

Khonzaphi Zimu (née Nduli).
Inanda student, 1965-1969; principal, 1999-2000; teacher, 2000-2009.
Interviewed in KwaMashu, KwaZulu-Natal, 14 December 2008.

When were you born, and what was your maiden name?

I was born in 1948, 20 August, and my maiden name is Nduli, I married in 1972 to Zimu, and I am Mrs. Zimu now.

And where were you born?

I was born in KwaZulu-Natal, at Eshowe.

And what was your parents' background?

My father was a teacher, my mother is a housewife.

Did your father work at an American Board school?

Yes, at an American Board school, a primary school out at Eshowe, and also I went to Inanda, yes.

How did you decide to attend Inanda Seminary? How did you hear about the school? Was it through your family's American Board background?

It was the church, yes. The church used to advise the parents to take their daughters. Yeah. Especially my father, because they knew my father was able to pay, yes. And he also is in education, so he would want something better for the children, something better for his children.

What was the application process when you went to Inanda?

We wrote a letter of application and then we got the reply to fill in the forms... We did not pay any application fee in that time... There was no application fee during my time. So, I was called fortunately. Many students' applications were turned down, so we were lucky to get in.

You were a student from 1965 to 1969. Can you tell me a bit about what the school was like during that time, in terms of the curriculum, in terms of the teachers, the other students?

Yeah... Well, we used to do very hard Matric standard, which was called JMB, which was very tough. Every subject was at A-level. IsiZulu A, English A, A, A, A, A-levels. So it was very, very hard. There were not many students in the class; the maximum was about fifteen in one class, so it was easy to get teachers helping out. Ehhe, fifteen only! So we all passed. When we were doing Matric, most of us passed, but the majority got S, not M. M was Matriculation, S was the School-Leaving Certificate. So most of us got S, because the JMB we were doing at that time was very tough, especially for the black student. We were supposed to do the English A when we were not English speakers. That makes a difference!

And a lot of the students at that time probably attended public schools in the primary grades.

Ehhe! Together also with the families we came from. Very impoverished. Ehhe, No exposure to things of the modern technology, no, none of those existed. We only used to close the school and go home and work in the fields. And that's all. We never had any extra things to teach us, like a TV. Also the church used to give us an education, but it was not really what the school would require. But the church did play a big role in our morals... The curriculum at Inanda was mathematics, physical sciences, history, geography.

Were there any teachers that you especially remember from your time there?

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Yes! The one who taught us English, Miss Cornell. She was so good! She was such a good teacher. I wasn't good. I wasn't one of those children who did well. But I used to like her style of doing things. Ehhe. She used to give us handouts, all written things, so we could read, and study, and read, and read. She did a whole lot of work for us to pass, and we did pass English, ehhe. Miss Johnson also used to teach the junior classes in English. She was so good also. She made us act out drama, *Julius Caesar* was acted out beautifully, drama was there, together with English... Maths was very hard. Whoo! We had Miss Gunn, from America also. She was a very devoted teacher, so the level of passing maths improved greatly. We had interest in doing maths... At university and in colleges, we did not find that maths again. That maths teacher who was so active and interested in teaching us maths, no. So we got the basics of maths at Inanda only. Then after that we lost it again.

Did you go onto University of Zululand?

No, I went to a teachers' college, yes, at Eshowe, ehhe. It didn't offer much, but at least it offered how to teach.

Did you come back to Inanda right after college?

No, I went to many other public schools, and then I only came back to Inanda in 2003. I went all over Eshowe, public schools all over the countryside. It didn't do me any good. It made me lower. It brought me down from what I had already been prepared to do, because of the environment, because of the influence of the environment. I wasn't doing the best that I had prepared to do at Inanda. I lost it. I taught English and History in KwaZulu-Natal... Grade 7 to Grade 12.

What were some of the differences that you saw between Inanda Seminary and some of the schools you were working in after you graduated?

Great difference. There's no order in these schools... There's laziness, there's haphazard kind of work, there's late coming, there's no interest in your career, there's nothing, compared to what Inanda gave. When we went out to teach we were expecting to find schools like Inanda. We were so disappointed. Everything was just to no level at all. Late-coming, drunkenness, absenteeism of teachers and students, *hhayibo*, it was chaos. Chaos. If you knew the order that we'd been accustomed to acquire, and then you find no order. It was terrible. I went to about five schools, and then I came eventually to Inanda, as I am retiring now. It was total chaos. Academically, you know, standards are very low. No one is eager to learn or teach, no one. No motivation whatsoever.

Does that description apply more to how the schools were in the 1970s and 1980s, or has this been a continuous state of disorder down to the present?

In the 1970s and 1980s, it was much better, but it has deteriorated... The culture of learning and teaching was not there at all. But Inanda has been restored to that standard of the correct standards to follow.

Were you involved in the efforts to revitalize Inanda? What were some of the challenges that you and the other Old Girls confronted?

Yeah, financial problems. Because in 1999 I was a principal in that school, for one year only.

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Hhayi, it was no school at all... Buildings were bad. Almost in ruins. Everything just dry and dead. Until SAPPI came to our rescue... After 2001, then things picked up, and it was a better school.

Going back a bit—What other recollections might you share about your school days? What information about the experience of being a student in the 1960s might I not find in the archives?

