

Esther Sbongile Sangweni (née Cele).
Inanda Seminary student, 1965-1969; teacher, 1974-1979.
Interviewed in Durban, 12 March 2009.

So to start, I've just been asking people when and where they were born—background on your family, those sorts of things.

Well, I was born in 1951, in Port Shepstone, and I grew up at a mission station, at a place called Fairview Mission, which is about 15 kilometers from Port Shepstone. It is a mission of the Free Methodist Church, which is also an American Church, so it was closely related to what was then known as the American Board. I grew up in a family of eight, six girls and two boys. Our parents were teachers. My grandmother on my mother's side was also a teacher. My grandfather on my father's side was a minister of religion, and my grandfather on my mother's side was a teacher as well and later became a lawyer's assistant. So we grew up in a family where learning and education were highly valued, and of course being in South Africa we knew from very early in our lives that to become anything we had to be educated, and of course since my parents were teachers we had that as part of our culture as we grew up. And of course with the advent of Bantu Education in the early 1950s, they decided to take us to Inanda Seminary, at least the six girls.

All six girls went to Inanda Seminary?

Yeah, except for two—no, although they did come later, but initially they went to other schools. But four of us went to Inanda Seminary and did all our high school education there, and then the two went to other schools and came later, for the matric year or the last one came for the secretarial course. Now they, that is my parents, had gone to school at Adams mission, which is also a UCCSA or American Board school, so they knew the values of the American Board schools, and that is why they wanted us to go there.

You started at Inanda in 1965?

1965, yes. I completed in 1969, the Centenary Year.

If you remember, what were your first impressions of the school? The people there? The campus?

Well, it was exciting, of course, since my older sisters had already been there. I had looked forward to going to Inanda because they had all sorts of things to tell us, the younger sisters, about it. So when it was your turn to go of course you were very excited about it. Of course when we got there we found that things were not as rosy as they said they were. First of all there was a lot of ill-treatment by other girls if you were knew, what was it called?

Hazing? Initiation?

Yeah, it was initiation. So it was important that you had someone to protect you, and fortunately I had my older sister—you know her, Mrs. [June-Rose] Mazibuko [who had matriculated in 1967], so there was that experience. But of course she couldn't protect you all the way through—you had your own group, your own dormitory, so she wasn't always there. But fortunately it didn't last long—maybe first month, or two months. But after that you settled down, and you became a member [laughs]. The other thing was—oh!—we starved.

You starved?

Yeah, we didn't eat very much and the food wasn't so good either. The food was terrible, in fact.

Actually, yeah, on Friday night, Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge was talking about how she lost a lot of

Esther Sbongile (Cele) Sangweni
Inanda Seminary Student, 1965-1969; Teacher, 1974-1979

weight when she first went to Inanda. She came home, and everyone was very worried about her.
Yeah, it was terrible—oof. You would starve. And we were not even allowed to pick the fruit—there was guava, mango, and we weren't allowed to pick the fruit. So those first few months, they weren't very nice.

So what was the diet? What did you eat there?

It was terrible. We had yellow mealie-meal porridge in the morning. And water. Hot water. To which we added brown sugar. And then we had the same thing in the evening.

Oh, shame. That's a lot of porridge.

Yeah, and for lunch we had beans, I remember, a lot of beans, beans and samp. And then we had meat once a week. So it was really bad. And most of us didn't eat the porridge. We ended up just drinking the water and a slice of bread, it was this thick, a very thick slice of bread, but with nothing to spread on it. We didn't get coffee, or tea, or chocolate, hot chocolate, or anything. It was just hot water with some sugar.

Did it seem that the school was short on money?

Well, we never knew why they were starving us like that, but I suppose that was the reason. Oh, it was terrible. Most of us lost a lot of weight. But of course, as you got used to the place, you learned to like it. And of course our parents, because they knew we weren't getting much food, would give us a lot of foodstuffs, tinned foods, biscuits, from home. And so Sundays after church would be the time when you would open your own thing and sit under the trees. Now, in my case, there were three of us, three sisters, at the same time.

What were your sisters' names?

