

MAUABI

BioMagazine

WHEN
AFRICAN
WOMEN RISE

BIOGRAPHY

BARBARA LAWRENCE-STRYDOM

Navigating the Heart of Identity—A Journey from the Navel to the Source, Unravelling the Threads of Ancestry and Self."



www.mauabiomagazine.com

Behind the scene

Feature

**Barbara "Aunty B"
Lawrence-Strydom**

Editor

Tendai Nheta

Chief Storyteller

Hazel Namponya

Technical Specialist

Archie Maunganidze

Designer

Elevation Media

Publisher

Write Words Create

Photographer

Cover by Monica Dart

Contact us

Maua Bio-Magazine Offices:
Johannesburg, South Africa
and Manchester, United
Kingdom

+27 65 922 6366

+44 7554 538633

Email: editor@ma-ua.org

www.mauabiomagazine.com

MAUA

WHEN AFRICAN WOMEN RISE

BioMagazine

Advertising

ads@ma-ua.org

ELEVATION MEDIA

Photographer: Monica Dart

THE LEGACY OF INKABA

THE STORY THE AUNTY OF AFRICA

Aunty B

It's all about Auntie B!

In this edition, we look into the extraordinary journey of Barbara Lawrence-Strydom. Auntie B's spiritual journey is an intimate story that takes us through the realms of identity and African heritage, highlighting how these elements play an important part in shaping one's life path. Her story is a source of inspiration for those seeking to unearth their roots and navigate the complexities of self-identity. She highlights the power in embracing one's lineage and the profound impact of ancestral legacies on our journey toward personal, collective and generational fulfillment.

Trust me, her story is worth reading if you are on this journey.

Happy Reading!



Hazel

Chief Storyteller



Photographer: Monica Dart

THE LEGACY OF INKABA

In the first cycle of my life—the first seven years—as I reflect on my story, I met my mum at 8:30 pm on 10 November 1971, just five hours before my dad’s 21st birthday.

Now, I have completed another seven-year cycle, marked by the completion of my *Inkaba* tour—a profound spiritual journey into my roots. In Zulu culture, *Inkaba* refers to the umbilical cord, symbolising a deep connection to one’s origins and ancestral lineage. This journey has been about more than retracing my steps; it has been about reconnecting with where I come from and understanding the ties that bind me to my past.

Between these milestones lies a story of discovery, healing, and legacy—woven into the complex and often painful fabric of South Africa’s history. Each step has shaped me, grounding me in the strength of my ancestry while guiding me toward a deeper understanding of myself and my place in the world.

MY STORY BEGINS...

At each place I visited, I performed ceremonies to give thanks, cleanse myself, and heal from the hidden traumas I unknowingly inherited at birth. My arrival into this world in 1971, as the child of Zelda Lawrence (née Anderson) and Mitchell Lawrence, was shaped by the harsh realities of apartheid South Africa. My father, born in 1950, was the first official "coloured" member of his family—a legacy weighted with both complexity and consequence. My story begins.

I was the first on my father's side to be born in a hospital—Addington Hospital—a place steeped in the shadows of segregation and systemic injustice. This is not just a story of beginnings; it is a testament to the legacy of Inkaba—the deep connection between personal history and national identity at the heart of South Africa.

It also marks the quiet shift in our culture, where ancestral practices tied to birth have begun to fade. The ceremonies once held to honour the afterbirth and umbilical cord—once carefully buried on family land or celebrated through the planting of a tree—are now reduced to medical waste, discarded and forgotten. In this quiet loss, the threads between heritage and modern life are slowly unravelling.

**Why they
call me
Aunty B?**

*Aunty is the anchor
who holds the
family together.*

&

B

**stands for
Borderless –
from the
village to
across the
continent**

ABOUT AUNTY B

Barbara Lawrence-Strydom, raised on a farm in Nqabeni, KwaZulu Natal, is a devoted mother of two, a social entrepreneur the Chief Enlightenment Officer (CEO) of BDLS AFRICA (PTY) Ltd. Her company is committed to African development through storytelling and capacity building across various sectors. With 18 years in the financial industry has played a role as a bank manager from 2003 and learning and development. Barbara is a BCOM graduate specialising in Business Management. A mentor and coach she has developed multiple skills which she passionately shares intergenerationally while continuously learning.

Barbara has a profound understanding of organic intelligence, reflecting her deep cultural, African, and spiritual awareness. Awarded as the Best Social Entrepreneur Africa in 2018 by CWENA, she continues to impact many through her educational and leadership roles. Registered with multiple SETAs, she facilitates programmes in customer service, strategic management, personal branding, and more, serving organisations across Africa and contributing to sustainable development and environmental conservation. Her MasterDreamer Vision Board sessions which she has become world known for as she supports the nature film industry of Africa through Nature Environment Wildlife Filmmakers (NEWF), communities and traditional royal houses across her country – MasterDreamers change the world.

