



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

A close-up, textured portrait of Charlotte Mannya-Maxeke, an elderly woman with dark, curly hair, looking slightly to the left. The portrait is rendered in a painterly style with visible brushstrokes, set against a warm, golden-brown background.

The Life & Legacy of
Charlotte Mannya-Maxeke

THE MEMORY PROJECT INAUGURAL LECTURE

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**Programme Director:
Deputy Speaker, National Assembly,
Mr Lechesa Tsenoli, MP**

TIME	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY
18:30 - 18:35	Musical Item	SABC Choir
18:35 - 18:40	Opening & Welcome	CEO of Freedom Park: Ms. Jane Mufamadi
18:40 - 18:45	Remarks by Charlotte Manny Maxeke Institute for Girls	Director: Charlotte Manny Maxeke Institute for Girls: Mr. Thulasizwe Makhanya
18:45 - 18:55	Message of Support The Maxeke memory as living heritage	CEO: Adv. Sonwabile Mancotywa, National Heritage Council
19:00 - 19:10	Remarks on the Memory Project Introduction of the Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa	Speaker of the National Assembly: Hon. Baleka Mbete, MP
19:10 - 19:25	Inauguration of the Memory Project	Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa: Hon. Cyril Ramaphosa
19:25 - 19:30	Live Praise singing in honour of Mme Charlotte Maxeke	Sepedi Praise Singer
19:30 - 19:35	Introduction of the Keynote Speaker	Minister of Social Development: Hon. Bathabile Dlamini ANC Women's League President
19:35 - 19:50	Keynote Address	Mme Getrude Shope: Former Member of Parliament: (1994-1999) National Assembly Former ANC Women's League President (1991-1993)
19:50 - 19:55	Presentation of Gift to Mme Shope	Speaker of the National Assembly: Hon. Baleka Mbete, MP
19:55 - 20:00	Vote of thanks	Hon RSS Morutoa Chairperson: Parliament Multi-party Women's Caucus

Charlotte Mmkgomo Mannya- Maxeke



She was the daughter of JONH KGOPE MANNYA, an ordinary man from Botloka village under Chief Mamafa Ramokgopa. John was the son of Modidima Mannya, the headman.

Charlotte was born in 1871 at fort Beaufort, now the Eastern Cape Province. Her father John had married Anna Manci who lived with her parents in Fort Beaufort.

Charlotte and her younger sister Katie were born in Fort Beaufort and the other children of John and Anna were born in Uitenhage. Charlotte and Katie attended school at Uitenhage and in Port Elizabeth.

During the year 1878-1900 some Boers had settled near the village of the Africans. Missionaries were also establishing mission stations among the African tribes. The ling hired whites people has created a scare because of their guns which could shoot people or animals from a distance as compared to spears used by the blacks of that time.

Like all other tribes, the old men at Ga-Ramokgopa encouraged young men to travel southwards to seek employment. Kimberly was already heard of as a place where young men could get employment Money earned there would be used to buy fire-arms to bring home for the defence of their tribe. John, like other man traveled to Kimberly on foot. This hazardous Journey took him several months. A road construction company employed him. He eventually got to Fort Beaufort.

Charlotte had a brilliant scholastic career at school in Uitenhage. After completing her primary education she went for higher education in Port Elizabeth where she later graduated as a teacher. John, her father often related stories about his Batlokwa people. He often said that it was unfortunate that his home village were undeveloped and that people were illiterate.

Charlotte had a burning desire to be educated like the white people and then go to her real home, Ga-Ramokgopa to tackle the problem of illiteracy of her people. Her mother, Anna was skeptical about her "dreams" Charlotte would also say that she wishes she could go overseas to study what the whites studies over there. Her father encouraged her. He would say: God will help her to make her dreams come true. After completing her education, Charlotte went to teach at Kimberly. She became famous together with her sister Katie as good singer in the well-known Presbyterian Church Choir. The choir was always invited to sing at parties and other occasions in that city. Charlotte, her sister Katie and other African singers were selected to form an African Choir to tour England from 1891- 1893. This Choir

was directed by Mr. Balmer and the chaperone to the female singers was Miss Clark. Her family received a message from her grandfather to bring the family to Ga-Ramokgopa. John sold his property in Uitenhage and trekked to Kimberly as a first stage of his trip homeward.

