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**BIOGRAPHY**

**BIO MAGAZINE**

# MAUA

WHEN AFRICAN WOMEN RISE

**BARBARA LAWRENCE-STRYDOM**

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



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# MAUA

WHEN AFRICAN WOMEN RISE

BioMagazine





# THE LEGACY OF INKABA

THE STORY THE AUNTY OF AFRICA

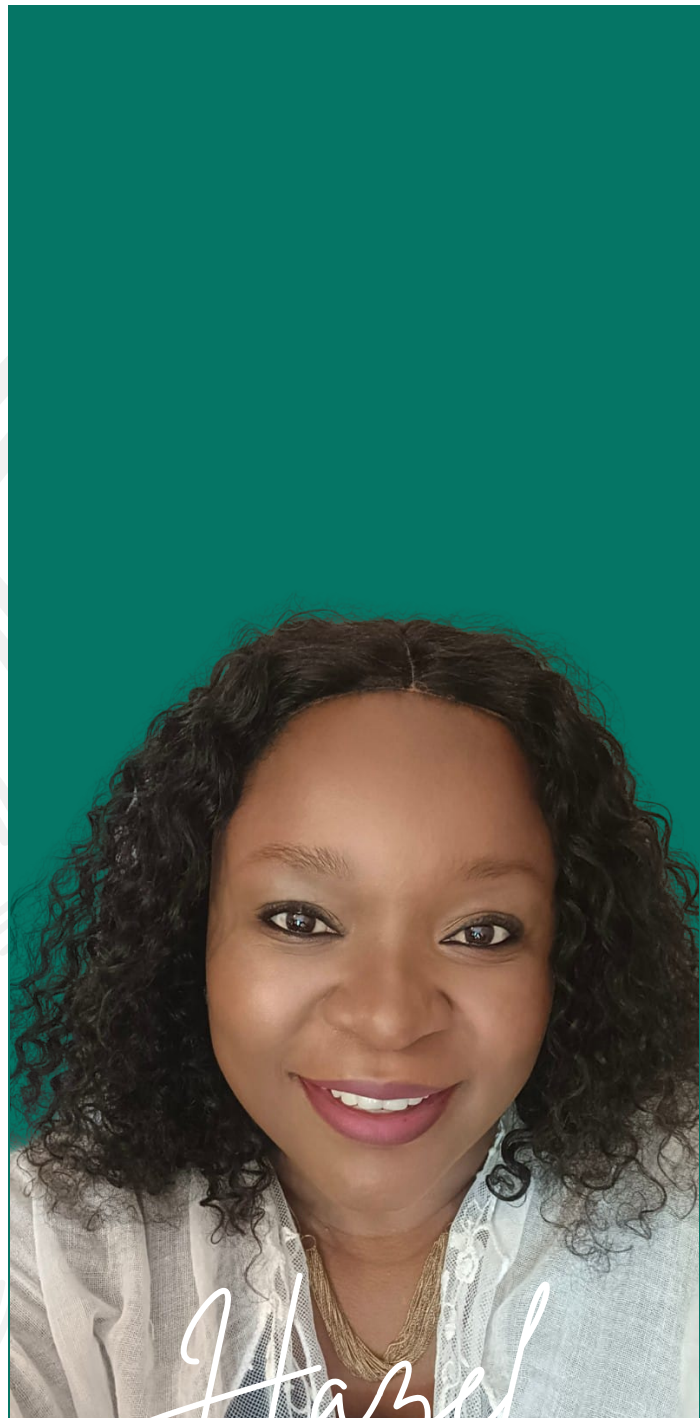
*Aunty B*

# 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. It underscores the transformative power of 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!**



Editor In Chief



Photographer: Monica Dart

# THE LEGACY OF INKABA

A journey of discovery, healing, and legacy, interwoven with the tumultuous history of South Africa.

In my first cycle of life or first seven years as I reflect on my story, I met my mom at 8.30pm on the 10th of November 1971. I was the firstborn child to my parents who had wed 5 June 1970 and born just under 5 hours before my dad's 21st birthday. Having just completed my Inkaba tour—a spiritual journey into my roots—I sought the addresses of the places I lived during my first seven years.



