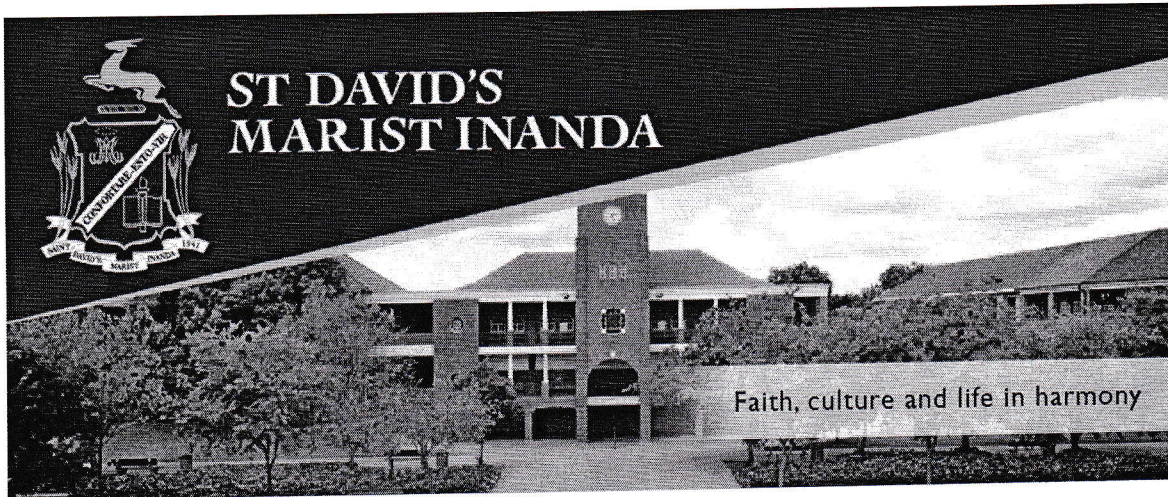


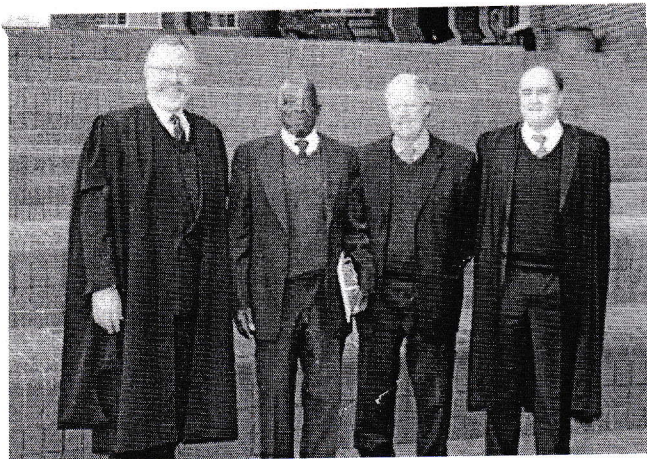
High School +++ High School Soccer Fixtures +++ Textbook Order Deadlines +++ NCS Final Examination Timetable 2010 +++



- HOME
- PRE SCHOOL
- PREP SCHOOL
- HIGH SCHOOL
- COMMUNITY
- FOUNDATION
- ADMINISTRATION
- CONTACT US

High School

High School Newsletter 23 July 2010



We bid Farewell to Mr Selima. 53 years of unstinting service to our school

Mr Phineas Selima

It was Gabriel and my privilege this morning to bid Mr Phineas Selima farewell on behalf of the High School. Mr Selima had his formal farewell function yesterday evening and Mr Wilson gave his farewells on behalf of the Prep School at Wednesday's Assembly. Below I include extracts of the speech presented at Assembly this morning:

In 1937 Morgan Freeman, Jack Nicholson and Dustin Hoffman were born. The famous Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco was also opened in 1937. It was the year of the Hindenberg airship disaster and the year in which Amelia Earhart disappeared, one of modern times unsolved mysteries. Heavyweight boxer Joe Louis – 'The Brown Bomber' – became World Heavyweight Boxing Champion for the first time. Philip Nel's 1937 Springboks remained one of the most successful teams to tour Australasia, beating Australia 2 – 0 and the All Blacks 2 – 1 in tests. The team included greats such as Boy Louw and Danie Craven.