Charlotte was obsessed about education and needed to get to Wilberforce University in America. She was clearly enticed by the philosophy of Wilberforce University as it was controlled by Blacks to suit their own development and nurturing. She was however unable to realize her dream because of financial constraints.

After the tour of England by the Choir, another tour was organized and this time it was to be the United State. Her dream was made a reality when she met bishop Turner who was instrumental in her registering and becoming an undergraduate student of the University of Wilberforce in Cleveland, Ohio US.

Charlotte at Wilberforce University

Her impression at Wilberforce were that the University was controlled by Blacks unlike in South Africa. This inspired her that a Black person is capable to lead his/ her fellow citizens.

She joined the A.M.E Church after studying the history of this church which was founded by Blacks especially the role played by Bishop Richard Allen. She was impressed by the reasons why Bishop Allen had to break away from the Methodist Episcopal Church. She also noted that the original A.M.E. church was over social treatment and the relationship of man (blacks) to man (whites).

All these fact reminded her of the social condition in her home country. It created a desire that such a Church could be introduced in South Africa. She was student and not the pastor, therefore she would not realize her wishes. She formed her sister Katie Makhanya about the "New" Church which she had joined and that her desire was that such a church could be introduced in South Africa.

By co-incidence, at that time Mangena Mokone who was her father's cousin was frustrated by failing to get a sponsor to help him to start a new church of his own.

Mangena Mokone, like his cousin John had left his home to work to earn enough money to buy a gun. He had traveled to Natal. There he attended school and was converted to become a Christian. After he completed his studies, he trained as a pastor of the Methodist Church. He served the church there but dissatisfied with the treatment by his white superiors. He served the Church there but was dissatisfied with the treatment by his white superiors. He was transferred to Pretoria; he eventually broke away from that church and become a founder and first pastor of the Ethiopian Church. This step did not yield him good fruits and frustration intensified.

He came into contact with Katie Makhanya who on hearing of his plight wrote to her sister Charlotte to find out if Rev. Mokone could get assistance. In response to this Charlotte contacted the A.M.E Church authorities in Ohio in America about Rev. Mokone's problem. She supplied all the church literature to Katie who would in return give it to Rev. M.M Mokone to study. If in agreement Rev. Mokone would write back directly to Charlotte and to

the bishop in America. After all the transactions by letters relating to the introduction of the "New" church in South Africa, an arrangement was made by Charlotte that Rev. Mokone and Bishop Turner should meet at Mrs Katie Makhanya 's home in Doornfontein Johannesburg.

Charlotte returns to South Africa.

Charlotte was already married to Rev. Marshall M. Maxeke when they arrived in South Africa. She came along with her husband to her home at Mokomene Ga-Ramokgopa. Her mother had died during the Anglo- Boer war.

Rev. M.M Maxeke held his Bachelor of Arts Degree and Charlotte a B.Sc. Degree, University of Wilberforce Institute in Mokomene, to train pastors. They were blessed with one son Clarke.

She housed some students at her home in Mokomene during their time of tuition. Later Wilberforce Institute was transferred to Evaton 35 miles South of Johannesburg. Rev Maxeke was appointed principal.

Charlotte family later transferred to Johannesburg. They had their home in Kliptown. She was appointed the first women Probation Officer by the then union government and her offices were in Braamfontain.

On several occasion she was conspicuously seen in Boksburg and the Benoni Courts where she appeared on behalf of youth who had committed various crimes.

Then a call came which was to her a direct challenge for her future work. In 1912 they were invited by chief Enoch Mamba- the paramount chief of the tembus- to open and take charge of a collage (private school) on his farm. The Maxekes went without a waste of time . The school produced a good number of high school young men and women but the cost of maintaining the school was exorbitant. But, their work went beyond the walls of the classroom. Mrs. Maxeke was drawn into the life of the Thembus; she took her full place in their councils and often spoke in the court of the Chief.

Charlotte's political career

The Maxekes had to leave for Johannesburg owing to Charlotte's failure of health. There, she too became a leader in church work and social service. The AME Church elected her president of the women's Missionary Society in recognition of her leadership-an office she held for a decade. Her gift of aloquence in English and African languages made her a popular speaker. (It is said that she once spoke on the same platform as Queen Victoria's grand-daughter, Princess Alice)

She was so interested in the welfare of her people that she addressed conferences on the social life of the Africans; she was out spoken on social issues that she was then called to give evidence before government commission dealing with African affairs.