There was Elizabeth, the eldest one—her name appears on the board in the dining hall, the Red Letter Bible, she was a Red Letter Bible recipient in 1960—what? I cannot remember. Then June is the second one, I am the third, and then my younger sister Sylvia as well, and then later on Margaret and Yvonne, but those are the two that I said came just to finish off. When I was there my oldest sister had left, so it was June-Rose, myself, and Sylvia. So on Sundays we would sit under the trees and eat our own stuff. It was nice, you got used to it, and of course the most important part of it was the friendships that you established at that time, and those friendships have lasted through life. We are still very, very closely connected with the people who were at the school with us, but at the same time, whenever you meet an Inanda girl—no matter when that girl was at Inanda—there's always that constant connection. Like for instance, Bongsi Dhlomo was there in the early fifties, and Flo was also there in the fifties, but when we met for the first time it was like we had known them forever, and I don't know what it is about the school that causes that, because once you say you are a member, you are sisters for life... Anyway, the quality of the teaching was good.

Yeah, I was going to ask you about the teaching there. Do you remember Mrs. Yengwa?

Yeah, she was there, she was the head teacher.

In 1966.

Yeah, she was there. She was very strict. She didn't teach me, but I remember her as a very strict person who wouldn't stand any nonsense. So, yeah... in Edwards Hall, the big hall on the ground floor used to be divided into four classrooms... and the entrance used to be MaYengwa's office. So our classroom was there, opposite her office. We would make a lot of

Esther Sbongile Sangweni (née Cele).
Inanda Seminary student, 1965-1969; teacher, 1974-1979.
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noise in the classroom, and she would come over...

What other teachers do you remember?

Of course there was Miss Scott, who also was the principal, Miss Gcana who taught Afrikaans, Miss Ndebele who taught Zulu, Mrs. Msombi who did housecraft, Miss McKay who did science, and there was one we called Doli, that was in my first year. Of course later on—and oh yeah, there was Miss Ngobose, who is now Mrs. Mqwebu—she was the best teacher. She taught English. Anyone who was at Inanda at that time was taught English by Mrs. Mqwebu. And then later on there was Mrs. Jones, who taught the matrices English, Mrs... There were some very good African teachers who had come from Fort Hare, who taught English... There is one, I can't remember her name then, but now she is Mrs. Zondi—not the one you know. And of course later there was Miss Cornell and Miss Johnson.

Miss Cornell I'm going to interview.

Oh, she was my favorite... Send her my regards. She will remember me, I know... You know later on, that was much later on, when we were in Form 3, 4, 5, we had that group of very young South African teachers who were very good, and she was one of them—there was her, Miss Johnson, Miss Johannsen, Mr. Aldis, and they were all young graduates, some from UCT and some from the University of Natal. And of course there was Miss Gunn, a favorite of a lot of us—she was a missionary. Later, of course, there was Miss Robinson, who was a missionary; Miss King, who was an old lady we used to make fun of—there were quite a number of missionaries, it was about half missionaries and half South Africans. It was always mixed, there was always a mixture of Western—I don't know, they were called European—and so the school itself had that vibe, which South Africa is trying to establish now—we have always had it at Inanda. And sometimes I have felt that the school was good in that it showed us that this was possible. It was a kind of an island, though. And when you got out of the school, you realized that the life you had lived at Inanda wasn't real. Many of us were traumatized when we got out, because life wasn't as it was at Inanda. You realized that there was apartheid out there; it was alive and well—and you know, when you are young and you come out of such a protected environment, it's a big shock to come out into the world and you realize that people don't like you, simply because you are you, and for no other reason—they don't want you here, they don't want you to express yourself. Whereas at Inanda, we were encouraged to express ourselves, we were encouraged to be independent. Now the South Africa of the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, did not want that. You couldn't express yourself at all. And we found it very frustrating, especially when we got to university.

I want to get back to that in a moment. But were there any sort of political discussions that were happening in school?

