



## OFFICIAL PRESS STATEMENT

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*He is gone but he shall never be forgotten!*

Today the world mourns the passing of “Madiba”, the honorable Nelson Mandela. We say the world because it is very rare when a single individual impacts people of all races, all vocations, and in every nation of the world. Nelson Mandela symbolizes for all of us the best of the human spirit, coming out as a prisoner after 27 years, not feeling bitter but quite frankly making all of us feel better.

Having had the opportunity to visit at the home of Nelson Mandela shortly after his release from prison, I will always remember the grace by which he welcomed us and saluted us in his backyard in Soweto, because his home was too small to welcome our delegation inside. Nelson Mandela leaves the nation of South Africa as a sterling example of how good can overcome evil and how forgiveness in the face of human assault can overcome retribution which results in the elevation of the human spirit. This legacy of Nelson Mandela does not make him weak. It makes him strong in the

eyes of leadership and a clear vision for all people. His life does indeed display for all of us “power beyond measure”.

His visit to Detroit at Tiger Stadium in 1990 on the Mandela Freedom Tour, was evidence of the power and magnitude of the “man”. I was on cloud 9 as I stood there on stage as the emcee for the program. It is even reported that crime went down in the city of Detroit during his 24-hour visit. I can still hear his voice as he thanked the people of Detroit and “Motor-town”, for their support during his imprisonment. It was electrifying for all of us who were blessed to be there, particularly as he recalled the words of Detroit’s own Marvin Gaye, “*Brother, brother, there’s far too many of you dying. Mother, mother, there’s far too many of you crying.*” The sad reality is in 2013, there are still too many of us dying, and there are still too many mothers crying. Nelson Mandela gave the world hope. May we continue to take that hope and pass it on to each other. In his own words, “I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.” May his spirit continue to live on amongst each one of us. To Madiba, we all say Amandla!

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