

Reflections by Dr Lyndon Bouah – Drakenstein Prison

On Friday 9 December 2016 I attended the launch of the Nelson Mandela Race that will be held on 11 February 2017. That day marks the 27th anniversary of the day our great icon left the prison walls of Victor Verster prison in Paarl.

In 2017 the celebrations will be a week long and will kick off with rugby and a chess event on the 4th of February 2017. The event will be a 27 min a side rapid event that will culminate on the 11th of February with a five, ten and twenty seven kilometre road race and a chess event on the 11th of February.

I am excited about these events because chess will be part of the bigger celebrations. There will be a music concert and many exhibitions throughout the week and an inter-denominational church service on the 12th. As can be seen from the picture below the rapid event has already been embraced by the prisoners.

The prison is outside Paarl close to the Drakenstein Mountains and served as the final prison of Nelson Mandela after Robben Island. The prison has a wonderful workshop and was responsible for the making of 90 chess tables which were distributed across the Western Cape to different libraries. The chess table project was a fantastic project. The funds came from the Western Cape Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport which is a provincial department, while a national department the Department of Correctional Services made the chess tables and the final destination was the libraries which is administered by the various municipalities which is a local sphere of government.

The chess tables were distributed to the following libraries:

1. Porterville
2. Van Ryns Dorp
3. Khayalitsha
4. Nyanga
5. Drakenstein
6. Groenheuwel (Paarl)
7. Bonnievale
8. Oudtshoorn
9. Beaufort West
10. Hermanus
11. Knysna
12. Riversdale
13. Vredenburg
14. Bella Vista in Ceres
15. George
16. Piketberg

At the launch of the Nelson Mandela we were joined by one of the last surviving Rivonia trialists Professor Dennis Goldberg. Professor Goldberg was in the dock with Nelson Mandela and served 22 years at Pretoria Central. I met him a few times this year at various occasions and I found him to be engaging and an endearing gentleman. He is 83 years of age and has not a shred of bitterness in him. He regaled me with tales of his chess playing days in Cape Town and he was pleased to hear

that chess was one of the sporting codes that will be held during the celebrations next year in February.

I invite all of you to play on the 4th of February 2017 and then come join the race on the 11th and enjoy a day out with the family celebrating the release and life of Nelson Mandela.



Dr Lyndon Bouah and Professor Dennis Goldberg



Professor Goldberg and the area Commander Mr. Jeremy Matthyse



Dr Lyndon Bouch with the advertisement for the Nelson Mandela Rapid

Regards.

Dr Lyndon Bouch