

Naledi Pandor

Naledi Pandor was born in Durban, and grew up in an academic family as her father was Joe Matthews and her grandfather was Z.K Matthews. Her family left South Africa and went into exile during 1961, first in Lesotho and Zambia, before settling in England. Before she could complete her schooling, they relocated to Botswana, where she completed her final year of O levels.

While in Botswana, Naledi completed a professional qualification in teaching, before returning to London to complete a post –graduate diploma and her master's, focusing on: "Education in South Africa and the issues of race".

After working as a teacher in Botswana, where she also met her husband, she later came back to South Africa to work in a teachers training college. In her spare time, she ran literacy programmes which led to the creation of The Union of Democratic University Staff Association, which she was a co-founder of, together with other academics to articulate their views of a future South Africa, and brought Naledi into contact with Blade Nzimande and various other comrades in the anti-apartheid struggle.

Later she moved to University of Cape Town where she eventually became Assistant Director of English for Academic Purposes.

She later left University of Cape Town to become Executive Director of the Desmond Tutu Educational Trust, by which time she was taking a leading role in the formation of ANC education policies in anticipation of the transition to democracy. After becoming a Member of Parliament in 1994 she did not neglect her own further education and was awarded a MA in Linguistics from the Stellenbosch University in 1997. Her Political career has also flourished and in 1998 she became the Deputy Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces and was elected Chair from 1999 to 2004.

As Naledi has spent the entire adult life involved in educational issues in various ways, she convened the Sub-Committee on Higher Education in the parliamentary Education Portfolio Committee. After the 2004 national elections, Naledi was first appointed as Minister of Education and later as Minister of Home Affairs.

Currently Naledi Pandor serves as the Minister of Science and Technology and on the National Executive Committee of the ANC. In addition, she is a National Director of the Black Management Forum. She has devoted considerable energy to the field of education and education reform, in her long –held belief that this forms the cornerstone of sustainable social and economic transformation.