At each location, I performed ceremonies to give thanks, cleanse myself and heal from unknown traumas inherited at birth. My birth in 1971 to Zelda Anderson Lawrence nee Anderson and Mitchell Lawrence was marked by the complexities surrounding apartheid system of South Africa. Born in 1950, my father was the first official "coloured" member of his family. Thus begins my tale. I was the first on my father's side to be born in a hospital, Addington Hospital, a place shadowed by complexities and segregation. This is not just a story of beginnings but a testament to the legacy of Inkaba, where personal history and national identity converge in the heart of South Africa. This is also where culture begins to shift as the ceremonies of our after birth and umbilical cords are now medical waste and no longer buried on our family lands nor a tree planting ceremony incorporated.

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## Why they call me Aunty B

Aunty is the one  
who holds space  
for the family

**B** stands for  
Borderless -  
from the village  
to across the  
continent

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# ABOUT AUNTY B

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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

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**#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

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**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



Does not  
mean  
nothing  
Sankara



Barbara Lawrence Strydom



THE BOOK TRILOGY







*Part 01*

**ROOTS AND  
BEGINNINGS**



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

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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. I have coined the term Inkaba Healing Journeys to honour all the facets of joy and pain, unspoken, assumed and uncomfortable 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 8 months and walking by 9 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, I love travel accept that cars, planes, boats are now included in the stories.

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A life-changing moment came in 1974 when my father, a twin and one of nine siblings, was involved in a horrific accident. We soon relocated in December 1976 to live on the family farm in Nqabeni and closer to our grandmother, MaMkhize, and interwove our family languages: English, isiZulu, Xhosa, and Pondo, in a seamless tapestry I never questioned until adolescence.

My family left the city to embrace farm life and watching my mom helping dad building a home with no electricity and drawing water from the river. My early school days were marked by a six-kilometre walk with my cousin, igniting a lifelong appreciation for the simple, grounding elements of life, far removed from materialistic definitions of success.

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**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.**

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Me attending my matric dance in 1989



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

# WORDS IGNITE

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

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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. My journey underscores the transformative power of literacy and the importance of nurturing one's passions and skills.

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. My story is a testament to the enduring power of words, urging us all to embrace and fall in love with the medium that shapes our understanding and interaction with the world.





**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, reflecting broader societal attitudes and biases.*

I transitioned from chemical relaxers to embracing her 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 narrative emphasises the transformative power of self-acceptance and the importance of defining my own beauty and identity, free from societal constraints.

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.



**“ ... vowed to my hair: "I refuse to lose you. Embrace your essence and present yourself for me. Be bold. Be grey. Be untamed.**



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

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I sometimes marvel at my patience when someone expresses their admiration for natural hair. It makes me ponder, do dogs exchange compliments about their coats? Nevertheless, I simply smile and acknowledge. In a crowd, my hair invariably stands out as 'natural,' judging by the remarks.

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

The choice of my hair's colour and style was dictated by necessity and budget constraints, not a conscious natural hair initiative. I've learned to just exist and be myself. "Stay compassionate, Barbara," I remind myself. Ultimately, it's not about their perceptions; it's about reinforcing my own self-relationship.

I'm always taken aback by how others project their thoughts and feelings, sometimes even strangers in the most unexpected places. When they likened me to a comedian from Cape Town, I cut them off, saying, "Focus on understanding the diverse narratives of women through history. Stop settling for surface-level judgments. That's sheer laziness."





# *Part 02*

## **THE SEARCH FOR MEANING**



# TRACING LINEAGE

*MaMkhize*

*Aunty B's investigation into her family tree, uncovering stories of 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 the 5th of September 1981 just before my tenth birthday my granny passed away. I reminded of her at different moments and each of those have been significant in my journey her story and my heritage. As a bank manager in my early thirties, I experienced a lifechanging moment that connected me to her spirit. One day, I overheard two men conversing, using the names "Khabazela" and "Mavovo" — terms that halted me in my tracks. These were more than just names; they were echoes of my grandmother's identity, familiar yet unexplored.

Intrigued, I approached the men to inquire about their knowledge of MaMkhize. It was the first time I had heard her name outside my family circle. My childhood memories flooded back, recalling how the local community, whom we affectionately called Omakhelwane, would greet her with these names, but without ever providing the context nor was I curious to understand it then.

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.

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**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, underscoring the foundational aspect of our traditions, isintu.**

.....

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, underscoring the foundational aspect of our traditions, isintu. 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.