In 1919 she achieved political prominence as a leader of women demonstrators against proposal to extend the pass system to women. She thus decided to found, what was then called the Bantu Women's League which T.D Mweli-Skota call "the African women's League- a branch of the African National Congress"

She became a president of the ANC Women's League "for many years". As president of this newly-formed African Women's League she led a delegation to the prime Minister to discuss the question of the passes for women in the Free State. "Charlotte Maxeke's women's League ", which had branches almost all over the country, demonstrated widely and occasionally against passes for women.

It should be remembered that the question of passes in the Free State forced women as early as 1913 to go beyond petitions and deputations the refused to carry passes and backed their action with mass demonstrations.

In workers struggle she was never an onlooker; she was very much involved. In 1920 she extended her support to the early efforts of Clements Kadalie and Selby Msimang to launch a national trade union movement for Africans.

In the document on the history of our people the name of Mrs. Maxeke appears next to the names of African and ANC gaints of the time. Selby msimang, Lehana, Makgatho, apikela, Ndhlovu, Fenyang, Zibi, Bokleni, Kuzwayo, Majozi, Moiloa, Mopeli, Mphahlele, Takalani Thema ect.

She was one of the contributors in the discussion in 1923 on the question of the "registration of the Native" the pass laws.

In the many meetings she attended she called for joint conferences of Africans and Whites to analyse the situation of urban African women; she also featured in discussion about the "Administration of justice" asking for the sitting up of juvenile court to deal with cases of children. She demanded that women magistrate should be appointed for these courts because the "present method" of treating children as adult and "sending them to goals and reformatories was utterly ruinous'.

Charlotte Maxeke was not only an activist she always sought to combine her actions with reflections with practice. When T.D Mweli-Skota wrote and published in 1913 the African Register, an African Who's who in South Africa, The main contributors of biography sketches in this pioneer work were sol plaatjie, George Champion, Josiah Gumede, Daniel Letanka and of course Charlotte Maxeke. She made use of her journalistic skills as she and her husband were also editors of local African newspapers.

One of the Charlotte's greatest contributions to the analysis of the women question in South Africa was the address she made on social conditions Among Bantu women and Girls at a conference of European and Bantu Christian Students Associations at Fort Hare, held from June 27 to July 3 1930.

In this address she discussed questions connected with the African home and family; the role of the women in the family and she went on to enumerate the "many problems pressing in upon us" to disturb the peaceful working of the homes.

These problems according to her, were the adverse effect of the migratory system—"the stream of Native life into the town"—and the laws and regulations which prevent the wife from living with her husband. She was very articulate in presenting the effect of racial discrimination, the problem of domestic servant, religious aspects, work permit, the social effect of racism on the wife and children, land question which she called a very acute question: indeed according to her South Africa in terms of the land available the African was "shrinking daily" and cattle diseases were running African wealth which is "gradually decaying"

She was dramatic and convincing in presenting her case. Let us take an example the question of a dilemma, which faces the wife of a migrant worker; she has either to look at the children for employment.

Therefore she decided on a "home industry" which takes the form of the brewing and selling of Skokiaan (a concoction).

" Thus the women start on a career of crime for herself and her children, a career which often takes her and her children right down the depth of immorality and misery...

The woman poor unfortunate victim of circumstances, goes to prison, and the children are left even more desolate than when their mother left them to earn her living by selling Skokiaan.

One of Charlotte Maxeke's favorite topics was the question of African unity- and not just in South Africa but on a continental scale- and this was four decades before the formation of the QUA.

Knowing the need for a wider service to the town authorities in juvenile delinquents to the Magistrate Court and she also ran an employment agency for African women. This gave her an insight into:

- The problems and difficulties of girls and women who frequented her office.
- The laws, magistrate's behavior and the attitude of law officials.

She visited the four women's prisons in the country; she could influence the prisoners; she found work for the women who had finished their sentences and cared for the prisoners' children while their mothers were in goal. She acted as advisor and friend and on behalf of many African to men and women who knew for miles around. Not content with seeking to help the prisoners, she worked to remove the cause of crime.

Her unforgettable role

She was the first president and co-founder of the National Council of African Women. She introduced the Women's Missionary Society of the A.M.E. Church in 1939 she became sickly and her sight became weak. She used her niece Ida Makena as her secretary and she later died at her home in Kliptown in the same year.

