

**PROF MS MAKHANYA, PRINCIPAL AND VICE-CHANCELLOR
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA
BRING HER UP: WOMEN OF FISTS AWARDS –
HONOURING, PRESERVING AND CELEBRATING WOMEN OF
EXCELLENCE
THE CHARLOTTE MANNYA-MAXEKE INSTITUTE
AND THE COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES
ZK MATTHEWS HALL, WINNIE MADIKIZELA MANDELA BUILDING
27 AUGUST 2019**

Thank you for this opportunity Programme Directors: Ms Zulaikha Patel and Mr Siyanda Nxumalo

- **Members of Council present**
- **Chairperson of the Charlotte Mannya-Maxeke Institute, Mr Thulasizwe Makhanya and the Mannya-Maxeke family, as well as the Ambassadors of CCMI**
- **Ms Nocawe Noncedo Mafu, Deputy Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture**
- **Dr Anna Mokgokong, Chancellor of the University of North West and Honorary Counsel General of Ireland**

- **Executive Dean of the College of Graduate Studies, Prof Lindiwe Zungu**
- **Your Excellencies – ambassadors and members of the diplomatic corps**
- **Ms Nonkululeko Gobodo, the first Black woman to qualify as a chartered accountant in South Africa**
- **UNISA management and staff**
- **Awards recipients**
- **Honourable guests**
- **Ladies and gentlemen**

A very good evening to you all.

This year, the theme of this evening's awards is "*Honouring, preserving and celebrating women of excellence*" and I must say that looking about me I feel both proud of, and a little intimidated by, the power and influence of the high-achieving women whom it is my honour to host this evening. But before we do that ladies and gentlemen, I think it would be appropriate to recognise and acknowledge with great sadness, the passing of one of our great women pioneers in the building industry, Dr Thandi Ndlovu, who died tragically in a car accident last week. Dr Ndlovu represents much of what powerful women have achieved, and indeed,

what many women here aspire to. She gave so much to South Africa and its people – through the apartheid years and during the 25 years of democracy. She lived and worked for our people, initially through her medical practice at Orange Farm, and then through her company, Motheo Construction Group. Not surprisingly, is the fact that Dr Ndlovu was a strong advocate and proponent of education. This is evident in the scholarships for tertiary education granted by her Motheo Children's Foundation. I know that I speak on behalf of everyone present here, and the council, staff, students and stakeholders of the University of South Africa, when I convey our condolences to the family and friends of Dr Ndlovu. Our thoughts and prayers are with them in their time of mourning, as they get to grips with their unfathomable loss.

In that spirit, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, and in honouring Dr Ndlovu and all the women achievers here tonight, I thought it would be appropriate to focus on that spirit of community that seems to undergird and drive so many of our female entrepreneurs. It is as if women in particular understand precisely what Me Charlotte Mannyamaxeke meant when she said: *"The work is not for ourselves, kill that spirit of self and do not live above your people but live with them and if you can rise, bring someone with you"*. One finds great resonance with the statement in the biblical injunction that states: *"3. Do nothing out of*

selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. 4. You should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interest of others” (Philippians 2: 3-4). One also noted the words of Ghandi who said: “Your beliefs become your thoughts; your thoughts become your words; your words become your actions; your actions become your habits; your habits become your values; your values become your destiny”.

Thus far, it would seem that our awardees are on the right path!

But distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, that is not to say that one should not enjoy the fruits of one’s labour! Certainly not! But I think it is important to appreciate enjoying the fruits – enjoying the “game” of making money should never overtake the reason why you are doing it in the first place. It is when we forget who we are and where we came from that we tend to lose our humanity, and with it, little pieces of our souls.

The dustbin of history is full of the names of people who believed that they were born leaders and who acted as if they had the patent on leadership. We all know that is a myth, and we have had two world wars, multiple genocides and all other manner of disasters and evils that have resulted from really, really bad leadership. The same applies to business. True business women and men have built lasting business empires. Bad

leaders, on the other hand, have never been able to get businesses off the ground, or they have taken up the reins and driven healthy businesses into the ground. The dividing line one might suggest is the fine balance between the self and the community. I would like to believe that our awardees are getting that balance right.

It is a pleasure and the greatest of honours to share this night with all of you here at the University of South Africa. I am delighted to be hosting this eminent event this evening. It is one of many seminal expressions of our University's living vision of being a university that does not only serve the community, but a university that is part of the community. My joy is also inspired by the ethos of the event we are all witnessing tonight – honouring women of stature who have played magnificent roles in community upliftment and bridging the many gaps that exist between the multitudes of binaries which divide our society. These esteemed honourable award recipients have shown strides of growing home-based skills and talent that will impact many future generations.

My sincere gratitude goes to the **Charlotte Mannya-Maxeke Institute** and the **UNISA College of Graduate Studies** for arranging such a great and outstanding event. I believe the “**Bring Her Up: Women of Firsts Award**” ethos will continue to **subvert and uproot the destructive spirit**

of suppressing others as we all empower our country's people to attain their best in life. I welcome you all. Enjoy the ceremony and celebrate these success stories.