



# Bitou's Women



August 2024



## BITOU'S WOMEN LEADERS

### Bitou gives Women's Month to local women to commemorate

This year's Women's Month was commemorated differently.

Instead of the municipality imposing a program on women, it took time ahead of Women's Month to hear the voices of women, to consider their needs and finally celebrate how modern women see the day.

The journey has been long, with numerous engagements of what the modern woman is and how to overcome today's challenges.

Yes, the women who took a stand on 9 August 1956 against discrimination and oppression during the apartheid era.

Women these days still face their challenges that they too need to take a stand against.

It is this thinking that brought about the change in how Women's Month would be commemorated.

Kicking off the lengthy calendar:

June 5 2024: "Conversations with SHE" where 40 women including pupils from Plett Secondary and Murray High School, businesswomen, subsistence farmers and owners of ECD Centres met and exchanged ideas.

27 July 2024: Breakfast with Ladies. This event saw the nomination of the Bitou Women's Forum.

The forum is responsible for Women's issues.

TBC: Bitou Women's Day Celebration

#### In this newsletter you can expect:

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Vuyokazi Kitsi: A Community Pillar and Entrepreneur

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Woman in Tourism: CEO Tourism: Patty Butterworth

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Woman in Sport: Nondumiso Mvandaba

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Woman in Leadership: Esmeralda Natasha Barnes

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Woman in Construction: Odwa Majova



From Right: Cllr Bill Nel, Cllr Renicia Willemse, Cllr Jessica Kamkam, Deputy Mayor Cllr Nokuzola Kolwapi, Minister Tertius Simmers.

## Bitou Women earn bricklaying certificates during Women's Month

A notable number of women have recently received their bricklaying certificates at the Ebenezer Housing Project, following a partnership initiative with CoroBrik and the Western Cape Government.

As Women's Month kicks off, 11 of the 18 participants in the Youth in Building Environment program are women. The program involved three weeks of theoretical studies followed by two months of practical fieldwork.

Passionate about women's issues, Deputy Mayor Councillor Nokuzola Kolwapi expressed gratitude to the program facilitators.

She highlighted the significance of this initiative for women, especially as it coincides with Women's Month in August. "Bricklaying is a male-dominated industry; however, the women who have completed this course have demonstrated that women are more than capable," said Councillor Kolwapi.

Meanwhile, Minister Tertius Simmers acknowledged the contributions of CoroBrik, NHBRC, and other stakeholders in making the program a success. "If it were not for CoroBrik, NHBRC, and all other stakeholders who participated, we would not be here today. I say this knowing very well how it feels to be an unemployed youth from this area, as I also come from this town," said Minister Simmers.



# Bitou's Vuyokazi Kitsi- A Community Pillar and Entrepreneur



*Mam'u Kitsi stands as a beacon of resilience and inspiration, embodying the spirit of community upliftment and principled entrepreneurship.*

**BY YEDWA MAYILA**

Vuyokazi Kitsi who is affectionately known as “Mam’u Kitsi” started her business with her strong community involvement.

She was one of the first to be trained as a Community Development Worker by the national government through the University of the Western Cape.

This training she says shaped her outlook and fuelled her passion for community service.

Previously she worked with Bitou Municipality, engaging in various social programs for youth, the elderly, and women.

Inspired by her work, she founded an NPO called Bitou Youth Pioneers in 2017, focusing on empowering women and children amidst rising gender-based violence.

Her daughter, a dedicated activist, also influenced this initiative.

Transitioning to entrepreneurship, Mam'u Kitsi established SINOMILA, a company named after her daughter Sino and her married name (*Igama lomzi or ubufazi*) Nokumila.

Her business spans baking, catering, events, and tenders in construction and services. Her drive is not solely profit but a deep commitment to community welfare.

Despite challenges such as funding difficulties and navigating a male-dominated business landscape, Mam’u Kitsi remains steadfast in her principles. She believes in taking the long road, and staying true to her values, even if it means facing setbacks.