News & Events

- Latest News
- Terms Calendar
- Extra-Curricular Calendar
- Upcoming Events
- Calendar
- Photo Gallery
- Newsletter
 - Pre-Prep
 - Prep
 - High School
 - MOBS
 - Archive

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For us, though, 1937 is a special year because it heralded the birth of one of our own greats – Mr Phineas Selima. Mr Selima's relationship with St David's began on a temporary basis during his school holidays in 1958. To give you a sense of this, Mr Castle also joined the School in 1958 – in Grade 1!

In 1960 Br Paul assisted Mr Selima in receiving an Identity Book. At the time the so called Native Urban Areas Act meant that Mr Selima had to have permission to work and stay in Johannesburg. Mr Selima tells me he clearly remembers being issued with the 'Dompas', as the Pass Book was known, for the first time in 1954.

Mr Selima completed his Matric in 1962 and was offered permanent employment from January 1963.

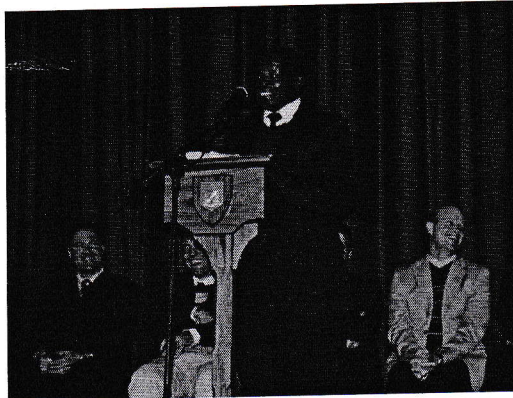
I believe it is important that we understand the things that Mr Selima and other support staff had to deal with under the policies of Apartheid during those years. For example, the police used to raid the staff quarters at the School in the middle of the night to check the Pass Books of the staff. If the papers were not in order they were arrested and sometimes held for a few days; sometimes staff, including Mr Selima, were slapped around. What many of you have seen in the Apartheid Museum as history is given meaning, I believe, when you consider that a gentleman such as Mr Selima was affected so negatively by Apartheid.

I asked Mr Selima on Thursday night what he had felt on Election Day in 1994, when he was able to vote for the first time in his own country. His eyes lit up and he spontaneously replied: "Ah, that was a great day in my life – to be free, to be free at last". This context is important when we reflect on what Mr Selima has achieved.

It was also during 1963 that Brother Aiden got Mr Selima to assist with the School's printing – the role that we all automatically associate with Mr Selima.

In this role Mr Selima has witnessed first hand the explosion of technology that most of you know as your only reality and take for granted. Mr Selima started with manual printers which often had wax-based master copies called stencils which produced blurred and easily smudged prints – these printers had a big handle on the side and you cranked away at the handle to print the copies. The first automatic photocopying machines at St David's resembled the mother ship hovering over Johannesburg in the film *District 9*. The noises they made gave the impression that they were about to lift off at any moment. In the last year or two we have installed digital printers where the staff can post the work directly to the print room and then pick up their work later. With each new wave of technology, Mr Selima has ensured that he has upped his skills and received the required training to stay on top of his game.

More importantly, Mr Selima has taken all of these things in his stride and has made sure that he has not lost the personal touch. Your ability to work under pressure and stay calm is an example to us all. You have always been willing to go the extra mile. As Gabriel has mentioned, you have seen generation after generation of boys come through the school.



I asked some of the staff which words they would use to describe Mr Selima. The responses included: caring; calm under pressure; patient; long-suffering; a gentleman; never a bad word to say about anybody; a senior member of staff and mentor. A number of staff mentioned how Mr Selima always asks after them and their families and how they are doing. All of the above are true.

I have appreciated your dry wit as you comment on the current group of boys caught getting up to mischief, and the twinkle in your eye as you say: "Ah, Mr Williams, what have the boys been up to this time?"

reminds me that you have seen it again and again over the years. At the same time, you have a strong sense of right and wrong, and of fair play.

Your great strength is that you give your undivided attention to each person you assist – whether it is a young Grade 3, a Matric, or a member of staff. Through this giving of respect you have earned the respect of all in the school. Your giving of yourself for others is truly Marist. Your cheery greeting of "Good morning" every day has always been a tonic. As Mr Greeff pointed out last night, you always walk out of the printing room feeling better than when you walked in – that is the positive energy that is Mr Selima. The other striking feature is that in his 52 years at St David's Mr Selima has been absent for not even one day because of illness. Our boys can certainly learn from this!

Of course there is also Mr Selima, the father and the family man. Mr Selima will now be joining his wife in Thohoyandou near Makhado (Louis Trichardt) at the family home he built during the late 1990s and which is undergoing final renovations at present. We must not forget that part of our heritage as a country are laws like the Group Areas Act and the Migrant Labour System. The reality is that Mr Selima has spent most of his nearly 50 years at St David's away from his family for most of the year, as is the case with a number of our other support staff. This level of commitment is something we must never take for granted.