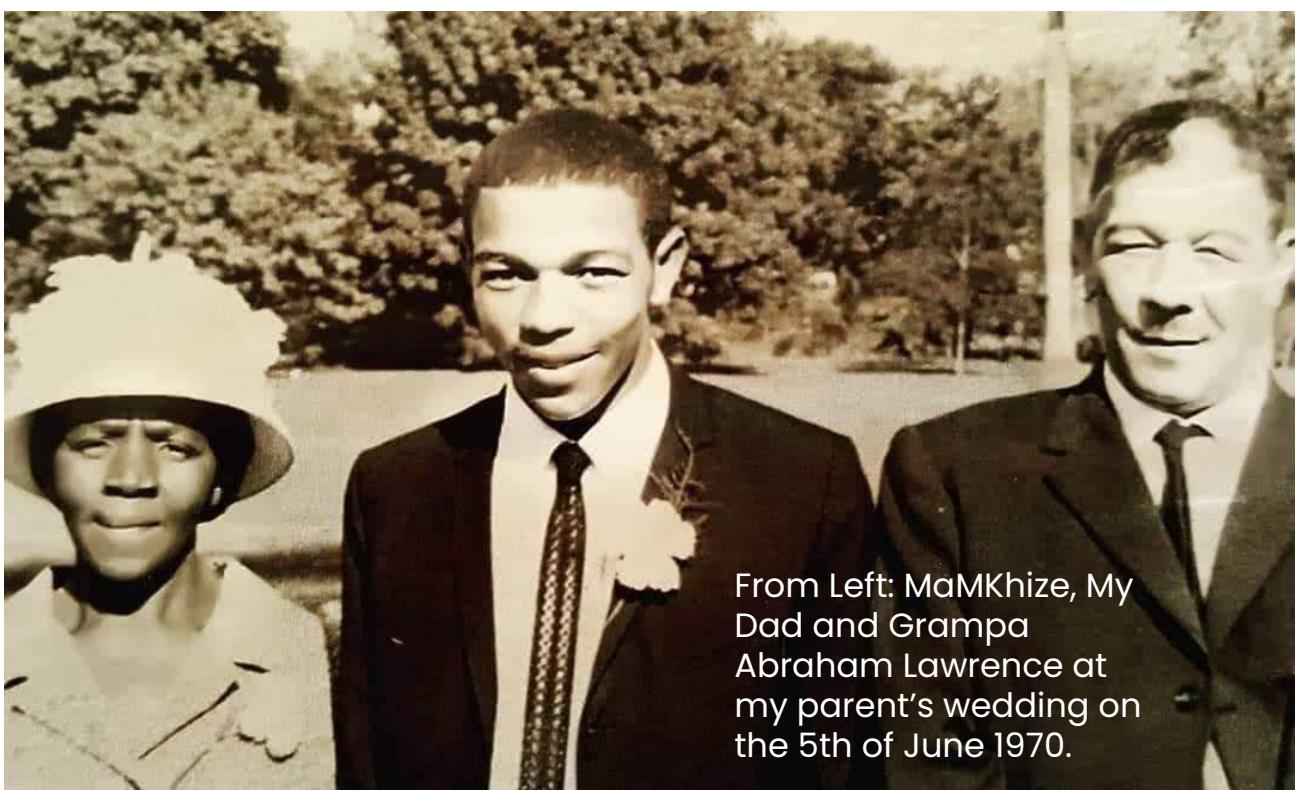
After recently mastering swimming—a personal triumph against a lifelong fear of water—I ventured to Durban's waterfront for stand-up paddling, leading to our journey to MaMkhize's residence in Clermont, near Pinetown. Upon arrival, a young girl, about my children's age, confirmed it was MaMkhize's household. Despite her unfamiliarity with Dinah, my grandmother, the connection slowly unravelled as she mentioned her great grandmother Andrina who my dad had mentioned as my grandmother's sister. My introduction as Barbara Lawrence Strydom initially met with confusion, as she did not recognise the surnames, creating a barrier that Dr. Thandeka helped me navigate, enabling my entry to seek family albums.

Inside, my attention was captured by a portrait of a woman on the wall. The girl identified her as MaNdlovu, triggering an emotional realisation of the spiritual journey with my grandmother, symbolised by the recurring elephants in my life. This epiphany would become clearer as my role to advocate for a mindful representation of Africa's wildlife, stressing their significance as totems rather than mere fauna, emphasising the need to preserve our cultural and spiritual connections.

.....