An accomplished author and the mind behind "The Book Trilogy," – Seed is Life, The Power of Hemp, Waste Knot Barbara is also known for her storytelling prowess, photography, and her active role in the environmental sector honouring her late husband's legacy and her passion continues through the "No Seed in the Bin" initiative.

Her adventures span across Africa, capturing its natural beauty and heritage, reinforcing her dedication to cultural preservation and education.

Her love for reading birthed her author journey. Her curiosity of the continent birthed the explorer that she has become with her current 7M's of Africa tour for Motherhood, a volunteer co-driver on a Cape to Cairo 40-day, 11 country, 12 500km road trip, her climb up Mt Kilimanjaro and her participation in the annual Jwaneng, Botswana Desert walk.

MY VISION AND VALUES

#TheAfricalSee - "The Africa I See" – a hashtag to amplify a view of Africa, celebrating our stories, for us, by us. From the Southern Tip of Africa to her pyramids – together.

My Vision: To build Africa each day, one person at a time.

My Mission: Achieving this through travel, collaboration, storytelling, capacity building.

My Mission: Achieving this through travel, collaboration, storytelling, capacity building.

My VALUES: Kindness and continuous learning.

MY STRATEGIC GOALS

BDLS AFRICA - Capacity building and speaker engagements.

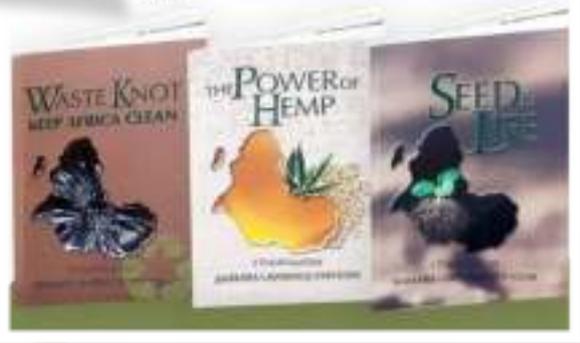
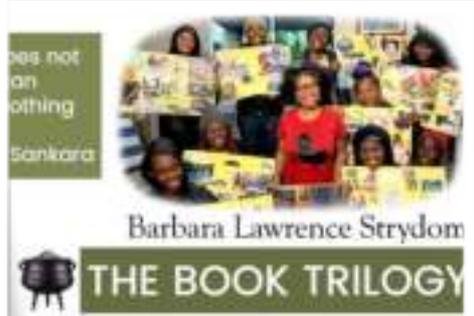
BDLS ENVIRO GREEN: To achieve self reliance through great stewardship.

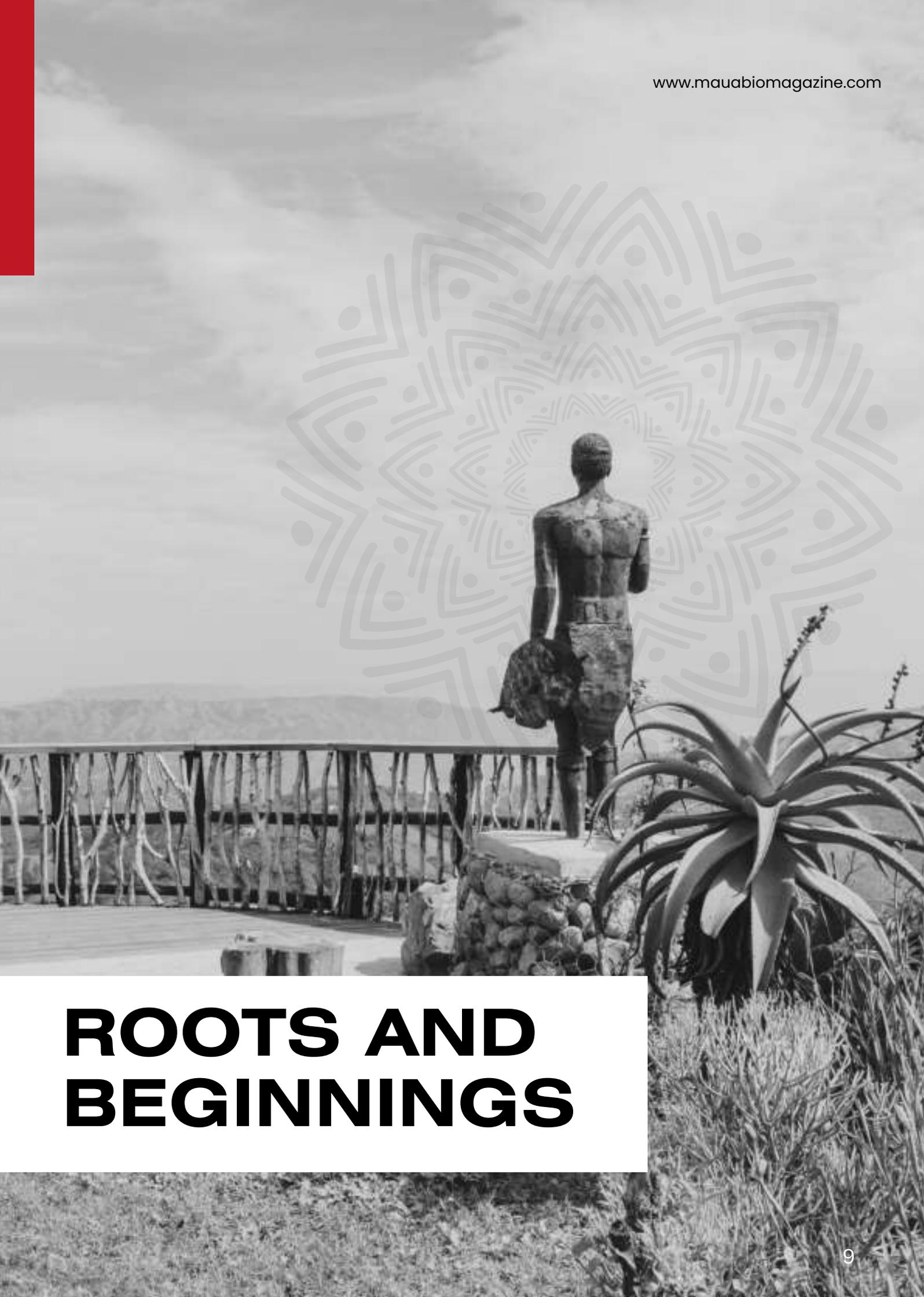
MASTER DREAMERS: Facilitate vision session to reimagine/leading from within.

