

Sanef mourns death of Phindile Xaba, the journalist's journalist

The South African National Editors' Forum (Sanef) mourns the passing of stalwart journalist and writer, Phindile Mary Xaba who died after a lengthy battle with cancer on Saturday, 7 May 2022.



Source: © Sowetan Live [Sowetan Live](#) Stalwart journalist and writer, Phindile Mary Xaba, has died after a lengthy battle with cancer on Saturday, 7 May 2022

According to her family, Xaba died at her family home in Diepkloof, Soweto aged 53.

Concerned about the state of journalism

Mathatha Tsedu, former colleague, veteran media personality and political activist, described Xaba as “the journalist's journalist” that was always concerned about the state of journalism.

“She walked the communications route extensively, living up to her belief that information is power and that communication, particularly journalism, was critical in the developing state of democracy here at home,” he says.

“She was no-pushover and I remember defending her in a disciplinary hearing where race-based but baseless accusations of inefficiency were levelled against her. Needless to say, she stood her ground and the case crumbled. Journalism and communication fraternity are the poorer with her passing,” Tsedu says.



RIP Thabo Masebe

20 Apr 2022



Long and illustrious career

Xaba's long and illustrious career included being the editor of *Real Magazine*, under Media24 stable, which created the platform for healing of women. She was also the founding editor of the Sowetan women's club. She also worked for the *Mail and Guardian* as the editor of *The Teacher*.

She also worked for The New Age, True Love, City Press, St. Pietersburg Times (USA), The Journalist and many others. At the time of her death, she was a communicator in the office of the deputy minister in the Department of Public Service and Administration, Dr Chana Pilane-Majake.

She also had a long-standing relationship with Penn State University in Pennsylvania. She worked closely with the journalism students and ProfAnthony Olorunnisola.

Promoting a culture of reading

Another former colleague and friend Nomvula Khalo recalled meeting Phindi (as she was popularly known) in the early 90s saying they clicked instantly.

"Besides being both journalists and coming from Soweto, we both loved shoes and would share notes and new styles. Phindile was respectful, calm, skilful, helpful caring and a brilliant writer, she took profiling of women and women's issues to greater heights," she says.

She said losing someone of her calibre and experience at the time when the nation was questioning the status of journalism as a profession, was terribly sad and unfortunate for South Africa because the profession and young journalists needed her mentorship.

"May we continue her legacy by promoting the culture of reading and taking our profession and ourselves seriously," Khalo adds.

"May her soul rest eternally, I wish her son, daughter and the entire Xaba family strength during this sad time," Khalo says.

She says while death is cruel, disruptive, and abrupt, her family should be consoled by the fact that they were able to spend time with her, look after her and take care of her. And they will have fond memories of her exemplary and fruitful life.

Wisdom in judging

Ryland Fisher, who worked with Xaba as judges on the Vodacom Journalist of the Year awards and the Standard Bank Sikuville Journalism Awards now hosted by Sanef, says he will miss her wisdom in judging sessions.

"She had a wonderful sense of humour. She made great contributions and interventions during our meetings. We judged the Sikuville Awards a few weeks ago and none of us had a clue of the pain she must have been suffering. She continued to perform her judging duties with diligence. May her soul rest in peace," says Fisher.

Sanef extends its deepest condolences to her family, friends, and colleagues within the industry.

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