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DSACR MOURNS THE PASSING OF LEGENDARY ARTS PRACTITIONER AND THOUGHT LEADER: SIPHO MNYAKENI

Death has once again struck like a fierce sword and claimed the life of one of Free State's leading art practitioners – Siphon Mnyakeni. The Free State Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation (DSACR) hereby takes this opportunity to send its heartfelt condolences to the Mnyakeni family for the untimely loss of the late Siphon Mnyakeni.

"Coach", as he was affectionately known, by many young people he mentored, will be dearly missed and his wealth of wisdom across various art genres is a legacy that the DSACR will continue to honor. He was a Pastor, Song Writer, Script Writer, Publisher, Producer, Motivational Speaker, Life Coach, Mentor and Thought Leader. Indeed those who had an opportunity to cross paths with this colossal figure can bear testimony to the fact that he imparted in them vast amount of knowledge through his talent.

In 2007 he was involved in staging a musical to the late liberation stalwart, Mr. Oliver Tambo, titled "Dear Oliver Tambo" as part of the annual Oliver Reginald Tambo Games that the DSACR hosts in Thabong, Welkom. He was also involved in several Arts and Culture programmes hosted by the DSACR. He continued to commit himself towards narrating the biography of Mr. Oliver Reginald Tambo with the "Dear Oliver Tambo" theatre production and he staged it again in 2013 with the support of the national Department of Arts and Culture through the Mzansi Golden Economy grant.

"As the Department is currently grappling with the task of providing relief to artists whose income has been affected by COVID-19 and also on a positive trajectory to mainstream the creative talent available in the Free State, it's sad

to be losing such talent", observed the Member of the Executive Council for Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation, Mrs Limakatso Mahasa.

During her second Budget Vote Speech as the Executive Authority in this Department, on 29 July 2020, MEC Mahasa committed to take the Arts to another level. This commitment is evidenced by her pronouncement to honour local artists directly as well as through the anticipated Free State Creative Sector Awards scheduled to take place in December 2020.

"I implore the creative industry sector to better organize itself more than it is now. The failure to have an organized creative industry sector makes it difficult for us to properly celebrate the available talent in our Province", further emphasised MEC Mahasa.

As a quest to ensure the realization of an organized and inclusive Creative Industry in the Free State, MEC Mahasa has through her Budget Vote Speech on 29 July 2020, stated that she will engage all Arts and Culture structures in the Province through a Creative Industry Summit that will be staged during this financial year. That Summit has become urgent as we begin to see the loss of intellectual capital in the industry, such as Mr. Mnyakeni and others that can contribute towards the advancement of the industry.

As the Department stated a week ago, we are indeed going through a difficult and dark period as a province and country as we continue to lose our patriots against the backdrop of COVID-19. May the soul of Mr. Mnyakeni, and those of the other departed artists, find eternal peace.

End.

Issued by the Free State Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation (DSACR)

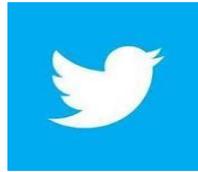
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