BDLS TRAVEL STORIES: Explore and share the continent greatness.

**“I travel because proximity shapes my narrative”
- Barbara Lawrence-Strydom**

In a nutshell





ROOTS AND BEGINNINGS

THE FABRIC OF HERITAGE - MY BIRTH AND EARLY CHILDHOOD AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF APARTHEID

My investigation into Addington Hospital revealed significant construction and an opening ceremony four years before my birth in November. It appeared that, even at a governmental level, there was a sense of preparation for my arrival at this Durban beachfront hospital. The politics of birth there were murky, shadowed by apartheid's stringent racial divisions.

My mother, Zelda Lawrence, born to Jessie Harris and David Anderson, never met her mother, Jessie. She hailed from the then-Transkei-Ponderland, near Port St. John's in a place called Mzwagazi. We recently had the privilege to do our tour home, a poignant journey given that she had never seen her mother, who left when she was merely nine months old. Her father had departed for the Second World War, leaving her in the care of his uncle and aunt, Mary Anderson nee Van Zyl and William Anderson, my Ouma and Oupa (Grandma and Grandpa). I have coined the term Inkaba Healing Journeys to honour all the facets of joy and pain, unspoken, assumed and uncomfortable truths to honour the personal story.

The onset of the homelands policy spurred a significant migration to the cities and they were among the early families forming Wentworth, a "coloured" community in Durban. Thus, I was born into a richly diverse family heritage, with my mother of Chinese and Khoisan descent, and my father carrying the Lawrence and Mkhize lineages.

As the firstborn of six, I experienced profound love and preparation, spending three and a half years as the sole child before sharing my parents with four siblings by the age of eight. My birth is fondly regaled by my parents with an ambulance ride and my birth with Matron Hulley at about 8.30pm. My mom remembers that I was born with a veil, a symbol of luck she says and a tooth. I hear stories of standing by eight months and walking by nine with speaking before my first birthday. My parents share my first train ride from Rossburg station to Port Shepstone then on the Goods bus to visit my grandparents on the farm. Not much has changed at 53.

A life-changing moment came in 1974 when my father, a twin and one of my siblings, was involved in a horrific accident. As a result has to relocated in December 1976 to live on the family rural farm in Nqabeni and closer to our grandmother, MaMkhize. Imagine the diversity - we had to interweave four family languages: English, isiZulu, Xhosa, and Pondo. The integration was seamless, to a point that I never questioned this tapestry until adolescence.

From a city life we has to embrace farm life. I watched my mom help dad build a home with no electricity and draw water from the river. My early school days were marked by a six-kilometre walk with my cousin, which ignited a lifelong appreciation for the simple, grounding elements of life, far removed from materialistic definitions of success.

A Journey from the Flames of Langalibalele to the Power of Literacy

WORDS IGNITE

Not long after the passing of my grandmother we relocated from our new home in the farming village of Langalibalele, nestled in the scenic hills of the Oribi Gorge area, a landscape of breathtaking beauty dotted with fields of abundant produce. This was a community rooted in farming and fresh food.

