

Dr Tumelo Amanda Lobelo-Ratefane

Bubbly but 'no-nonsense', Ous Tumi, as she's affectionately known, is one of the co-founders of SI Mmabatho (now SI Mahikeng, South Africa), a club that she's still passionately and actively serving. Together with other pioneers, she petitioned SIGBI to start the club which took its first steps in 1990, a club which will be celebrating its 30th anniversary this year in 2020.

Twice she became the club's President, the highlight of which were her endeavours in getting the lost Club Charter replaced when the club turned 21. Her passion and dedication to SI catapulted her to become the first President of SISAN. When her term ended, she bravely travelled all the way to the SIGBI Conference in Newcastle (UK), despite being on crutches, in order to hand over the baton to Sally Currin, who is now our current SISA President. As she thrives on friendships, she couldn't miss attending SI Falkirk's (Friendship Link) 60th anniversary, with other members of her club.

Notwithstanding other members' initiatives, Ous Tumi, the humanitarian, has espoused the Soroptimists' 5Ps in championing several projects:

- Ephphatha Early Learning Centre (ELC): Close to her heart was its establishment and running. She wore two hats (SI and Methodist Church) in order to ensure that not only the women and girls of the Slurry community were empowered and educated, but the entire community benefited (both kids and the infirm). Doors were knocked on and mountains moved to acquire a building, tile and furnish it, and get food for the children and a stipend for the teacher;
- Kgakgamatso family, a child-headed HIV-orphaned family: ensuring that they get educated, fed (monthly groceries), proper housing (furnished, fenced and with a borehole) and a job for the eldest
- Shuping family: a destitute family of orphaned children living with their granny, providing inter alia uniforms, and a cell phone for granny to ensure constant updates. Highlights: Matric Dance dress for the girl;
- Lapa-la-botlhe Old Age home: soup and food;
- Village garden projects in Ramatlabama and Top village;
- Active participation in the Village Libraries Project.

Her spirit of giving herself to the community is manifested in her doctoral thesis entitled "Volunteerism in Social Welfare Services", with NPOs as her subjects. She is a true and natural Social Worker, something that she has dedicated her life for, as shown in being one of the pioneers of the Retired Social Workers Association (volunteers) in 2012. She is currently the Provincial Chairperson. Studying Social Work as a profession was just a cherry on the cake!

Born in Taung (RSA), a place renowned for its "Taung child skull", the 76 year-old (born 22nd December 1943) has been blessed with two sons and two daughters, whose doors have been broken down by her constant begging for contributions to her Soroptimist projects. What a granny to her six grandchildren!

She has kept the Soroptimist International flag flying high, through thick and thin. In her own words, "She can't imagine life without being a Soroptimist." She's simply the best!

