

■ TRIBUTE

Dr Thandi Ndlovu shattered stereotypes

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AS I SAT penning my reflections of the success of our Women's Month programmes, devastating news arrived of Dr Thandi Ndlovu's tragic death in North West on Saturday.

As the tears welled in my eyes, those reflections had to turn into this tribute to an exceptional South African whose entire life was about shattering stereotypes.

Dr Ndlovu was an extraordinary woman who had such a powerful hand in both our Struggle for freedom and the consolidation of our democracy.

In the building sector, she is known best for her brainchild Motheo Construction which she founded in 1997. She learned construction from the ground up, literally from the simple task of brick making.

Motheo had worked itself up to the top end of the premier league in the construction industry. Her company built over 80 000 homes across the country while being contracted to government.

She was always on the ground personally making sure her work was of the highest quality.

That trait earned her numerous



Dr Thandi Ndlovu

awards as a top businesswoman and a leading light in the sector.

Dr Ndlovu was born in Soweto and went to Orlando High School. Her contemporaries attest to her powerful academic record and active involvement in the community.

When the student rebellion of 1976 erupted in Soweto she was at the University of Fort Hare.

Like many of her peers, she was forced to abandon her studies in the wake of the repression by the apartheid state that followed. Like thousands of her generation, she made the journey into exile.

Thus, she joined what was to become known as the June 16 Detach-

ment of Umkhonto we Sizwe, taking its place among other noble formations like the Luthuli Detachment of a generation earlier. She underwent military training and was part of the contingent of cadres who were posted to Novo Catengue in southern Angola.

Within MK she served as a senior political commissar with responsibilities for running a literacy and education programme for new recruits.

She obtained her medical degree in Zambia.

When she returned home after the unbanning of the ANC she set up a medical practice in the informal settlement of Orange Farm in Johannesburg and literally made medical rooms out of a shack. Her journey as a successful entrepreneur growing a major company and thousands of people began at that point.

As members of the ANC Women's League we honour Dr Thandi Ndlovu's great contribution to uniting our people and building our country. She leaves a formidable legacy for us to build on.

Nkonyeni MPL serves as the MEC for Human Settlements and Public Works in KwaZulu-Natal