

Garden launched to honour murdered activists

TEMBILE SGQOLANA

tembiles@dispatch.co.za

The four towers stand tall and proud on a hill overlooking the Lingelihle township in Cradock each honouring the Cradock Four who were brutally murdered in 1985.

The towers bear the names of Mathew Goniwe, Fort Calata, Sparrow Mkhonto and Sicelo Mhlauli who were murdered near Bluewater Bay by the security police while travelling back home from Port Elizabeth in 1985.

Yesterday, government leaders officially launched the Cradock Garden of Remembrance after a multi-million rand refurbishment of the memorial complex.

Goniwe's widow, Nyameka, said the garden was long overdue.

"We as families even thought that it was not going to be done as the space was identified and left empty for years and ended up being vandalised," she said.

She said the garden had been established for a purpose and it should be used to create culture, history and distribute knowledge to South Africans.

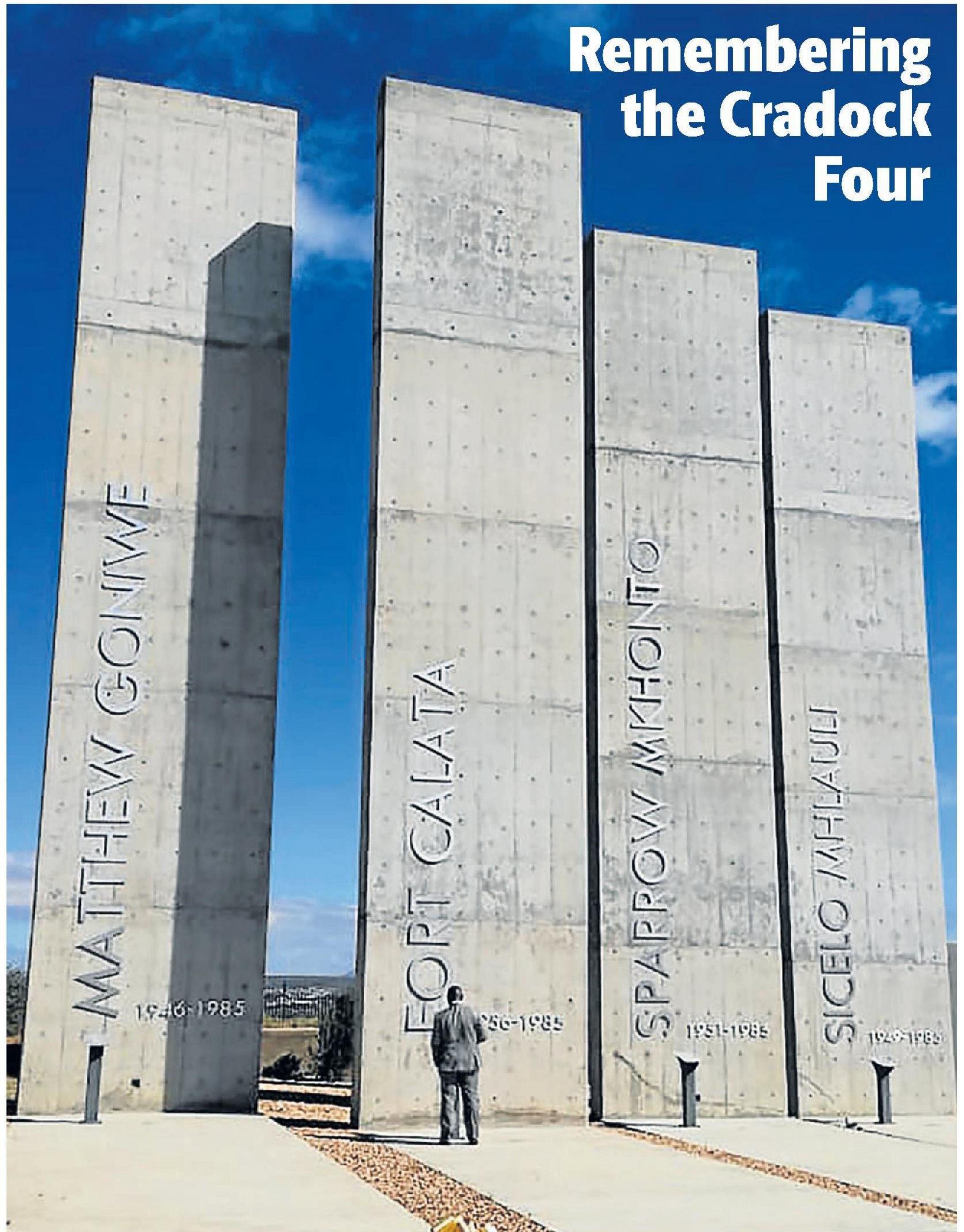
"This site should be guiding us as the Cradock Four guided the country before they were brutally murdered. This must be the light that stands on top of the mountain and sheds light for everyone," Goniwe said.

Mhlauli's widow, Nombuyiselo, said there were parts of the history of the Cradock Four that needed to be edited.

"We urge those who are writing to consult with the families so that we can write our own history," she said.

She still remembered the day the four activists died and how the attack by the state on the families did not stop there.

"The families were harassed



Remembering the Cradock Four

SOLID REMINDER: A man pays homage to the Cradock Four in front of four giant concrete pillars. Officials launched a Garden of Remembrance at the site on Human Rights Day in the town. Picture: TEMBILE SGQOLANA

after the death of the our husbands. I can't even count the times they came to my house kicking down the doors and harassing us," she said.

She said the garden of remembrance gave them strength.

"We must protect, guard and reprimand those who are vandalising the garden," said Mhlauli.

Tourism minister Derrick Hanekom said the department had spent R28m on the project.

"This was built by the expanded public works programme workers and people will be employed to keep the

We urge those who are writing to consult with the families so that we can write our own history

site clean," he said.

Hanekom said the monument project had exceeded his expectations and would create jobs.

"The local economy will be boosted as tourists come to visit the site," he said.

He said the monument had potential for attracting people.

"The place is huge and has a conference centre, wall of remembrance and a small hall," he said.

Hanekom urged the people of Cradock to take care of the memorial.

Economic development, environmental affairs and tourism MEC Oscar Mabuyane said they had committed to help educate relatives of the Cradock Four.

"We want to make these families independent," he said.

He also announced Standard Bank had contributed R20,000 to Solomon Akona Primary school to buy school uniforms.

More reports, pictures – P7