Mr Selima said last night he had tried to follow St Marcellin over the past 52 or so years, that he had tried to follow a simple life focusing on School and Home. As a father he has overcome great odds and achieved great things.

Mr Selima and his wife have had 7 children (and have 8 grandchildren) and with his income as Print Operator over the years he has still enabled all of his children to go on to study successfully at tertiary level, where they have achieved qualifications in nursing, engineering, tourism, marketing and commerce. His daughter, Ivorne, for example has an Honours and a Masters Degree in Information Sciences and currently works for the South African Revenue Services, as does one of her brothers.

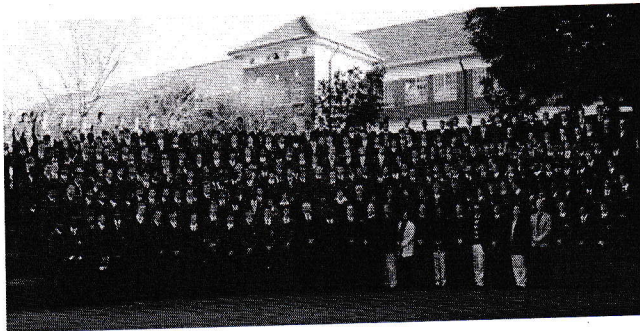
Phineas, you are a man whose actions speak louder than words. You understand Marist 'Presence' and a 'love of work'. You epitomise the Marist qualities of humility, modesty and simplicity and yours has truly been a life of service to others. It is fitting that you share your day of retirement with another who has spent life in the service of others – Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu. You have made a difference at St David's and we are privileged to have worked with you as a colleague and as a friend. You have been a special member of our School family – you have been one of the custodians of the School and what it stands for. You now deserve to spend more time with your wife and your own family.

The School's main gift to you, after consulting with you, is to assist you with the final renovations to your family home. Yours has truly been a service of the highest order.

Go well – hamba khahle.

Malcolm Williams

Headmaster: High School



From the Deputy Head: Academics

Nick Clogg

Exam pressure is upon the boys once again; and for some it is a time to thrive and for others a time of uncertainty and worry. Irrespective, what is absolutely vital, is that all boys are fully prepared.

This has been a disruptive academic year which has compounded the stress many may be feeling at present, and yet, a few short weeks ago all of us were entranced by the marvel of the FIFA World Cup and what a magnificent job South Africa did in hosting this wonderful event. The many positive emotions felt have now been replaced with potentially negative ones. This rather rapid transition of emotions can be difficult to manage, but managed they must be. Time-management is a vital skill we all have to develop continuously and many of the boys need help in devising well-balanced programmes that allow them to utilise their time effectively. Already all should have devised a time-management schedule that takes into account all facets of their daily lives. Obviously, a significant proportion of this time must be allocated to academic preparation. Time must also be set aside for rest, recreation and exercise. Too often the boys think they have more than enough time to prepare for the exams and unfortunately, procrastination sets in which results in panic buttons being pressed when they suddenly burn the midnight oil.

For the Grade 11s and 12s, these exams are especially important. For many of the Grade 11s, this set of exams will be significantly more difficult than their end-of-year Grade 10 exams. A realisation will occur whereby many will internalise the need for a more concerted effort in class and certainly, better preparation for the end-of-year exams. For the Grade 12s, this will be their last opportunity to identify where there may be gaps in their understanding of the work covered thus far. Moreover, many tertiary institutions will provisionally accept/reject the boys according to their results. The pressure is certainly on, but the Grade 12s can take comfort in the fact that the standard of our internal exams will most definitely reflect, and in some cases, exceed, what they can expect at the end of the year. This does not imply that if they achieve pleasing results now, they will automatically achieve similar results at the end of the year. On the contrary, without a refined time-management programme that addresses any mistakes learnt during these exams, a focus on paying attention in class and thorough preparation, disappointment at the end of the year will be the order of the day.

With regards to preparation, it is important to note that different levels of 'learning' must take place. Firstly, the boys must read through their work. In addition, it is expected that the boys read around their subjects to enhance their understanding of them. Secondly, the boys must commit to writing down what they have read. This must be done by writing down summaries in their own words. Lastly, they should try and teach others the work they have 'learnt': only if others can understand what you are trying to teach them, have you fully internalised the subject content.