This experience provoked contemplation about my identity and the absence of an African name among my given names. An unexpected call from Dr Gcina Mholpe, our KwaZulu Natal- a treasured storyteller, addressing me as Babalwa—an isiXhosa meaning 'the blessed one'—isiZulu meaning – someone who is graced, that day bestowed upon me a name that resonated with my soul. Affirming my place and purpose within the African narrative and so timely on the day I received the first copies of the Book Trilogy.

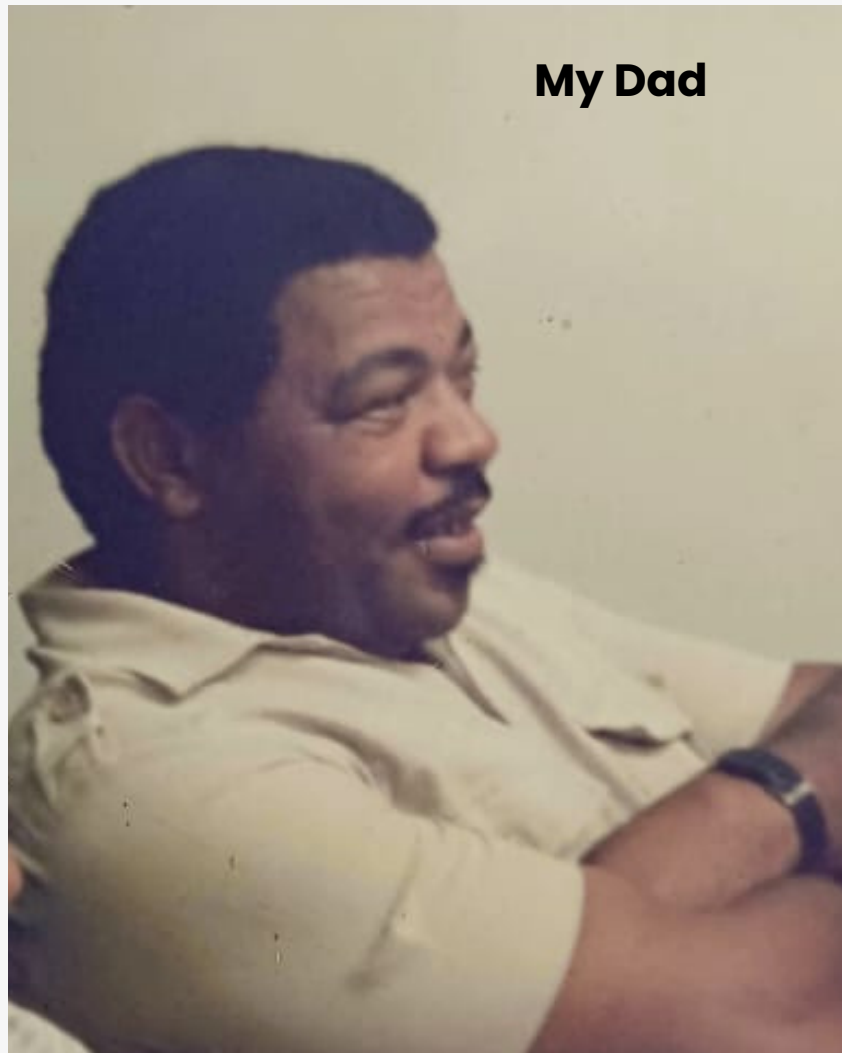
The essence of MaMkhize continued to manifest, notably through the phenomenon of Ukukhemezela, a soft rain or drizzle symbolising celestial approval or ancestral happiness. This gentle rainfall, experienced during moments of reflection or celebration, became a metaphorical conversation, a subtle yet profound communication with my ancestry, reminding me of the interconnectedness of our existence and the enduring influence of those who came before us.



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.