[Answers quickly] Of course. All the time. All the time. And Mr. Zondi, and Miss Cornell, and Johnson—you know, that group of teachers was always very strong on that. We had in fact what was called the Thursday Morning News every Thursday morning; instead of the usual sermon we would have sort of a news broadcast. Mr. Zondi was the biology teacher, he was also the librarian, so he always encouraged us to be aware, to read the newspapers; the newspapers were always full; we had political discussions; we had debates; we had all kinds of things. And then on Thursdays, one of the students would take turns to read the news, to collect the news for the week and to present it to the whole school, on Thursday morning.

Esther Sbongile (Cele) Sangweni
Inanda Seminary Student, 1965-1969; Teacher, 1974-1979

And I think that is where a lot of us got interested in politics. Baleka [Mbetse] for instance was a class ahead of me. She was a very, very vocal sort of debater. And Mr. Zondi was very influential in that regard—in making us conscious of what was happening outside of Inanda. I think he was always aware that Inanda was overprotective of us, and he always tried to get us out, to make us see what was going on. I remember, for instance, when I was in my final year, and he took us on a field trip to Umlazi. Some of us had never been to a township. Some of us had never seen how people suffer in those places. And he took us to what is called the Place of Safety. It is an orphanage in the township. And you know, for the first time we realized some people, some children, live very miserable lives. So I have always been very grateful to Mr. Zondi for that, for exposing us. Because, as I said earlier, when you are as protected as we were, it is a shock when you get out. And sometimes—I remember, when I first got to university, I was very angry, for a long time.

You went to University of Zululand.

Yeah, well—because I couldn't go anywhere else.

That was 1970.

Mmm. Mmm. I was very angry with the Seminary, in that they didn't expose us—I mean, we lived in a dreamworld, sort of. It was good, that we, we—I know it was good that they protected us—but at the same time, that had its disadvantages. Like we didn't know anything about boys, for instance. [Laughs] We didn't know anything about boys! We didn't know anything about the fact that we were second-class citizens! [Laughs] Yeah, but it was good, on the whole. It was good. Because they taught us very valuable skills. They taught us that we—they taught us to be confident in who we are, and to be proud of who we are. They taught us to be independent, to be able to think independently—although, for some time, *we couldn't use that*. Especially at university. At university, no one wanted to know what your opinion was, about anything. So we just sat there and took whatever the lecturers gave us. But of course those lessons had already been learned, so that when we came out of university, we could be ourselves again. So we had that advantage over the other students, in that they had been groomed from small to be subservient, not to express themselves, whereas we knew how to express ourselves, even though for four years we were not allowed to.

Yeah, I interviewed Cecilia Khuzwayo a couple of months ago, and she said that she felt the curriculum at Inanda as well was more difficult than that at University of Zululand. She felt that she was sort of over-prepared for university.

Yeah. We were, we were. We were always miles ahead of everybody else. Even though, at that time, at Inanda, we didn't realize that what they were teaching us was something that other students were not taught. It's only when we got to university, and we realized, hey, we already know this! So university was just a breeze for most of us. It was—there was nothing new, really. It was just new courses. But the ability to think, the ability to argue, to express ourselves, we already had that, and we had no difficulty doing it.

So you were at university 1970-1973, is that right? And then you came back to Inanda to teach in 1974?

Yeah, because at the end of my matric year, I got the Lavinia Scott scholarship from Inanda, and the condition was that I was to come back and teach, for two or four years, I can't remember. But I had to come back and teach at Inanda. So I came back, and I taught for six years.

Esther Sbongile Sangweni (née Cele).
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So that was from 1974 to 1979.

You've done your research. Yes, so I taught up to 1979, and then after that time I went to the University of Zululand.

You studied English as an undergraduate at Zululand?

Mmm-hmm, I studied English, History, and Education.

And you taught English and History at Inanda?

Mmm-hmm.

Did you find that the school had changed much in the time you had been away at university?

