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21 ICONS SA to feature Frene Ginwala

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On Sunday, 24 August at 20:27 on SABC3, *21 ICONS* season two features Frene Ginwala, the first female speaker at the National Assembly of South Africa. This episode is the fourth in the series.



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21 ICONS pays homage to the men and women whose courage, passion, dedication and vision has not only helped to shape South Africa, but whose influence has had a global impact.

In addition to the short films, where each subject speaks frankly about their accomplishments, the challenges they have faced and the motivations that have propelled them forward, *21 ICONS* further comprises a series of black and white portraits featuring each of these role models. These portraits will appear in the weekend paper on the same day as the short films are flighted.

Filmmaker and photographer Adrian Steirn has succeeded in capturing the essence of what makes these people great in pictures that make an evocative statement about who they are and how they have contributed to South Africa. To watch the *21 ICONS* promo video, [click here](#).

Ginwala's portrait depicts an icon who is incredibly adaptable, as she can turn her mind to almost anything to master any issue within a very short space of time including becoming the first female Speaker of the National Assembly. It also reflects her anecdote about being the travel agent that facilitated people's departure into Africa in the early 60s, comments Steirn.

The portraits will be auctioned at a charity event later in 2014. Ginwala has nominated the Oliver and Adelaide Tambo Foundation Trust as the recipient of the funds generated through the sale of her portrait.

Given her upbringing, Ginwala's entrance into politics was almost inevitable. She explains to Steirn that her political consciousness was created by her parents, who were always reminding her and her sister that they were privileged.

By the time Ginwala went to study law overseas, she was an active member of the Indian Congress, which by then had joined forces with the ANC. Her involvement with the

latter organisation increased when, after her return from her studies, she was approached by Walter Sisulu to set up an external mission, a process that gained momentum after the Sharpeville Massacre and subsequent banning of the ANC. Ginwala admits that she didn't know how to set up the mission, or even how to help the exiles gain entry into other countries – but she did have a particularly valuable resource: a passport.

With her return to South Africa came a new position within the ANC. Although she had planned to set up the organisation's research department, Nelson Mandela informed her he wanted her to be parliamentary speaker. Ginwala reveals that she had wanted to turn down her nomination for the role, but with the entire leadership backing Mandela's proposal, she felt there was no point in saying no.

Looking back, she is able to see the mark she left on her country. "I believed I strengthened and transformed the parliament, which is what we needed to do. We started that parliament with a blank sheet; there were no traditions and no precedents as far as the ANC was concerned, because there had been no democracy. If you don't have democracy, you don't have a parliament."

She believes challenges can be overcome, with good leadership and input from all members of society. "We need a South Africa in which the population as a whole – men, women, poor, rich – has a say, knowing their views and attitudes are taken into account," she states.

About 21 Icons South Africa

21 ICONS South Africa is an annual collection of photographs and short films of South Africans who have reached the pinnacle of achievement in their fields of endeavour. These men and women have been an inspiration through their extraordinary social contribution. It is not a definitive list and does not denote any ranking.

The short film-series documents the conversations between Steirn as the photographer and filmmaker and the icons. Each short film provides insight into both the subject and photographer's creative approach to the portrait.

The original photographs, signed by the icon, will be sold at a future charity auction and the proceeds donated to his or her chosen charity.

Season two of *21 ICONS* South Africa is sponsored by Mercedes-Benz South Africa, Momentum

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Asset Management, Nikon, Deloitte and the Department of Arts and Culture. It debuted on Sunday, 3 August. Continuing for another 20 weeks, one of the 21 short films will be screened every Sunday on SABC3 at 20:27.

On each of these Sundays, a poster of the icon’s portrait, taken by Adrian Steirn and his creative team, will be published in the *City Press* to form a memorable collection that everyone can own.

Media partners include SABC3, *City Press* (Media 24), Provantage and Mxit.

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