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News and Views from the College of Arts & Sciences at Webster University

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## Legacy of Nelson Mandela Lives in those Impacted by His Life



**South Africa continues its week of mourning, after the Dec. 5 death of Nelson Mandela, 95, the country's first black president. Millions of people worldwide also remember Mandela's extreme patience, humility, and kindness touched nearly every corner of the earth.**

At Webster University, students remember his achievements, influence, and legacy of social justice.

"Nelson Mandela's life and career taught me to



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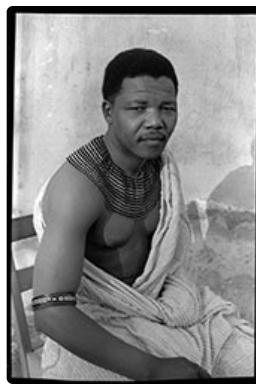
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fight for something bigger than yourself and to risk your life for what is right. His desire to better his country and aid his people can be respected by all regardless of color or nationality and that selflessness is truly inspiring," said Chris Whitmore, senior political science major with an emphasis in law.



Chris Whitmore

Nelson Mandela united his divided country by appealing to the people's sense of humanity and working to create a country where everyone is welcome. Throughout his life, he believed forgiveness, generosity, and respect were weapons of political persuasion that are as powerful as any gun.



His great legacy began when he was born in July 1918 in Transkei, South Africa. Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela was born the son of Hendry Mphakanyiswa, chieftain of the Tembu Tribe. Mandela studied law at University College of Fort Hare and the University of Witwatersrand. He joined the African National Congress in 1944 and later became involved in the resistance against Apartheid in the late 1940s. In June 1964, Mandela and eight Freedom Fighters were sentenced to life in prison for plotting to overthrow the South African government.

During his 27 years of imprisonment, his reputation grew and he became accepted as the most important black leader in South Africa. His imprisonment symbolized resistance against bigotry and his support increased steadily. He repeatedly refused to change his political position in exchange for his release from prison.

Upon release from prison in February 1990, he immediately began working to help eliminate oppression and bigotry. In 1991, Mandela was elected the first black President of South Africa.

"He literally had the worst thrown at him and yet he still stood vigilant and defiant against his misfortunes. His actions during his imprisonment speaks volumes to who he was. Never compromise your ideals, virtues, and beliefs," commented Kristie

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*Kristie Handang*

Hangdang, a freshmen sociology major.

“These traits help determine who you are as a person and I try to live up to his ideal every day. If he could endure imprisonment and violence, then I can handle almost anything by remembering his suffering and strength.”

Throughout his life, Mandela has remained a symbol of freedom and equal rights across the world.

“Nelson Mandela’s patience and his ability to bring together different individuals by breaking down racial, sociological, and economic barriers is very inspiring,” said Alex Kellmeyer, a sophomore double majoring in psychology and history.

“His handling of the racial tensions when he came into power is very admirable. He is an influence to me because of his stance on equality. Every leader should follow his example.”

Through his leadership, Mandela’s legacy embodied unity and understanding, looking past the color to see humanity.



*Alex Kellmeyer*

“Mandela was and is a hero of human rights – fighting for the rights of the oppressed black citizens of South Africa and for the freedom of his country,” said Taylor Randall Caldwell, a freshman studying biology. “Mandela may be gone in flesh, but his legacy will always remain. That is what truly matters.”

*Taylor Randall Caldwell*

*Submitted by student Mitch Price.*

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