Yeah, it had changed—it had changed in that the missionaries were gone. Miss Scott wasn't the principal anymore; her last year had been my last year, in 1969. Mr. Aylard had come, and he had made a lot of changes—physical changes to the school. When we were at Inanda, there was no hot water for students. So there was hot water, the ablution blocks at Phelps Hall were built during Mr. Aylard's tenure, so that had changed, Phelps Hall had changed slightly... What else was there? The missionaries were gone. There was the first black person as the head of the school. But of course being a student and being a teacher are two different things, and you are looking at the school from two different angles, so I don't know if I would have had the same observation of the school if I was a student there... But I remember there were two of us who came out to teach at Inanda at the same time; we were together as students and then came out to teach at Inanda. Khosi Mpanza—she was the librarian, and I was a teacher. And of course we were very rebellious. I remember very well. Like I said, for some time one was angry with the school—because I felt, they should have taught us these things, they should have taught us about boys—you know? Because when you are at a university, and there are all these men [laughs] and you don't know how to deal with them, and they never even told us about them! So I remember I had a class, which was religious education. And I would teach my students a lot of life skills, which I felt the school should have taught me as well. I don't know whether it was a good thing, but I think it was a good thing. I taught at least the senior classes, which was Form Four and Five, Grade 11 and 12, I taught them a lot of life skills, which I felt was necessary, especially for girls at that age.

What sort of life skills?

Like boys, about boys, you know? Because I found that the greatest frustration for me when I got to university was how to deal with the boys. Because we knew nothing about them—at least some of us. The boys would pressurize you to do things that you don't really want to do, you knew? So I felt at that time that the girls needed to know that; they needed to know that they shouldn't be forced by someone else to do things they don't want to know. They should know about life, about sex, those things. And whatever they decide to do they must decide because they want to do those things, not because someone else is pressurizing them to do it, whether it be boys or their peers. Because I remember for instance when I got to university there was this pressure, not necessarily from boys, but from other girls as well, that *you had to have a boyfriend*, you had to have a boyfriend, otherwise you were going to be used by everyone, you know? So you had to have somebody to protect you, you know? And I felt that students needed to know that before they go, so that they make the right decisions. So those are the sorts of things I would teach them. And of course, because it was a Scripture

Esther Sbongile (Cele) Sangweni
Inanda Seminary Student, 1965-1969; Teacher, 1974-1979

class, of course, I worked that into the Scripture class as well.

And you did drama and debate as well?

Yeah. Ooh, I enjoyed that. I always enjoyed my classes at Inanda; I enjoyed working with the girls, yeah. I produced quite a number of plays in the time I was there, drama, debates, yeah, in the afternoons. And of course the girls in those days were very committed and very respectful. If you asked them to do something, they would do it. And yeah, it was great. I really enjoyed my time at Inanda. And you find yourself still longing for that kind of life, you know. Because the school, even today I think, the atmosphere, it is very special. And you miss that, because you don't find that anywhere else. And I think it's the way people treat one another; it's the way you are made to feel as a human being. You are made to feel you are worthy, you are important, you know, and you treat other people in the same way.

Are there any students that you especially remember, from when you taught there?

Oh, quite a lot of them. Oh, oh, there is Linda, Linda Mtshali, she is Dr. Mtshali, she was one of my students. There was Thandeka Mgoduso, Nomvula Mgoduso, they were all there on Saturday. Nonkululeko Nyembezi, Ndo Nyembezi, Sibongile Nyembezi, Thandi, her sister, all those, there were so many of them. And a lot of them went on to become doctors—Nohle Tshiki, Felicity Mpofu who is a specialist dermatologist now, a lot of them, yeah. Almost everyone has become very successful in their own right. And of course we all continued that tradition of Inanda, that freedom—encouraging students to be who they are, to be proud of who they are, and to be firm and confident, and most important, to give back to the community. Because we were always made to realize that what we were getting was very special, and we had the obligation to give back to the community. So community involvement was very important to us. So even though we were a private school, we were never made to feel that we were an elitist school, you know, because we all came from ordinary backgrounds. Some of us came from townships, some of us came from mission stations—a lot of us came from mission stations. So we already had those values from home, but I remember Miss Wood, for instance, and Mrs. Nduna, and Mrs. Cele, they would encourage us to be involved in the community. Now, in those days, Inanda wasn't as built up as it is. It was a country school.

It was still quite rural.

It was open. Very rural. And we would take walks on Sundays, we would go out into the village to teach Sunday school, you know, we would be involved, we would go out to Dr. Gumede's—Mumsie Gumede, you know, her father was a local doctor, yeah, so we would go there and teach Sunday school, we would go to Umzinyathi and teach Sunday school there, so the community involvement was also drilled into us. Now, when we were there, there wasn't any plowing or planting any more. But we understand that those who came before us used to go into the fields.