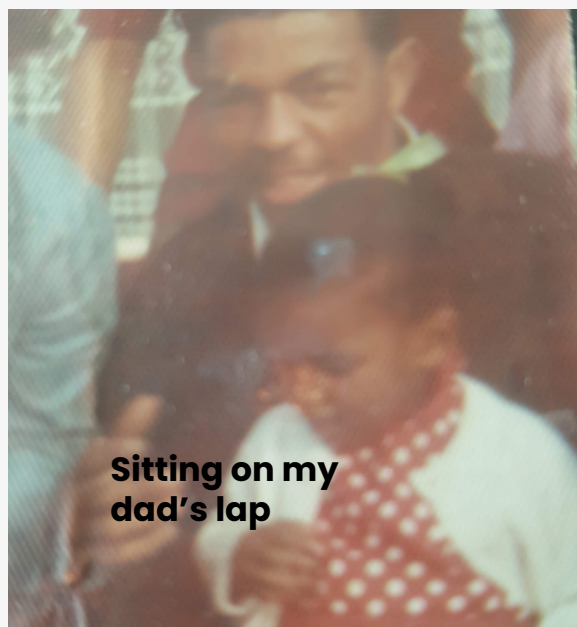
**My Dad**

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**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 to the strength and guidance of both my African ancestors and the spiritual teachings I was raised with, embodying the dreams and aspirations they held.



**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.

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.

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.

# MY FAMILY

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## PRICELESS MOMENTS

We got married on the 10th February 1995  
to my late husband, Shirleigh Strydom  
born on 15th of September 1962, was 33  
years old.



He left his home in Mangete, in 1976 to live with his older sister in New York. In 1978, he commenced his education at Putney in Vermont, which remarkably resembles the school my first son attended for his high school. That same year I was starting school at Nqabeni Primary school. I would later meet him when he returned home in 1993 a graduate with BSc Environmental Management ready to support his parents to establish their farm in our area. and As I ponder on his education, I am amazed at the similarities with our first-born son Henry's education again making me realise the strong influence of genetic predispositions in guiding his path.

In honour and fulfilment 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, a week after his grandfather's funeral. Our son was born on the 4th of January 1996. His naming sparked our first significant disagreement, which I lost because he had already processed the birth registration without my consent (a service offered by most private hospitals on the premises). I was not in favour of giving my child traditional Afrikaans names.

For our second child, I chose not to contest the name, and thus Cameron Cassius Strydom was born on the 9th of May 1997. Cameron began to communicate clearly at around seven years old, creating a special bond between us. He started crèche at 18 months, a decision I later regretted, contrasting with his older brother, who started at three. To compensate, I allowed him a two-year gap year after matriculation.

Parenting the boys during their schooling years taught me valuable lessons as a mother to support their unique qualities and to ensure they lived experiences defined by as few labels as possible. Whenever suggestions of dyslexia or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) were raised, I encouraged the boys to navigate their paths creatively to achieve their necessary progress. They both excelled academically, achieving high marks and distinctions, proving they could overcome challenges without being confined to a label. They have explored various passions, from professional hunting to international modelling, while embarking on their careers. Amidst their grief after losing their father at ages 20 and 21, they have emerged as young men of deep compassion, diligence, and mindfulness.



**With my sons - Left : Henry Hans Strydom and Cameron Cassius Strydom - right**





*Part 03*

**LEGACIES OF  
LOVE AND  
LOSS**



# AUNTY B'S MARRIAGE

## Barbara Strydom's Decade-long Battle with a Misunderstood Criminal Record

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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.

# RECLAIMING JUSTICE

## Barbara Strydom's Decade-long Battle with a Misunderstood Criminal Record

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

Earlier, I had checked out from the Kennaway hotel in East London, where I stayed on my stopovers on or from my trips to the landfill waste management project. Upon my return, shocked and distressed by the day's events, the hotel staff offered me a discounted stay. I had been stopped by a traffic officer for speeding while enroute to the airport. Despite my explanations that it was just not possible even explaining the unique gear indicator system of the rented Hyundai I10, the officer insisted on taking me to the magistrate. I think the weirdness of the experience was conversation the officer had as he sat in the passenger seat accompanying me to the airport where he announced to one and all that he had to take me to the magistrate and I would be there later, confusing me, the staff who knew me well because of my weekly visits and the passengers who watched gobsmacked. Together we drove to the magistrate after extending the car hire, all this time he was repeating no one gets away with this not even the Premier who he took to the magistrate the week before.

At the police station, confusion ensued. I was inexplicably locked up for hours and then grouped with others to pay bail. Without proper paperwork or understanding why I was detained; I faced the bewildering legal system. Despite my background in recruitment and labour relations and being well-informed about the implications of a criminal record, I was poorly advised legally. Urged to plead guilty for convenience, I was left unaware of the significant long-term consequences this would have on my employment prospects.