Mam’u Kitsi emphasizes the importance of accessible business opportunities for all, particularly the economically disadvantaged. She advocates for simpler registration processes to combat poverty in South Africa.

## ADVICE TO ENTREPRENEURS

Her advice to aspiring young women entrepreneurs is to seek wisdom from experienced businesswomen, as embodied in the Xhosa saying, "inyathi ibuzwa kwabaphambili" (wisdom is sought from the elders). She urges them to uphold their values and principles, ensuring peace of mind and integrity in their business endeavours.

**THE WOMEN IN TOURISM WESTERN CAPE EXCO WILL BE VISITING PLETTENBERG BAY IN AUGUST**

**WHY: TO SHARE OUR PURPOSE IN TOURISM AND TO FIND OUT HOW WE CAN SUPPORT YOU IN BUSINESS**

**WHEN: WEDNESDAY, 14 AUGUST 2024**

**WHO SHOULD ATTEND: WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS / BUSINESS OWNERS IN TOURISM, TRAVEL & HOSPITALITY**

**ARRIVE: 10H30**

**EVENT: 11H00 - 14H00**

**VENUE: PIESANG COMMUNITY HALL. 7 GREENPOINT AVE, PLETTENBERG BAY**



**LUCKY DRAW PRIZES TO BE WON NETWORKING WITH A LIGHT LUNCH**





# CEO OF PLETT TOURISM

## Patty Butterworth

For young women particularly, who are entering into a working space, it's very important to remember that often there are times when we must be a little bit louder, a little bit more aggressive, and a little bit more empowering to ourselves.

Those are the words of the CEO of Plett Tourism, Patty Butterworth.

Butterworth who was born in 1968 in Montare California in the US has been a world traveller from the tender age of 6 years old living in Japan, Hong Kong, the United States, the Philippines and Korea.

Butterworth met her husband in 1996 who is a South African and moved to SA in the same year where she stayed in East London for 7 years, then moved to Plettenberg Bay almost 22 years ago.

During her stay in East London, she was involved in tourism working at the Border-Kei Chamber of Business as the Communication Manager and sat on the Tourism East London Board.

She then moved to Plett she worked at Market Square when they first opened as the Bank Marketing Manager at Rand Marchant Bank for just over two years.

She then opened a shop in Melville's Corner and opened a Deli restaurant down at the Beacon Island Spar Area. In 2007 Butterworth started to get involved in tourism within the private sector first as a consultant and then with Plett Tourism Association for the past 12 years.

She says her world travels exposed her to different cultures that she says have allowed her to develop a thick skin, especially in business.

"Because we are competing in environments that aren't necessarily traditionally taken by women and often women can be mistaken as being bossy or being too pushy or being too loud, we must have faith in who we are and what we do."



Advising the youth, she said: "alot of the youth today want instant jobs and want big salaries.

"You must get experience, you must fall, and you have to learn how to pick yourself up again, and to carry on."

Butterworth also shared that being a woman in the business world in South Africa has not been easy she thinks it is still quite a patriarchal society and patriarchal business environment, particularly the Tourism Industry. She said:

***"You just have to really be hungry for it, be prepared to work hard, and be prepared to pick yourself up when you fall down."***

Having come from a corporate environment in America being a little bit more progressive and aggressive with women being in upper managements is more prominent or predominant in other countries than it is in South Africa.

"South Africa should take on opportunities to grow management and upper management as far as women go in particularly the tourism industry," Butterworth added.

**BY THANDOKAZI SIPHUNGU**

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# 'THIS IS ALSO A WOMAN'S WORLD'

-Odwa Majova



August is a month of women, to celebrate women in male dominated industries. We had a conversation with Odwa Majova, who is the owner of Sidomela Trading Enterprises.

Majova was born in Mount Frere year 1992 and later moved to Plettenberg Bay in 2004.

