The following are tributes paid to former President Nelson Mandela of South Africa. If you want your thoughts to be added please contact: uwazieeee@csus.edu and send your text and it will be added.

Former President Nelson Mandela epitomized peace and reconciliation, having spent much of his life revolting, fighting, and resisting the apartheid rule as unjust and inhuman. Despite the challenges in the path of the struggle for justice and equality, and indeed a Long Walk to Freedom, he won the race and shamed his oppressors with unmatched grace. As the President of South Africa, he exemplified leadership and demonstrated that democracy is very feasible in Africa. As a Nobel Peace Laureate, he showed forgiveness and championed reconciliation, and earned the admiration of all, at home and abroad.

As he rests in peace, may we do no less than President Mandela--- in the long walk for peace and justice, nor tire from the burdens of peacemaking!

To the people of South Africa, thank you for allowing the world to share Madiba with you. We mourn with you. May we be deserving of his personal sacrifices and public service.
Peace,

Ernest Uwazie, Ph.D.  Director, Center for African Peace and Conflict Resolution

California State University, Sacramento

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Nelson Madiba Mandela Legacy

by Jessie Gaston, Ph.D. (Chair, CAPCR Board)

I am so very honored to say a few words about such an influential African warrior, statesmen, family man, leader and a lover of humanity, the Honorable Nelson Madiba Mandela.

Over the Thanksgiving Break, I started to read one of the most recent books on him entitled Madiba A to Z: The Many Faces of Nelson Mandela, written by Danny Schechter and published by Seven Stories Press in New York (2013).

I was ready to familiarize myself at a deeper level with this person who had spent almost 28 years of his life doing hard prison time for his attempts to make this world, and especially South Africa, a better place for all God’s children, regardless of their ethnicities, race and color.

However, I quickly realized that the common underlying thread of these faces was his fiery passion and dedication to assist in causing justice and freedom to be experienced by those who had been denied them.

I believe that God gives an assignment and a purpose to each individual, but that individual must say yes to the assignment. And, when they do respond with a yes, I believe that God Almighty commissions and empowers them with the tools and strength
to take that journey. When Madiba said yes to his journey, he knew it would not be an easy ride.

But he, like Dr. King, Denmark Vesey, Gabriel Prosser, Nat Turner, Malcolm X and many other male and female warriors, took on the Mission to help redeem the human race, by standing up for those who were the targets of oppressive, cruel and inhuman acts initiated by those who thought themselves innately superior.

I, myself, grew up in the apartheid state of Mississippi and I remember what used to happen to those who tried to stand up for their rights.

Madiba wanted and was determined to help create a world where people could hope for a brighter day. He proved and served as that light for millions of South Africans. And, his Legacy is still lighting the way for millions around the world.

I applaud Madiba for embracing his destiny with such dignity and I pray and hope that we can follow his techniques of Peace.

MADIBA, you can now rest with the Almighty!!!

Dr. Meshack Okpala

Mandela had carried a cross of freedom and liberated his people, our people and the people of the world to look behind the curtain and see beyond the veil. As symbol of a great leader, he preached peace and gave his people justice. After so much hard work, endurance and burden of self-determination, it is time for retirement. He had gone to the deserved internal rest. He left the world much better than he found it.
Diamond Longjel

Well stated, Prof Uwazie! Mr. Mandela languished in prison for 27 years with hard labor and received only one visitor a year and was allowed to write only two letters in a year. Yet, he lived and suffered with such honor and grace. Through his suffering, he transformed to a man of peace and reconciliation. It has been quite a teachable moment for me and my children who want to know more about this great man and his legacy.

In the words of one of Mr. Mandela’s most profound statements: “During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.”

Indeed, Madiba changed the world for good. May his gentle soul rest in PEACE, Amen!

Invocation by: Jon B. Fish -- Interfaith Council of Greater Sacramento

Oh, God, our Father…we who are thy children … your sons and daughters … gather on this quiet day in prayer to remember a leader who once had lived in solitary ages who later lived on world stages.
We bow our heads in reverence and respect to remember this man of grace, this man of forgiveness and this man of decency. We understand in our hearts that life has to end, but we also understand that love does not have to end.

In our hearts and minds we are saddened at the death and passing of Nelson Mandela. He was not only great in the sight of many who mourn, but he was also good. And from the sadness we feel at his passing, gratitude emerges as we consider the honor of having watched and learned from his approach to life. We feel thankful that we were here when he was and because of his life – and the way he lived it – we know that we must seize and grab opportunities now to forgive, to share, to explore and to love for there is no greater way we could honor his name and his life than to live like he tried to live.

As we gather in prayer our hearts are filled with goodly thoughts and strong feelings as we remember that all of us do not have to think alike, but it becomes increasingly important for each of us that we learn to love alike.

We are reminded in deep humility and grace -- over and over -- that when the hand of death reaches out to take from us, a friend, a family member, a leader or a teacher – as Nelson Mandela has been to millions – that a part of us is not going to die with him, but on the contrary a part of us will live with him … for he has only stepped into the other room.

And as has been chiseled and carved in stone for hundreds of years around the world, we know that on his tombstone that sits in our minds we must always strive to remember his vision. Yes, he is gone…but never forgotten … for there are many things worse than death. However, when it comes to someone we know, it always seems so final to our hearts.
Yet President Mandela would stand here himself, if he could, and remind us that what lies in the future … and beyond … is a matter of faith in what we have always hoped for. In faith we must act, to do good, for that is the Mandela way.

To this end our solemn prayer extends our love and praise to thee for blessing this man with courage, wisdom and honor. We shall not soon forget the life he lived.

May we all be blessed for being here and may we continue to reflect on Nelson Mandela and his purposes, taught by his God and accepted into his life to pursue. This hope in our soul and this prayer in our heart are ours today and always … amen.

Invocation offered by Jon B. Fish -- Interfaith Council of Greater Sacramento -- at California State University-Sacramento Pan-African Studies memorial/remembrance service for President Nelson Mandela, Thursday, December 12, 2013 – Student Union Building, Redwood Room, California State University, Sacramento, 5-8pm.