Throughout her life she showed outstanding qualities as an ANC activist, social worker, teacher, journalist, thinker and leader in the AME church-which she represented at a

conference in the US in 1928. She had a keen sense of humour, sane judgement and kindly heart as G.A. Gallock described her in her book *Daughters of Africa*.

Another aspect of her character is depicted by T.D Mweli-Skota;

“Such a zealous was Mrs. Maxeke that on one occasion, for fear that she would miss the opening of the conference of which she president, decided to travel by a SAR coal truck from Johannesburg to Bloemfontein in the conference, and was there on time. She sacrificed comfort and sleep for duty.

It is true that not all her ideas-and those of her contemporaries can be acceptable today. Even the language of her generation differs markedly from present day parlance. The conciliatory nature of her speeches (“let us try to make our Christianity practical) is typical of the pronouncement of the day whose characteristic message was to “make the white man understand our plight”.

Her very participation in Congress activities together with other women icons and in the general struggle of the African symbolized the determination and willingness of the ANC to involve women and crystallized the belief of congress in the equity of both sexes. Women like Charlotte Maxeke laid the firm foundations in their pioneering work for which women today are reaping immense benefits.

Brief profile of Mme Gertrude Shope

Gertrude Nancy Ntiti Moeketsi was the second of four children born to John and Mary Moeketsi on 15 August 1925.

She married Mark Shope on 11 July, 1957 and together, they had 3 children Lyndall, Thaninga and Lenin.

Gertrude Shope was born in Zimbabwe as her father had been under the employment of an Anglo African Agrigultural Iron Steel Company, repairing farming implements. She attended school in Epworth Mission Station near Harare where the family had settled.

The family relocated back to South Africa and MaShope attended St Hilda College in the then Natal, doing spinning and weaving and later Home Economics, completing in 1947.



Her first teaching post was at Indaleni Training Institution teaching home economics to female students who were training to be teachers.

In 1952 she was offered a temporary post at the Western Native Township Home Economics Centre just outside Johannesburg. During this time she was introduced to Adelaide Tsukudu, who was later to marry Oliver Tambo.

MaShope was offered a permanent post at Pimville High School, just when the Bantu Education system had been introduced to South African Schools.

Refusing to be part of it, she tendered in her resignation, accepting a post at Coronation Hospital in the occupational therapy department, dealing with patients who were admitted for operation.

MaShope's involvement in politics and ANC activities started in the 1950's, and has been part of all her active life.

In 1965, she was elected Secretary of the Federation of South African Women in the Transvaal Province, under the Presidency of Albertina Sisulu.

In 1966 she left South Africa to go to exile, joining her husband in 1967 in the then Czechoslovakia where he was the representative of the South African Congress of Trade Unions, at the World Federation of Trade Unions in Prague.

The family stayed in Czechoslovakia until 1971, then left for Tanzania where MaShope's political work continued in the office of the Women's Section of the ANC until she left for Zambia in 1972.

In Zambia, MaShope was appointed the Chief Representative of the ANC, being amongst the first women to be given this level of responsibility in the history of the movement.

In September 1981, the ANC Women's Section held its first ever conference in the external mission in Luanda, Angola where MaShope was appointed as the Head of the ANC Women's Section, taking over from Mme Florence Mophosho.

It was at this time that MaShope was also appointed to the National Executive Committee of the ANC.

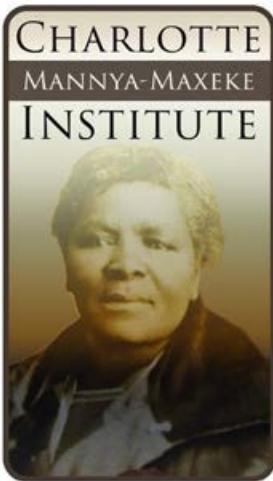
MaShope was elected the Head of the Women's Section of the ANC at the second conference of the ANC Women's Section that was also held in Angola, in 1987. In 1990, she led the team that was tasked with returning to South Africa to re-establish the ANC Women's League.

At the first conference of the ANC Women's League now held in South Africa after the unbanning of the ANC, MaShope was elected its first President.

She later proceeded to serve in the first Parliament of a free and democratic South Africa in 1994 until her retirement in 1999.



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*"This work is not for yourselves,
kill that spirit of self & do not
live above your people but live
with them and if you can rise
bring someone with you"*



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