From the tender age of three, my father taught me to read, instilling in me a profound love for Bible stories and scripture recitation. My cherished verse, John 1:1, states, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God." This verse underlines my belief in the importance and power of words.

My dad's new position as a pastor led to our relocation to our new home and school during a time in South Africa when racial segregation dictated much of life's experiences. I was classified as "Coloured," a label that significantly shaped my existence on this beautiful planet. Despite this, I was granted special permission to attend an Indian school, though this meant a delayed start to my education that year.

At this new school, I forged many friendships, learned new languages, and was exposed to diverse foods, traditions, and cultures. Despite the long 10km walk to school, my academic achievements were a source of pride and joy. I relished learning and excelled academically, compensating for my lack of sports accolades with book awards, nurturing my burgeoning home library.

My school holidays were spent balancing household duties with my passion for reading, offering me an escape into worlds beyond my immediate control. This escapism was fundamental, especially recalling a nightmarish event where the serene glow of a candle led to a devastating fire, awakening me to flames and fear, yet miraculously my sister and I escaped physical harm. This incident and a subsequent fire left an indelible mark, transforming spaces in our home into reminders of those harrowing nights.

Now, as an author and literacy advocate, I understand how words and reading shaped my life, igniting a passion born from my rural upbringing.

In the realm of education, every discipline interweaves with words, from the numerical language of mathematics to the musical notes that compose melodies, and the scientific terms that fill tables of knowledge urging us all to embrace and fall in love with the medium that shapes our understanding and interaction with the world.

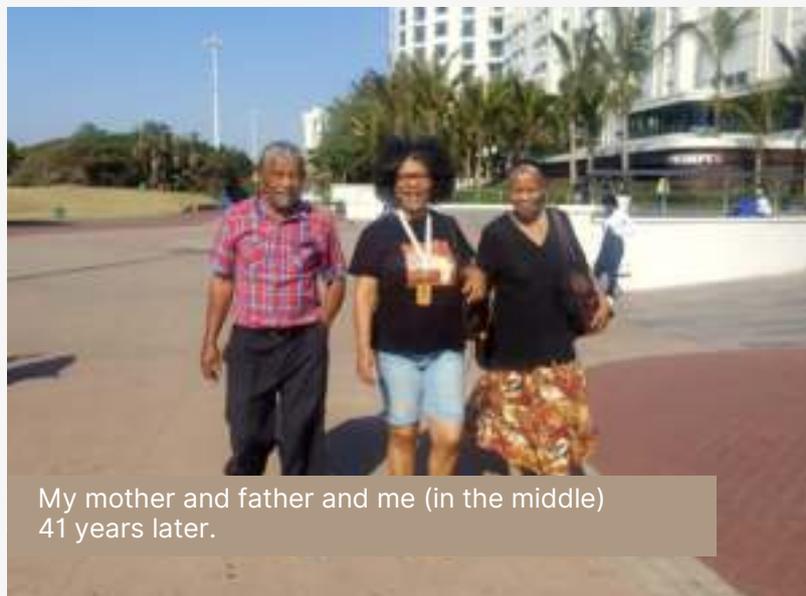
.....

These formative years sculpted my understanding of identity, heritage, and belonging. They set the stage for a lifetime journey outside conventional spaces, notably when my father became a pastor in the Indian community of Langalibalele, introducing us to a new cultural landscape and further enriching my complex heritage. This journey, rooted in a deeply ingrained familial and cultural legacy, has been my guide through the intricate expansion of my life's experiences, crafting a narrative of strength, identity, and unyielding connection to my ancestry.

.....



Me attending my matric dance in 1989



My mother and father and me (in the middle) 41 years later.



”

**THIS VERSE
UNDERLINES MY
BELIEF IN THE
IMPORTANCE AND
POWER OF WORDS.**

“

Photographer: Monica Dart

HEARING MY OWN VOICE

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE NOISES OF HAIR

Growing up in rural KwaZulu Natal as a mixed-race and mixed-culture child, I encountered various voices that influenced my view of my hair- a reflection of a broader societal attitudes and biases.

I transitioned from chemical relaxers to embracing my natural hair as a journey towards self-discovery and liberation, unlearning imposed beauty standards and relearning my African heritage. I often reflect on how my hair, once a source of confusion and external judgment, has become an expression of my identity and freedom.

I recall experiences with different hairstyles and the reactions they provoked, illustrating the complex social dynamics surrounding hair.

"My story reflects the power of self-acceptance and defining my beauty and identity beyond societal expectations."

This story not only personalises the global struggle with racial and cultural identity seen through the lens of hair but also serves as a reminder of the silent, yet loud, impact of historical classification systems like the pencil test in South Africa.

My journey from compliance to self-defined beauty encapsulates a broader narrative of resistance and empowerment, offering a resonant message on the significance of embracing my heritage and the diverse forms of beauty it encompasses.