Her journey in establishing her own business, Sidomela Trading Enterprise, in 2014 was marked by a significant turning point.

Prior to this venture, she was part of a collaborative-

- business with three other women, which was launched when they began working together on the construction of houses in Pine Trees.

When they first met, none of the women had any experience in construction.

However, through dedication and hard work, they acquired skills and knowledge in the field.

"It was not easy at all to stand alone and establish a business especially in such a male-dominated industry but with perseverance and dedicated action, I made it work no matter what."

## ***"Wathinta abafazi, wathinta imbokodo!!"***

In 2017, the Western Cape Government had a training in Cape Town about construction and all the elements in it.

Majova took part in that training and that is where she learned about how to run a company and manage her finances.

"Before I went to that training, I used to be careless with money, I took unnecessary loans because I did not know how to manage my money especially when I had a big payout. I wanted to buy myself fancy makeup and clothes," she said.

More than anything, what one can take away from Majova's journey is that women can do anything if they put their minds to it.

They should take up spaces and especially in those that are believed not to be suitable for women, get out of their comfort zone.

We hope that you will be inspired by the story of Odwa, and we wish all women a happy women's month.

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# Nondumiso Mvandaba



Nondumiso Mvandaba's story is one of passion, a deep love of community and a knack for community development.

Born in the 1980s in Stutterheim (Cumakala) and raised in Qoboqobo, her passion for sport dates back to when she was just 12 years old.

She says her journey in sports began during her high school years when she reunited with her father, who owned a soccer team named Callies. Initially joining Callies as the team's organizer, Mvandaba soon found herself encouraged by others to assist additional teams.

This saw her leave Callies and join another team called Teenagers, where she became active in team activities and eventually secured the position of team secretary. It was during this time that she realized sports was her true calling.

Nondumiso, known as Sis' Ndumie, participated in various sports including soccer, netball, and darts, and was also a marathon athlete.

Seeking better opportunities, she moved to Plettenberg Bay and in 2011 began working with local children aged 11-13, organizing activities to keep them engaged and off the streets. Her efforts extended to organizing and supporting older children up to the age of 17, continuing this work until 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic forced a temporary halt.

Mvandaba's dedication to sports and community development was so profound that she resigned from her job to fund the purchase of team kits, which she successfully acquired in 2017 for the under-13, under-15, and under-17 teams.

Her initiative provided a structured environment for children to showcase their talents not only in sports but also in activities like gumboot dancing, ensuring that every child had an opportunity to develop their skills in something they loved. Supported by her family and community members, Mvandaba's work was widely appreciated.

During the COVID-19 hiatus, she was approached by the Pirates, a well-known active team in the Bitou community and she played both roles of manager and secretary of the team.

Under her leadership skills and other management members, Young Pirates played in several leagues in 2021- 2023 and they were lucky to be promoted to another league including the recent Hollywood Bet where they have completed 30 games and won 19 games.

Mvandaba shares that being a female in a male-dominated field requires extra effort in explaining and implementing ideas.

Her story is a testament to her commitment to sports and her community, demonstrating how passion and dedication can positively impact the lives of young people.

**BY THANDOKAZI SIPHUNGU**







## THE INSPIRING JOURNEY OF AMANDA VALELA

In any story of a living legend, the beginnings are always humble- Amanda Valela's story is no different.

Born and bred in Plettenberg Bay, Valela has always been an active child with a passion for singing. She participated in the school choir in assemblies and competitions, where her journey into the performing arts began.

Her life took a turn for the better when she started attending drama classes alongside her brother, Mcendisi Ncedani.

Though Valela was more passionate about dance than drama, the world of entertainment ran in her family. Her love for dance led her to join the Masimanyane Theatre Group, formed and led by her older brother, who encouraged her to pursue drama as well.

Valela's first professional performance was at the Ikhwezi Festival, now known as the Eden Drama Festival, at the Baxter Theatre in Cape Town, where she performed in a play written by her brother Ta Mnce.

