

Caroline Goodie Tshabalala Mogadime: A Biographical Sketch

Born in the early 1930s Caroline Goodie Tshabalala Mogadime grew up in Clermont, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa during apartheid. She attended Inanda Seminary, school for girls, where she enjoyed learning about history, performance arts, and sang soprano in choir. She completed her BA in History at Fort Hare University and qualified as a teacher in the 1950s. After marrying Dr. Henry Mogadime, they were exiled with their children, lived in Botswana then Zambia and in 1970 arrived in Canada as refugees. Caroline worked in collaboration with women's organizations such as the YWCA, NGOs (e.g., Miles for Millions) and the United Church while working toward attaining her credentials as an Ontario teacher and supply teaching. She achieved her special education additional qualification designation, then was hired as one out of a small number of Black teachers in an Ontario school board in 1976. While being called to speak on apartheid and the plight of women and children in South Africa she worked toward attaining her MS Education from Niagara University, with a focus on guidance counselling, graduating in 1985.

She published three books, "Developing the whole individual in South Africa" (self-published, 1986), "Free to Be, Creativity and Self-Discovery in Every Child," (published by Shuter & Shooter, 1988) and revisited her childhood experiences in her book entitled, "Dearest Teacher," (published by Shuter & Shooter, 1990). She wrote about the importance of teaching every child according to their unique talents and strengths. Funded by The Ontario Teachers' Federation, The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, The Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association; and United Churches, she returned to South Africa annually beginning in the late 1980s to promote the ideas pivotal to her education books, in the areas of special education, gifted education and guidance counselling.

Caroline became a celebrated keynote speaker at universities where she motivated and inspired teachers and school leaders with her books and lectures, based on her own teaching practices and community leadership. Caroline toured universities and spoke to hundreds and thousands of educators. She was frequently interviewed by popular media, magazines, and newspaper journalists, as a motivational speaker and television/ radio show personality in the late 1980s and early 1990s when morale among teachers was at an all-time low due to political unrest. A milestone among her contributions was developing a community college for the local Black community called, Pietermaritzburg Community College.

Caroline Goodie Tshabalala Mogadime is a pioneer among Black teachers in her school board. Among the many recognitions she is noted for are: The Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity Award that she led her school to achieve; The Vocational Award from Pietermaritzburg Rotary Club in South Africa that she received for initiating a community college; and The South African Women for Women Award she received for Excellence in Education. Upon her retirement from teaching after over 4 decades, in 1999 she received a copper school bell. When Dolana completed her PhD in Education, Caroline passed her bell on to her daughter. It is currently held, in a special place, in the Faculty of Education in Dolana's office.

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