Five years ago, in the throes of considerable loss, I vowed to my hair: "I refuse to lose you. Embrace your essence and present yourself for me. Be bold. Be grey. Be untamed. Claim your space as I embark on a journey of rediscovery and self-reconstruction.

"I am certain of one thing: my hair is unique to me. If people find beauty in it, that reflects their perspective; if they don't, the problem lies with them. We are partners in this journey— I'm ready to risk everything to understand you fully, independent of anyone's validation.



This story not only personalises the global struggle with racial and cultural identity seen through the lens of hair but also serves as a reminder of the silent, yet loud, impact of historical classification systems like the pencil test in South Africa.👏👏

**I sometimes
marvel at my
patience when
someone
expresses their
admiration for
natural hair. It
makes me
ponder, do dogs
exchange
compliments
about their fur?**

This story personalises the global struggle with racial and cultural identity through the lens of hair, while highlighting the lingering impact of historical classification systems like South Africa's pencil test. I often marvel at my patience when someone admires natural hair. It makes me wonder—do dogs compliment each other's coats? My hair's colour and style were shaped by necessity and budget, not a conscious natural hair movement. I've learned to simply exist and be myself. "Stay compassionate, Barbara," I remind myself. Ultimately, it's not about how others see me but about strengthening my relationship with myself.



THE SEARCH FOR MEANING

TRACING LINEAGE

Mam Khize

Aunty B's investigation into her family tree, uncovered untold stories of her ancestors and connecting with lost relatives, painting a picture of a divided yet rich history.

THE SPIRIT OF MY GRANNY MAMKHIZE



My Granny
Dinah Mkhize-Lawrence
*Khabazela Mavovi Gcwabe
wanawasEmbo*

On 5 September 1981, just before my tenth birthday, my granny passed away. I am reminded of her at different moments, and each of these has played a significant role in shaping my journey, her story, and my heritage.

In my early thirties, while working as a bank manager, I experienced a life-changing moment that connected me to her spirit. One day, I overheard two men talking, using the names "*Khabazela*" and "*Mavovo*"—clan names that stopped me in my tracks. These were more than just names; they were echoes of my grandmother's identity—familiar yet unexplored.

Curious, I approached the men and asked if they knew MaMkhize. It was the first time I had heard her name mentioned outside my family circle. Childhood memories flooded back as I recalled how the local community—whom we affectionately called *Omakhelwane* (neighbours and extended family bound by community ties)—would greet her with these names. Back then, I never questioned their meaning or significance. Now, hearing them again felt like uncovering a hidden thread of my ancestry, reconnecting me with a part of my heritage I hadn't fully understood.

Seeking clarity, I invited the men to my office and requested a straightforward explanation. They revealed that these names were part of a clan song, a discovery that deepened the mystery and connection to my grandmother. This encounter marked a turning point in my journey to understanding and embracing the legacy of MaMkhize, whose spirit, encapsulated in the melody of a clan song, guided me towards a deeper appreciation of my heritage, the ancestral bonds and the journey of the people of Embo of which I am apart of.

I started to notice elephants everywhere I went; in boardrooms, paintings, and in every space, I entered, these majestic creatures seemed to follow me, leaving me puzzled about their significance. During this period, a dream sparked my curiosity about my grandmother, MaMkhize, whose presence in my life had been subtle yet persistent, revealing itself through various encounters as I navigated my career and community life.

FINDING MAMKHIZE

I embarked on a mission to uncover the story of my granny MaMkhize. This journey necessitated delving into my father's memories, gently prompting him to recall the past, considering these recollections might stir emotions not fully processed. I asked him about his visits to her home, and he mentioned a solitary trip via rickshaw, sharing names that hinted at a history constrained by apartheid, which gradually restricted their access.

I soon realised I couldn't undertake this journey alone. In our African culture, one doesn't simply visit certain places without being sent or accompanied—a concept known as *ukukhapha* in isiZulu, which underpins foundational aspect of our traditions, *isintu* (refers to the essence of being human, encompassing the customs, values, and practices that define African identity and culture).

.....

I soon realised I couldn't undertake this journey alone. In our African culture, one doesn't simply visit certain places without being sent or accompanied—a concept known as *ukukhapha* in isiZulu.

.....

Consequently, I sought the company of Dr Thandeka, acknowledging the potential for overwhelming emotions that might impede my ability to communicate effectively, given that isiZulu isn't my first language and my cousin Andrea to bare sacred witness.

I sought the guidance of Dr Thandeka, knowing that the emotions stirred by this moment could overwhelm me, especially since isiZulu isn't my first language. I also invited my cousin Andrea to bear sacred witness.