Yes, the school used to grow all of its own food.

But by the time we got there, we didn't. Maybe that's why we starved [laughs].

Perhaps [laughs].

Yeah. So that was Inanda, it was great, it really was [laughs].

6

Did you have a student named Sikose Mji? She wrote a really great poem in 1976 in the school

Esther Sbongile Sangweni (née Cele).
Inanda Seminary student, 1965-1969; teacher, 1974-1979.
Interviewed in Durban, 12 March 2009.

newspaper. She was in the secretarial school.

No, I didn't teach in the secretarial school.

She wrote this really great poem called "The World of Inanda Seminary," which talked about what you described—how you're in this sort of island, and then you go out into the real world, and you have all these strengths that you've developed at Inanda, but you're kind of overwhelmed at how different things are outside.

Outside of the school, yeah. And it was really a big shock. Because even though we knew, we knew, intellectually we knew there was apartheid out there, we weren't really prepared for it—I mean the impact of it, that was what was so painful. When you realize that all these things that Inanda has taught me I am capable of, you couldn't practice—you had to sort of shrink into your shell and not be yourself. And it took a long, long time—because even though, after university, you became sort of free, you were not really free—not until 1994, anyway. Because I remember even when I was teaching at the University of Zululand, you were always conscious of what you said in class, always afraid, because you didn't know who was there, because there were spies all over, and you couldn't just say anything, you know, you had to be guarded all the time, all the time. So we couldn't really be ourselves until well into our adult lives, when some of us have grown old, and retired... And of course we always think, I always think, if only these opportunities had come when we were younger, how far we would be, you know? And they are only coming now, and so much has been lost. And we don't have the energy anymore. And we've lost so many opportunities. But at least we were luckier than most, in being Inanda students. And I am always grateful to my parents for having taken us there, because it wasn't easy for them either. They had to make a lot of sacrifices to get us into Inanda, and of course to have so many of us there.

Did you get scholarships or anything to go to Inanda?

No, no, no. They paid for it. They paid for everything.

And where did your brothers go to school?

They went to Amanzimtoti, which was Adams, although it had changed [by the time they attended], it was no longer a mission school, it was a government school. But my older brother—not older than me, but the older of the two brothers—first went to Polela, which was another mission school. I'm not sure which church it was, maybe the Wesleyan mission—he went to Polela for his junior high school and then he went to Amanzimtoti. The younger brother was there all of his high school life. I suppose my parents wanted them to go back to their alma mater, but it had changed; it wasn't the same anymore.

Then after you taught at Inanda you taught at University of Zululand, for how long?

Oh, I became the gogo of the place! [Laughs]

Is it.

I taught for twenty-five years, until 2005, and of course with the mergers, university mergers, the branch of the University of Zululand where I was had to close, and we had to go to Empangeni, the main campus. But I decided not to, because my children, at least the younger children, were at university at that time, and I couldn't just leave them. And my husband works all over the province. And it would have been expensive, because I would have had to

Esther Sbongile (Cele) Sangweni
Inanda Seminary Student, 1965-1969; Teacher, 1974-1979

have two homes. So I decided to go to Mangosuthu University of Technology instead... Yeah, Inanda was great. The values that were taught there have made our lives really different from the rest.

And you have this company too.

It is Umvutho Oil and Energy, we are a group of eight—how many of those are Inanda girls?—three of us are Inanda girls. We do investments, and export and import, although that is hard. It is very difficult, you know. Especially dealing with the big companies in South Africa; they don't give us any chance to succeed... We always think it is because we are women and we are black, and they are very reluctant to work with small companies.

One more thing—you were involved with the efforts to resuscitate the school in the late 1990s. Can you tell me about that? I heard a bit from Mrs. Dhlomo yesterday.