In 2008, her talent and dedication earned her roles in *Khoko's Suitcase* and *How to Save Water*.

In 2010, Lunchbox Theatre collaborated with a local foundation where she taught children poetry, drama, and dance.

Since then, she has continued to grow and develop her skills within the company. She is now a qualified facilitator which saw her attend the prestigious BIBISE Festival in Sweden, further showcasing her talent.

Her next major endeavour was co-directing the acclaimed production *ILifa* (The Inheritance)" at the HIFA festival in Zimbabwe. *ILifa* was also performed on the main stage of the Grahamstown Festival. Valela's work took her around the world, including to Australia, where she wrote and performed in a show called *Dream* directed by Nhlanhla Mkhwanazi. Her shows have been performed in countries such as Ivory Coast and Iran to mention but a few.

Apart from her work with Lunchbox Theatre, Valela formed a core group of girls from Murray High School to create stories about gender-based violence (GBV) and the real experiences and challenges faced by young girls in society. Their first show *Agony* was well-received. Valela is currently working on a story called *Intombi Ezilishumi* which also addresses real issues faced by young girls that they find difficult to share with their parents.

### ADVICE TO YOUNG WOMEN

"Even though you come from a poor background, make sure that you take decisions that won't jeopardize your future. Remember, everything has its own time."



BY OLWETHU MANTYI



## **"WOMAN, YOU CAN"- ESMERALDA NATASHA BARNES**

With a career in aviation spanning over 37 years in the aviation industry, Esmeralda Natasha Barnes, credits her successful career in the male-dominated field to her manager who she says was a person, who identified your strengths, your weaknesses and worked with you.

"Although he was a director and one of Dr Anton Rupert's closest friends, he took me and he moulded me to be the person that I am today."

She says women should be that person in their respective fields as this would propel other women to greater heights.

Expanding on her lengthy career, Barnes says she lived at an Airforce base where her father worked.

She says this saw her also joining the Airforce before starting a career in corporate working at the Petersburg Airport where she was appointed the first female airport manager in South Africa.

During that time she was also battling numerous things in her life, including being a single mother after her divorce and also being unable to pursue school after grade 12.

Asked how she managed she said: "I had the brains, I had to prove myself wherever I went and believe me, there were a lot of challenges along the way."

"Sitting here today, I can look back on my career, I can say to you, you know, this is what happened to me, this is how I basically experienced life in the business sector and you know what, it's up to you what you reach and what you become and how you achieve."

In 2022, Barnes retired, but she soon found herself back in the field, helping with the management of Hoedspruit Airport.

Recently, she was approached to manage the Plettenberg Bay Airport, and has been involved in the transition process since May.

Asked about her aspirations she says: "My goal now is to grow the airport, create opportunities for the local community, and inspire the next generation to consider careers in aviation."

"I believe in the importance of education and want to see more young people, especially from our region, involved in this exciting industry," she added.



**BY YASMINE MANSOUR  
AND YEDWA MAYILA**

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# Bitou Beach Umbrella & Cushion Project

**Closing date : 19 August 2024 at 12:00pm**

Bitou Municipality calls on potential **suppliers** for the sponsorship of umbrellas & cushions for the purpose of creating informal trader opportunities from **1 December 2024 to end April 2027**.

It is requested that bidders consider including umbrellas for 20 township vendors and CSI support to one (1) township entrepreneur. Suppliers must be able to provide opportunities for employment through the provision of umbrellas and beach cushions and auxiliary services in return for **branding opportunities** on Plettenberg Bay's beaches.

Application forms are available at the Economic Development Offices, Office No 57, Melville's Corner, Plettenberg Bay or on email from Mr. W Sebezo on [wsebezo@plett.qov.za](mailto:wsebezo@plett.qov.za). For any technical enquiries please contact Alicia Brettenny at 044 501 3152 or via email [aklein@plett.gov.za](mailto:aklein@plett.gov.za) during office hours.



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