Inside, my attention was drawn to a portrait of a woman on the wall. A young girl identified her as MaNdlovu, sparking a powerful realisation about the spiritual journey I had been on with my grandmother—symbolised by the recurring presence of elephants in my life. This revelation deepened my understanding of my role in advocating for a mindful representation of Africa's wildlife—not merely as fauna, but as sacred totems that carry profound cultural and spiritual significance.

This experience made me reflect on my identity and the absence of an African name among my given names. That same day, I received an unexpected call from Dr Gcina Mholpe, the treasured KwaZulu-Natal storyteller, who addressed me as *Babalwa*—an isiXhosa name meaning "the blessed one" and an isiZulu name meaning "one who is graced." The name resonated deeply with my soul, affirming my place and purpose within the African narrative—perfectly timed on the day I received the first copies of my book trilogy.

The presence of MaMkhize continued to reveal itself through *Ukukhemezela*—a soft rain or drizzle symbolising ancestral approval and celestial blessing. This gentle rainfall, which often accompanied moments of reflection or celebration, became a quiet yet profound conversation with my ancestry—a reminder of the enduring influence of those who came before me and the unbreakable connection between past and present.



From Left: MaMkhize, My Dad and Grampa Abraham Lawrence at my parent's wedding on the 5th of June 1970.

REMEMBERING DAD

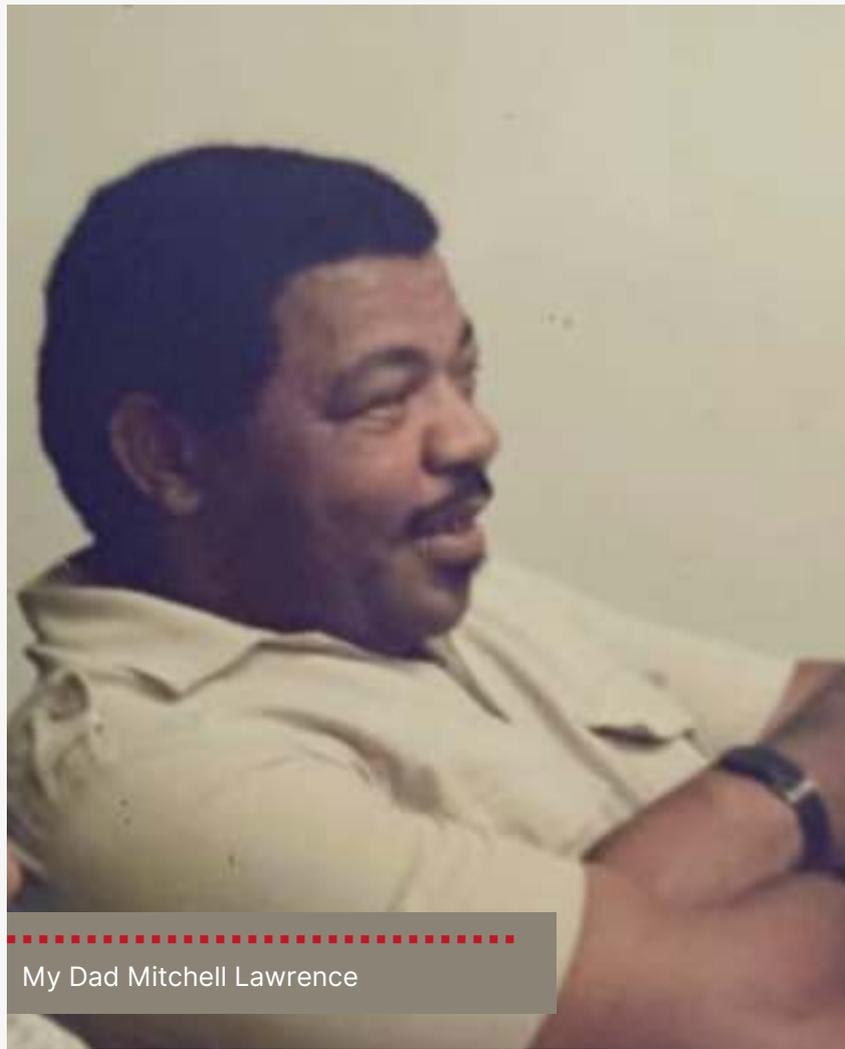
My father was profoundly religious, instilling in me a deep reverence for the Bible. He taught me to read at the tender age of three and a half, often placing me on the podium to recite Bible verses. To this day, I can effortlessly recall John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." This early introduction to scripture forged a connection between my ancestral beliefs and the religious teachings of my upbringing.

.....

I wanted to honour the memory of my grandmother, who would have been a tea lady, by providing a space for black women to feel respected and valued within the bank.

.....

I grew up understanding Abraham not only as a biblical figure but also as my grandfather, blending the spiritual and ancestral worlds in my prayers. My life has been a testament of guidance from both my African ancestors and the spiritual teachings I was raised with, awakening the dreams and aspirations they held.