After paying bail and meeting with a legal representative, I questioned the ramifications of my plea, yet remained inadequately informed. The incident led to a legal bill dispute and subsequent challenges in gaining employment due to the undisclosed criminal record. This incident overshadowed my financial independence and professional life, resulting in a negative credit record and financial strain.

In 2023, after navigating the expungement process complicated by COVID-related delays, my criminal record was finally cleared, coinciding with my 51st birthday. This legal ordeal, marked by misunderstanding and lack of transparency, significantly impacted my life and career, capturing a decade of struggle for justice and clarity.





It was hard to navigate all this while trying to provide post my husbands death and the complications of his estate. I have had the privilege to spend time with the elders who have regaled their incarcerations related to the pass system, Africans in Africa incarcerated for walking without authorisation to access public spaces including my grandmother. I was understanding first-hand the difference between the law and justice. I was living the injustice of a legal system.

I am reminded of the day we left Natal University with my dad, the day I was accepted to study law 1 February 1990 and the day I chose to accept my banking job over university. My dad said to me as I shared my preference to work- if you studied law you would have to do the law of the land but justice you can do anywhere, go and do justice. It is the mantle I entered the banking industry with, and it paved the way for the many justice stances I would relentlessly represent customers and staff. I learnt to trust God more and meditated on the story of Joseph in the bible and crafted so many new paths for myself. I lived by my vision board and amid it all had a recurring message in my dreams to go and make my people dream again. The MasterDreamer Vision sessions were birthed and to date, I have facilitated over 3 000 sessions. So many new possibilities were birthed for me and an inner strength and knowing that God is and was in my story.

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**I was understanding first-hand the difference between the law and justice. I was living the injustice of a legal system.**

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# 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.

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**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**

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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 beacon of hope and a source of pride, drawing from the ancient well of Inkaba wisdom.

Through her journey, Auntie 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.

In the quiet of the evening, Auntie B gazes at the stars, feeling the pulse of the Inkaba within her, a continuous thread linking the essence of her being to the vast expanse of her lineage. Her life, a living tribute to those who walked before her, ensures that the intertwined fate of her ancestors and descendants remains vibrantly alive, woven into the fabric of a future where each thread is acknowledged, each pattern celebrated.

In this reflective moment, Auntie B understands that her narrative is far from complete. The journey continues, enriched by each experience, each interaction, and the perpetual impact of her endeavours. Her life, intertwined with the legacy of the Inkaba, is a living storybook, each chapter filled with the wisdom of the past and the hope of the future, a legacy that will continue to inspire generations to come.

As Auntie B's 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 the legacy of the Inkaba, she finds not only her roots and identity but also the path forward, a journey of continuous connection, learning, and love.



Barbara  
LAWRENCE-  
STRYDOM, 52

## VIGILANT, FUN-LOVING, KIND

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY YOU ARE MOST PROUD OF?

The courage to follow my vision board story from crossing the continent to climbing Mt Kilimanjaro-Tanzania, walking across the Kalahari Desert - Botswana, and sharing in our local communities and across our continent, solo backpacking Mozambique for my 50th and sharing the power of Vision Board through Leading From Within, across the continent and community.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE YOUR YOUNGER SELF?

Pride.  
Put the mask on yourself first - know what sustains you.  
Be courageous to enjoy SOLITUDE.  
Sit in discomfort and be surrendered.  
Life is Hard, learn to dance and stay connected to SOURCE.  
Die Empty, as light as a feather.

WHAT IS A GOAL OR DREAM YOU STILL WISH

Mozambique...with 4 more to still explore while reflecting on my motherhood journey.

Complete writing #TheAfricaSEE series which includes my life lessons from the law, widowhood, and travels.

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON AGEING?

As I understand the African way, I see more and more the great responsibility as an elder for wisdom and as keeper of the story so I am in reverence of this season of my life.  
I am aware that self-care is a non-negotiable for me from spiritual to mental to physical and financial and this has my attention.  
Ageing is so beautiful and affords me some special graces which I am receiving open-handed.  
I have surrounded myself with great elders and I keep learning while I am becoming a teacher.  
Mortality is humbling and keeps me walking close to God, a spiritual relationship.

WHAT DID YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT THE 50...  
...A FUTURE-ORIENTED PORTRAIT CAMPAIGN



# Aunty B is giving away an Aunty B Africa Bag

To claim your price, simply tell us the village where Aunty B was raised?

Send your answers to:  
[editor@ma-ua.org](mailto:editor@ma-ua.org)



**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."*