

The magazine for the caring profession

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# nursing

## update

**FOCUS ON**  
NO TOBACCO DAY

BEATING THE  
**ENERGY**  
CRISIS

THE  
**STELLA**  
**KUBAYI**  
STORY

THE INAUGURAL  
**CECILIA**  
**MAKIWANE**  
**AWARDS**



DENOSA



# Great nursing achievements

By Bhungani ka Mzolo

In April this year, two important events took place, both of which brought smiles and pride to the nurses of South Africa. On April 5, 2002, President Thabo Mbeki officially launched the first Cecilia Makiwane Nurses' Recognition Awards at the University of South Africa (UNISA). Eight nurses from that number of provinces shook hands with President Mbeki as they received their certificates. The only province that was not represented was the Western Cape.

All the nurses who attended the occasion were accompanied by the Health MECs from their provinces. Also present at this prestigious function were Health Minister, Dr Manto Tshabalala-Msimang, Professor Rachel Gumbi, President of the South African Nursing Council (SANC) and Elder Pretorius, National Board member and Treasurer of the Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa (DENOSA).

It is important that all those people who have made significant contributions to our country's development be duly recognised, especially when we remember the country's transformation – from a society in which its history and culture was based on the exclusion of the majority of its people to the present one, with a culture where everyone is included.

Cecilia Makiwane was the first black woman to register as a professional nurse and the first to qualify in Africa. It was therefore most fitting that a person of President Mbeki's stature should launch the first recognition awards that are dedicated to this remarkable nurse.

The second important event for nurses, which took place from April 19 to 20, was the awarding of an honorary Doctorate (DCur) to Dora Ngiza by the University of Port Elizabeth. Others who also received honorary degrees at the same time were Black Consciousness leader, Steve Biko, Chief Justice, Arthur Chaskalson, businessman, Raymond Ackerman, and the creator of the World Wide Web, Tim Berners-Lee.

Giving the reason for these pioneers being awarded these degrees, the University of Port Elizabeth said that they were "people who have contributed to human rights, justice and the advancement of mankind, nationally and internationally".

Ngiza was born in Cradock on 17 October 1891 and is one of the first three black nurses to train and qualify as a nurse at the Lovedale Mission Hospital in Alice, Eastern Cape.

She is credited with having established the first professional health service in New Brighton. In the next edition, we will give the full background of the work she has done.

We are grateful for the role these two nurse pioneers have played in the history of nursing in this country, Africa and the world. Their recognition is also the recognition of nurses of today, who have to provide quality nursing care, often under the most difficult of circumstances, with inadequate facilities and staff shortages.

However, without minimising the difficulties under which today's nurses work, it is probably true that Cecilia Makiwane, Dora Ngiza

and Mina Colani also did not work under ideal conditions.

The challenge for us, therefore, is to maintain a high quality of nursing care and treatment with the limited resources that we have. The other challenge is to ensure that promises made by government to improve these conditions are actually realised.

Where undertakings were given to improve health care for patients, it becomes our responsibility as nurses to push for this to happen because, at the end of the day, it is the nurses who must provide that service.

Therefore, let us start today to read newspapers, watch the news on television and listen to the radio – where such announcements are normally made – and make a note of them. That way, we will be in a position to base whatever position we may take in the future, on fact rather than on hearsay.

Finally, the other challenge is for all of us to start recording the work being done by our colleagues in the profession. ☺

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