My Dad Mitchell Lawrence



Sitting on my Dad's lap



From Left: Vice President of Institute of Waste Management of Southern Africa (IWMSA) 2004-2006 with me as a Bank Manager at 33 years

At 31, I began my bank manager journey, a role I accepted during a tumultuous period marked by hijackings and robberies. With a diploma in IT and no degree, I was placed on a special programme, but my motivation was deeper. I wanted to honour the memory of my grandmother, who would have been a tea lady, by providing a space for black women to feel respected and valued within the bank. This commitment led me to inadvertently learn about the harsh realities of gender-based violence and propelled me into advocacy work.

Despite my sheltered upbringing on a farm, away from the political upheavals of South Africa, I found myself unexpectedly representing KwaZulu-Natal in the Women's Parliament at 35. This experience unveiled the significant historical events and struggles I was previously unaware of, including the remarkable legacy of the women who marched against apartheid.

My journey through these experiences has been a profound exploration of identity, legacy, and purpose. The discovery that my family name, Strydom, was connected to a legacy of pain and oppression led me to a deeper understanding of my role in healing and transforming this lineage. I am determined to raise my children with a strong sense of their African heritage, ensuring they grow up with the knowledge and understanding necessary to navigate their multifaceted identities.

My interaction with powerful female figures, such as Sophia Williams-De Bruyn, and the personal revelations about my familial connections have deepened my commitment to honouring my ancestors and living a life that reflects their wisdom and sacrifices. In doing so, I've realised the importance of acknowledging and embracing the complex history of our past, to shape a future that is both aware and appreciative of the rich heritage that defines us.

The discovery that my family name, Strydom, was connected to a legacy of pain and oppression led me to a deeper understanding of my role in healing and transforming this lineage.

My Family



PRICELESS MOMENTS

We got married on the 10th February 1995
to my late husband, Shirleigh Strydom
born on 15th of September 1962.

He left his home in Mangete in 1976 to live with his older sister in New York. In 1978, he began his education at Putney in Vermont—a school remarkably similar to the one our first son, Henry, would later attend for high school. That same year, I was starting school at Nqabeni Primary.

I met him when he returned home in 1993, a graduate with a BSc in Environmental Management, ready to help his parents establish their farm in our area. Reflecting on his education, I am struck by the similarities with Henry's path - the powerful influence of genetic predisposition in shaping their journeys.

In honour of a promise made, my husband named our first son Henry Hans Strydom after his paternal grandfather, who tragically passed away at the age of 90. He returned to South Africa, grieving, just a week after the funeral. Henry was born on 4 January 1996. His naming sparked our first major disagreement, which I lost because my husband had already processed the birth registration without my consent—a service offered by most private hospitals. I wasn't comfortable giving my child traditional Afrikaans names, but the decision was already made.

Parenting the boys during their school years taught me valuable lessons about nurturing their unique qualities and allowing them to experience life without restrictive labels. When suggestions of dyslexia or ADHD were raised, I encouraged them to find creative ways to progress rather than being defined by a diagnosis. They both excelled academically, earning high marks and distinctions, proving they could succeed on their own terms.

They have explored a wide range of interests, from professional hunting to international modelling, while building their careers. Despite the devastating loss of their father at ages 20 and 21, they have grown into compassionate, diligent, and thoughtful young men, shaped by both their challenges and their triumphs.



With my sons
On the left is Henry Hans Strydom and
Cameron Cassius Strydom on the right.



LEGACIES OF LOVE AND LOSS

acknowledging both the love and the turmoil, is a profound responsibility I carry forward

I married the youngest of eight children, one of six boys and two girls. His family had different plans for him and this made my entry extremely unsettling for me. Feeling unsupported with our wedding we decided independently and married on a Friday in a courthouse, a quiet affair followed by photos in the garden and dinner at a hotel. My mother, a skilled seamstress and baker, insisted I not marry in jeans, leading to a last-minute wedding dress and a five-tier cake crafted by her and my aunt, accompanied by a beautiful flower bouquet.

The marriage began turbulently, a time I wouldn't want to relive, yet I harbour no regrets. This period taught me the value of simplicity and authenticity in life's journey. Amidst these familial dynamics, I converted to Catholicism to align with my husband's family's wishes, a decision marked by mixed feelings and significant transitions.

Navigating my husband's challenges with alcohol was a solitary battle, layered with personal and communal complexities. His struggle, hidden from even his closest kin, led to moments of vulnerability and strain until his passing.

The aftermath brought me to Al-Anon, a place where I sought understanding and healing, not just for the legal battles over his estate but for the emotional scars left behind. This journey led to a deeper introspection which enabled me to take responsibility for my role in cocreating in our story and a commitment to breaking generational cycles of pain and dysfunction.