Yeah, in 1997 the church decided to abandon the school. I heard on Saturday, the story has changed—I don't know who has changed the story. [Laughs] The school was, in fact, closed. They closed the school in 1997, the church. Now, with the departure of the missionaries in the early 1970s, the funding from the church in America dwindled, and as a result of that the school—the buildings, and everything else—deteriorated, to the extent that the school couldn't be sustained any more. The church in South Africa didn't pay any money to the school. I mean, over 100 years, the school had been sustained by the mission church in America. And I don't think the church in South Africa had really committed itself to supporting our school. I think that's a fact. So when the missionaries left, the school was left on its own, and the church—I suppose because it wasn't in the habit of supporting it—didn't do it, and so the school had to find its own resources, and as time went on—oh yeah, the other thing was, because half the staff was missionary, they were paid by America, so when the missionaries left, the school had to pay all the teachers. I think that was one of the reasons the finances dwindled. And of course, with the departure of the missionaries, all sorts of people came to the school as well—people who didn't really care for Inanda Seminary as a mission school, people with different values, different agendas. And so it deteriorated to the extent that the buildings were completely dilapidated. Although the academic side has deteriorated, it was still better than most African schools. It wasn't as good as it was when I was teaching there, for instance. But it still was better than most schools, because even in our first year, in 1998, we managed to get 100% passes, in spite of the conditions. So, in 1997, the church decided to close the school, and when we heard that the school was closed, we decided to approach the church and ask that they give the school to us. Now, we as the alumnae, as a formal group of alumnae, had been established about ten years before, in 1988, because even as early as 1988, we could see that the school was going down, and we had a lot of concerns about some of the things that were happening at the school which went against the values that the school stood for, and we were very concerned that the school was adopting certain values—I'm not going to mention them, the things that were happening—and we felt that we needed to be an eye, sort of, on the school. And that's how this present alumnae was formed. Baba was the main chairperson, you remember, Cecilia—and she served for some years, and then I became the chairman. So that when this crisis came up, I was the chairman for the alumnae. And of course ten of us then decided—because I approached a lot—now when you say alumnae, all the time it has been just a few who are active, the rest are just alumnae because they went to Inanda. But once you say hey, let's get to work, you know, a lot of people don't commit. So it has always been a very small group that is active. So ten of us, including June-Rose Mazibuko, Flo Madlala, Bongsi Dhlomo, Khosi Mpanza, Thelma Ngidi,

Esther Sbongile Sangweni (née Cele).
Inanda Seminary student, 1965-1969; teacher, 1974-1979.
Interviewed in Durban, 12 March 2009.

Nora Moerane, Gloria Sosibo, who else—how many have you got there? Eh, let me see, oh, Glen-Rose Khuzwayo—oh, Nzimande, she’s Mrs. Nzimande—myself, who else... oh, and Doris Gogela.

And your group is called what?

It’s called ISOKA—which stands for Inanda Seminary Old Girls Association. And so we approached the church, the ten of us, and we said, “They cannot close the school.” Of course, it was already closed. But we said, “They should give it to us. If they don’t have the commitment, or the time, to run the school, they should give it to us, and we should do it.” Now what got into us, I don’t know [laughs].

That’s a big undertaking.

