: ‘Don’t you get tired of people?’ but he said: ‘People energise me. They encourage me.’ That to me made me think about him in a different way.”

Makgoba spoke of what it was like to attend Madiba’s funeral in Qunu and how he was touched by the reception by the military and the residents of Qunu as they bid Madiba farewell.

“It was a beautiful display to see a great send-off for our father. The military paid so much respect to this global icon. When we stood by his gravesite and watched his coffin go down, I couldn’t help but think he had played his role in this country and in the world.”

In his sermon yesterday, Makgoba went on to say: “Mandela’s legacy exemplifies wisdom, strength and faith. It demonstrates to the world there is a viable example to follow towards achieving justice, reconciliation and democracy and that change can happen through individuals through collective acts of service.

“Through his example he has set a standard for South Africans and the world. Today he continues to call on all of us to better serve our fellow human beings and contribute to better our society.

“He still remains a hope and inspiration to those in countries fighting for freedom. As we look back to Madiba’s long walk, it continues and will continue to inspire generations to come. He was one of those individuals who selflessly contributed to the development of human dignity.”

The memorial was attended by lecturers, professors and former parliamentarians including Mills Soko, who was head of policy and research in Parliament in 1994.

“I had the privilege to work with Mandela when he was a president. He stood by his values. He never let any policies intimidate his values. He leaves us with a legacy of institutions. We have independent institutions because of him. People come and go, but institutions maintain democracy.”

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<http://www.iol.co.za/capetimes/madiba-was-energised-by-the-people-1.1623989#.VCFCpBacxfg>