In reflecting on our marriage and its challenges, I grappled for a time with the painful legacy left behind, the societal perceptions, and the deeply personal journey of grief and healing. My role in crafting a narrative that honours the complexity of our lives together, acknowledging both the love and the turmoil, is a profound responsibility I carry forward.

I envision a future where the lessons learned from our marriage can illuminate paths for healing and understanding, not just for me but for those who encounter our story.

Aunty B's Decade-long Battle with a Misunderstood Criminal Record

RECLAIMING JUSTICE

On 22 February 2012, I appeared before a magistrate in East London Court, following instructions from the police station the previous afternoon. I had hired Russell Inc. Attorneys for legal representation. That day, I found myself part of a group detained under a "BLITZ" operation—a term I heard for the first time in the unfamiliar corridors of the court.

Earlier that day, I had checked out from the Kennaway Hotel in East London, where I often stayed during stopovers for my landfill waste management project. Later, shocked and distressed by the day's events, the hotel staff offered me a discounted stay.

It all started when a traffic officer stopped me for speeding on my way to the airport. I explained that it wasn't possible, even detailing the unusual gear indicator system of the rented Hyundai i10. But the officer insisted on taking me to the magistrate. What made it surreal was the officer's casual conversation as he sat in the passenger seat, announcing to the airport staff—who knew me well from my weekly visits—that he was taking me to the magistrate. The passengers watched in disbelief.

We then drove to the magistrate after I extended the car hire. The officer kept repeating, *"No one gets away with this—not even the Premier, who I took to the magistrate last week."*

At the police station, confusion took over. I was locked up for hours without explanation or proper paperwork and eventually grouped with others to pay bail. Despite my background in recruitment and labour relations, and my understanding of the consequences of a criminal record, I was poorly advised. I was pressured to plead guilty for convenience without fully understanding the long-term impact on my career and reputation.

In 2023, after navigating the expungement process—delayed by COVID-related backlogs—my criminal record was finally cleared, coinciding with my 51st birthday. This legal ordeal, marked by misunderstanding and lack of transparency, defined a decade of struggle for justice and clarity, leaving a lasting mark on my life and career.

UNSTOPPABLE

BY DONNA ASHWORTH

Unstoppable they called her
but I saw her stop
I saw her stop many times
sometimes I thought she had
stopped for good
but no
she always found a way
to rise again
to resurrect
not the same, never the same
unstoppable they said
but I think it was in the stopping
that she found her power





PAIN IS FOR PURPOSE

Though it may seem intangible now, observe the evolving economy and the unfolding power within this continent. We must start with what we have, envision our goals, move in the desired direction, and trust the journey. #TheAfricaSee embodies this vision, encouraging us to share our perspectives and engage constructively, allowing us to be integral to the Africa we all envision.



WEAVING THE THREADS OF LEGACY

As the sun dips below the horizon, casting a golden glow over the lands once crossed by her ancestors, Aunty B sits on the veranda of her family home, reflecting on the divinely orchestrated life's journey. Her story, interwoven with the legacy of the *Inkaba*, that connects her lineage, has profoundly shaped her destiny and that of her descendants.

Aunty B's achievements stretch beyond personal success, echoing the strength and wisdom of the *Inkaba*, connecting past, present, and future. Her pursuit in promoting literacy, cultural preservation, and community empowerment will not only fulfil her ancestral calling but also sow seeds of inspiration in the hearts of many.

Reflecting on the journey, Aunty B's achievements and the continuing impact of her story on her community and family, tying back to the legacy of the *Inkaba* and the intertwined fate of her ancestors and descendants

.....

Her narrative, rich with the triumphs and trials of a life fully lived, continues to impact her community and family, creating a sense of identity and belonging. Her work, rooted in the deep understanding of her heritage, has become a source of hope and pride, drawing from the ancient well of *Inkaba* wisdom.

Through her journey, Aunty B has meticulously crafted a legacy that transcends time, bridging generations. The stories of her ancestors, once whispered on the winds of the KwaZulu now resonate in the lives of her descendants, guiding them like the stars guided the travellers of old.

Her story unfolds in the pages of history, it becomes clear that her legacy is not confined to the achievements catalogued in the annals of time but is truly measured by the lives she has touched and the cultural heritage she has preserved. In her quest, she finds not only her roots and identity but also the path forward, a journey of continuous connection, learning, and love.





Aunty B Africa Bag

Aunty B Africa Bag
The custom-made Africa
backpack Made with Love
Gwexintaba village, home
of Magwa Falls was
Inspired by Aunty B's
volunteer co-driver road
trip from Cape to Cairo.

"I am grateful for the strength to trust that every part of our journey has a purpose, allowing us to surrender to a vision that encourages us to explore deeply, embracing the shame, guilt, and discomforts that come with growth. Cherish each moment as a treasure, whilst also valuing the riches of Africa."



www.auntybafrica.co.za



info@auntybafrica.co.za