Because we had nothing! Absolutely nothing, but passion for the school, and we felt that what the school had given us a lot—we had gained and learned a lot at the school—and we felt that what we had learned at Inanda had given us an advantage in life, and we felt that that advantage had to be given to the rest of African girls. We felt that it was not something we could simply abandon. It is our heritage; it has been a beacon of light in our community for over 130 years, and we felt very strongly that what the school stands for cannot be allowed to die. And we felt that the school needed to continue to give young African women what we gained from it, because we feel that is what has made our lives different, that is what has made our lives worthwhile. So that was the reason. And there was nothing else. We didn’t have money, we didn’t have anything. And of course the church just thought we were mad [laughs]. They just thought we were mad. But we just said, ‘Give it to us. And we will resuscitate it.’ And we did! The first thing we did was get rid of those teachers. Because as I said, all kinds of people had come into the school—people who didn’t care about the values of the schools, who didn’t care about the school as the heritage of the African people, who didn’t care about the contribution of the school to South Africa and to African society. A lot of them were male, and were having affairs with the students, you know—all kinds of corruption were going on, money was being squandered, you know, all kinds of things were happening. So the first thing we did was to get rid of those teachers. Now, those teachers had come in because, since the school was short of funds, one of the principals at that time had approached the Department of Education in KwaZulu-Natal to fund the teachers’ salaries. So it became sort of semi-government. They believed that because they were paying the teachers, it was their school. So of course they didn’t screen who came to teach there; they introduced their own policies—for instance, they introduced day scholars. Now, all that opened the school up to a lot of corruption, a lot of criminal activities, because there were day scholars who came in and out, and with the day scholars came all kinds of influences and people. And so we went to the Department of Education in Ulundi, we drove there, and we said, ‘Take your teachers back,’ and they said, ‘Where are you going to get the money to pay your teachers,’ and we said, ‘We don’t know, but just take them!’ Now, there was a lot of argument before we went to Ulundi, a lot of argument with the local education management; they believed that they were the owners of the school, that it was a government school. And we said, ‘No, Inanda is a private school, it’s just that the government pays the teachers. That doesn’t mean it’s a government school.’ It got so bad that we even got lawyers to resolve that question, the status of the school. And in the end, of course, it was proved that the school is a private school, the only thing is that the government pays the teachers. And once when we got that, we said,

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‘Okay, if the only thing that links us to the government is the teachers, then the teachers must go. In any case, they are corrupting the school.’ So we got rid of them and hired our own teachers. And that was when everything started improving, because we made sure that the kinds of teachers we employed were those who would be willing to uphold the values of the school. And so it improved. 1998 was really bad because we were fighting all those wars with the government, with the Education Department. So we really started doing what we felt we needed to do in 1999, and we approached the then-president Mandela for funding, and he approached SAPPI as you know, and then we got involved with SAPPI, and they renovated the school, and the rest was history, as you know. So it was a great achievement, and we are really thrilled that our dream has come true. I mean, we really started with nothing, and everybody mocked us. I remember Reverend Thompson, he would mock us, I’m sure he wouldn’t want us to remind him of that—

Who was that?

Reverend Thompson was the financial—I don’t know if he still is—Reverend Thompson was the treasurer of the UCCSA in KZN. He would laugh at us, because we didn’t have anything, we didn’t have any money, and he would say, ‘Oh, where are you going to get the money? Are you going to go to Umzunjane and ask for cows?’ I’m sure he wouldn’t want us to remind him, but we never forgot it. And this is why I am saying, on Saturday I heard something else, and I just wondered where that history had come from, because those of us who were there know what happened. So—and of course, we would beg the church for some donations, and they would give us a loan—I remember at one stage they gave us a 200,000 Rand loan, and we would have to go to Standard Bank and beg the manager for money to pay the teachers. You know, on payday we wouldn’t have money to pay the teachers, and we would beg and pray. You know I would always say if there is anything I gained at that time from my involvement with Inanda, it was my faith in God, because, like I say, month after month, there wouldn’t be any money to pay the teachers, and we would beg, but no one would give us the money. And we would pray, and pray, and pray! And on the day the teachers needed to be paid, the money would be there. And there wasn’t a single month when the teachers were not paid. So my faith, you know, was revived. Miracles do happen, it’s true. They did happen at Inanda, they did happen, month after month, month after month. And at that time, you know, we couldn’t even raise the fees, because the school was in a very bad condition. And so we had to keep the fees very low. Now, I said when the Department of Education first came in, they allowed day scholars, and the day scholars were paying only 25 Rand. How could you run a boarding school on that?... And that’s another reason we decided to get rid of the day scholars... So, that’s how it was. It was very difficult, very, very, very difficult. And we spent I don’t know how many nights sitting and planning and implementing, yeah, for almost ten years. But it was worthwhile.

That’s very impressive.

Yeah, and the opening of Edwards Hall was the culmination... otherwise, everything else that we set out to achieve, we did, and so the reopening of Edwards Hall was a great highlight, it was like the work is complete, and it is up to the school now to fly. I think it will. But of course there is the need for continuity, and there is always the concern, after Mrs. Tate, who is going to take over? And that is what we need to start working towards, because Mrs. Tate is not going to be there forever. So that’s Inanda.