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DETROIT BRANCH NAACP REMEMBERS WINNIE MANDELA

DETROIT -- The passing of Winnie Mandela marks a significant point in the life of those who sacrificed so much to obtain justice, freedom, and dignity. Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, known as “Nomzamo” (the mother of the nation), was the reason that many of us in the west were well acquainted with Nelson Mandela. For 27 years, from 1963- 1990, while Nelson Mandela was in prison, it was Winnie Mandela who was the face of the Anti- Apartheid Movement.

Winnie Mandela was tortured and politically attacked. She spent 18-months in solitary-confinement in Central Prison in Pretoria, South Africa. It was apartheid that separated Nelson and Winnie Mandela. It was apartheid at the root of it all, creating a schism in the movement and in the marriage between Nelson and Winnie Mandela. Ultimately, it is the apartheid systems of the world that separate good people who simply want to live freely with dignity and respect that one day must be eliminated for causing such pain and agony.

The 1990 visit of Nelson and Winnie Mandela to Tiger Stadium in the city of Detroit, during the International Freedom Tour, was one of the high points of our city and this nation. Those of us who were at Tiger Stadium remember with great historic pride the feeling of triumph and comradery on that 28th day of June. It was indeed a blessing to pay tribute to those who had been beaten down by the system of human degradation, now standing up in triumph and celebration. While Winnie Mandela may no longer be among us, her work, her words, and her sacrifice will always inspire us. There is an old African proverb which says, *“Those who we love die only in the physical sense. Their spirit continues to live on in the will and determination of those whom they leave behind.”* The spirit of Winnie and Nelson Mandela will always live on within each and every one of us.

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