One thing I liked was the uniform. We used to have two sets of uniform. The summer uniform... and then in winter we had black skirts and white shirts... And we used to have very poor food, diet. We used to have a mug, you know, a coffee mug, and then we used to have a quarter of a coffee mug amasi and then a thick slice of bread. That was all we used to eat for supper sometimes. But we never worried. We were very fat, happy with it. We used to be marked for minor things we did. Like speaking Zulu, when you happened to say a word in Zulu, you would be written in a punishment book, and you would have to cut grass. That was not nice, hey, *hhayi*. If we spoke one word we would cut grass for thirty minutes. If it was a long conversation we would cut grass for an hour or two. Sometimes the girls used to abscond and go to buy bread because there were no proper meals there, at Inanda. The girls would leave campus to go buy bread outside. The community was very cooperative with the school. Whenever they saw an Inanda girl... they would come and tell the principal, and the roll call would be called... *Hhayi!* The community was really looking after the school. The principal also used to keep snake bite serums for the community. They used to come to the school to get some firewood or collect water... It was so homely, really... This thing of stealing people's things was going on them, students stealing among themselves.

We used to have SCM, Student Christian Movement. We used to teach Sunday School also. The school chaplain used to train us.

Did all of the students participate?

No, but I did it. I loved it! It was a chance to be out of the campus, you know... Yes, we used to go further, as far as what is now the Inanda Dam to teach. We used to take long walks back to school. On Sunday we were allowed to take a walk for three hours. Then, things were very safe, the community was very loving. The community is rough now, it won't just let us walk around freely as before... We used also to partake in sports and music.

Did you take part in any sports?

I used to play tenniquet. We traveled to Ohlange and Maritzburg Vocational School.

What differences did you see between Inanda as a private school and government schools?

The treatment at Inanda was exceptionally good. There's respect for oneself, and a person just demands respect from the next person... At other schools, no, there was no good manners among the people that worked there and the students that went there, no respect between adults and children... We used to see this at Eshowe Training School and Ohlange when we went to play basketball. It was rowdy, noisy and violent. We used to think that it was because we looked so pretty, so beautiful, and they were jealous of us [laughs]...

So how did you decide to be a teacher?

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I didn't want to be a teacher. It was my guidance teacher, that same Miss Gunn who taught us maths, advised me to take up teaching, because I was very patient, ehhe... And it was not hard to train as a teacher and to become a teacher... When I was still at Inanda I never thought of teaching as a good career. I thought it was something too common. I wanted something very special for an Inanda girl [laughs], not knowing that it depends on the gifts that one has, I never took into cognizance that, I just thought I should become "that" because I went to Inanda...

What other careers did you consider?

[Answers quickly] I wanted to become a nurse. I actually went to nurses' training.

At McCord Hospital?

At McCord Hospital; we used to walk right across, we never even applied! [Laughs] When we were in Matric we were just asked, "How many of you want to become nurses, want to train as nurses?" and the hands went up, 1, 2, 3, 4, okay, we just go to McCord, it was so easy. So I went to McCord, when I started training I liked it... Then they changed the system, McCord had to stop now to train nurses. For some political reasons, I guess. I did nurses' training for about 4 months, then it changed... and I decided I didn't want the kind of life at King Edward Hospital, and so I went back to teaching and found my way.

What sort of careers did your classmates pursue?

Ooh, they were doctors. They wanted to do medicine, some of them are politicians, there are some in teaching, but majority are in medicine.

So what do you see as the key factor attracting families to Inanda, then and now?

... They don't want chaos and haphazard things. They like the order at Inanda.

And you have two daughters at Inanda now.

Yes, they are there now.

You had two sisters attending Inanda as well, right?

Yes, two of them, ehhe. They are younger than me, they went there in the 1970s. We all liked Inanda. My parents used to love Inanda a lot. We didn't have so many holidays, we only used to go home twice a year. At Easter many would stay at school... It was just like a home, we used to play games there. I was just nice, nice. Some of us preferred to stay at school. We had good teachers, who were devoted to helping us out, they had time for us. We used to sing at Inanda, sing and be happy, it was all good time.

As students, were you aware of Inanda's unique status during Bantu Education?

We were aware. They used to give us very high standards, ehhe, and we were aware that was the demand, out there. Unfortunately, when we came out, we did not find that. We were the epitome instead. *Hawu!* Instead of being led by people to get up to those high standards, no, we were the ones to bring up the others.

Do you feel that you applied the skills you learned at Inanda in teaching students elsewhere?

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Even now, it's helpful. You know what we teach them, is really life, how to live life. I am really proud of that school, Inanda. It has taught us really to be, what it means to be human, how to live and make others live as well, that we have learned at Inanda [laughs]. Yes, respect for humankind. We learned that at Inanda. Where I am living now, we have that now, because this area I'm living now is not four-roomed houses. When you go to the four-roomed you can see the differences just glaring at us. No respect. No self-respect. *Hhayi*, violence. *Hhayi*, bad manners. *Hhayi!* [Laughs]

How long have you lived here?

Since 1989. I expanded that house, this used to be two houses.

How did you come to be principal in 1999?

I was not working then, I had a severance package from the government. I saw an ad in the paper to teach at Inanda Seminary and applied, and because of my experience they made me principal.