



South African Council of Churches



Media Advisory

UNISA and the South African Council of Churches (SACC) to honour the women of 1956 and celebrate the living legacy of Dr Sophia De Bruyn

**Approved for Public Release
Monday, 24 August 2026**

70 Years of Courage, Collective Action and Herstory

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the 1956 Women's March a defining moment in South Africa's social and political history and a powerful demonstration of women's collective agency, courage and solidarity. To commemorate this herstorical event, the University of South Africa (Unisa) in partnership with the South Africa Council of Churches (SACC) will host a special commemoration on Thursday, 27 August 2026 at the Unisa Muckleneuk Campus in Tshwane, as part of Women's Month celebration.

Held as the culminating event of the Women's Month commemorations, this special gathering will honour the women who marched in 1956 and celebrate the enduring legacy of **Dr Sophia Williams-De Bruyn**, one of the last surviving leaders of the herstoric march and a living custodian of its memory, meaning and legacy.

Under the theme, "**Passing the Baton: 70 Years of Courage, Collective Action and Herstory**", the gathering will create a space to reflect on the courage and collective action of the women of 1956, while connecting their legacy to the contemporary struggle for women's advancement, equality, dignity and empowerment.

It will celebrate the achievements of women, create space for intergenerational dialogue, examine the barriers that continue to limit women's advancement, and strengthen partnerships to advance gender equality and women's leadership. Emphasis will be placed on the role of education and higher education in creating pathways for women to lead, generate knowledge, participate in decision-making and contribute meaningfully to national and continental development.

It will further bring together leaders and stakeholders from the higher education sector, faith and religious organisations, government, business, civil society, and the broader community to reflect on the progress made since 1956, acknowledge the barriers that remain, and consider how institutions can create conditions for women to exercise leadership and so realise their full potential.

Sophia Theresa Williams-De Bruyn is one of the leaders of the 1956 March and a living embodiment of the courage, resilience and commitment to justice demonstrated by the women of her generation. Her life provides a powerful bridge between South Africa's herstory and its future, reminding contemporary society



that transformation is achieved when ordinary people find the courage to challenge injustices and create a different future.

Members of the media are invited to attend and cover the event as follows:

Date : Thursday, 27 August 2026

Time : 10:00

Venue : Function Hall, 3rd Floor Kgorong Building, UNISA Muckleneuk Campus, Pretoria

Ends

For RSVP's and interviews requests, please contact Unisa Senior Media Officers: Mr Tommy Huma on 072 218 6197 / 012 429 3981 / humartm@unisa.ac.za OR Mr Edgar Rathelele on 063 731 5456 / 012 429 3981 / ratheme@unisa.ac.za / SACC Communications Consultant Khuthalani Khumalo on 084 681 7125 / khuthalani@khuthalani.net

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AND
The South African Council of Churches (SACC)

