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Golden bulb covered with a dark cloth: memories of undocumented athletes in South Africa

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Abstract

Sports in South Africa have evolved into an arena for self-discovery, a place of self-revelation. Through sports, particularly athletics, heroes emerged who not only achieved for themselves and their communities, but also served as golden bulbs, flickering lights of hope, inspiration, and motivation to the community. Despite the heroic roles played by athletes, sporting memories of unique and gallant characters remain self-stored, exposed to all natural disasters such as loss, rapid deterioration, inaccessibility, thus turning into golden bulbs covered in a black cloth. This qualitative study adopted oral testimony triangulated with content analysis to explore the memories of undocumented athletics heroes in South Africa. Snowball sampling was adopted to help locate historically excluded athletics heroes and sheroes. The study revealed that athletes' houses have been transformed into museums encompassing all of their running memories, displayed all over their living rooms, with only a few athletes overseeing forgotten historical memories of most legendary runners and, in some cases, without specialised handling, compounded by the fact that these archival memories are only accessible to those fortunate enough to be close to these legendary runners. The study recommends that these memories be included in the national archival system so that they can be accessed by the public, as a large portion of athletes' historical memories are unaccounted for and thus inaccessible.

Keywords: Endangered archives, sports memories, athletics, self-memory storage, access

Introduction and background to the study

When memory collections are well preserved, they play a pivotal role in the building of national identity, as well as in providing valuable sources of information on a variety of issues. South African archives, however, have "focused their collecting efforts on documenting the perspectives of the more prominent individuals and dominant communities of society, or of those that were and are represented in the positions of power or government, often overlooking the history of others" (Rodrigues, Van der Walt & Ngulube 2014:98). Bale (1998) asserts that most marginalised communities such as sports communities, have resorted

to storing their sports memories in their homes where they will be safe and accessible whenever needed, but only to them. To put it differently, this is a golden bulb wrapped in a dark cloth. In this context, sports memories should be placed in archival configurations where they will be accessible to all people and inform them of all the victories that have occurred in the past. This will be in line with the analogy by Jesus Christ in the gospel, according to Matthew 5:14-16 that "...a town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, it should be placed on its stand so that it gives light to everyone in the house." In the context of the study, as in the scripture where the importance of allowing the gospel light to shine into people's lives is emphasised, sports memories should be placed in archival configurations where they will be accessible to all people and inform them of all the victories that have occurred in the past.

Jimerson (2007) has observed that those in possession of their memories typically take measures to preserve their unique heritage through the creation of their repositories. Labuschagne (2016) laments the fact that sport in South Africa resulted in the history and achievements of black athletes remaining largely obscured and unreported. According to Fagan (1992), one issue with collecting personal papers, particularly in sports, is that it is often only the papers of the famous or successful that are collected. Cacceta (2015) concurs that there is a significant gap in the information available about ordinary road-running champions. Indeed, most memories of ordinary road-runner champions are nowhere to be found in mainstream archives. Aside from that, "effort has been made in the collection and preservation of government records, the same cannot be said of private collections held by families and private organisations such as religious organizations, societies" (Mnjama, 2017, 4). Hence, this study explored the memories of undocumented athletes in South Africa with the intent of enhancing access to the identified endangered sports athlete's memories.

Contextualisation

This section discusses how athletics, particularly road running, came to be in South Africa, as well as some of the country's most famous races and some of the country's forgotten road running heroes. Since the dark days of apartheid in South Africa, mining companies in the Transvaal have been heavily promoting road running. Every year, each school would be expected to recruit pupils with potential to compete with other schools up to and including national level. Black women would also have the opportunity to compete in these inter-school competitions, despite being discouraged from participating in sports such as athletics because it was claimed to be harmful to their health (Mayer, 2009). Shortly after finishing high school (grades 8 to 12), most black men would travel to the Gauteng province from rural provinces such as Northern Transvaal (Limpopo), Natal (KwaZulu-Natal), Eastern Transvaal (Mpumalanga), and others in search of work in the mines, because Central Transvaal (now Gauteng) was the hub of mines during the apartheid era, and thus job opportunities were plentiful. The initial purpose of these mines was to harvest motivation, create recreational programmes for employees and serve as advertising methods by having runners compete while wearing uniforms with their companies' logos. However, as the system evolved in the early 1960s, mines began to actively recruit top black runners who could spend more time training while being given the easiest jobs (Lane 1999). Mining companies sponsored road running and other sports such as soccer and boxing for entertainment programmes to keep workers from migrating to big cities. By the mid-1960s, every major gold mine provided tracks and coaching, and every track was of international standard (Merrett 2004). Blacks dominated the competition among mining company workers. A good example is the 1962 Umtata non-white championships, in which only black athletes competed. Most of these

black athletes came from gold mines and competed in sprints, hurdles, and middle and long distances, including the marathon. Benoni Malaka won the 880 yards, with Humphrey Kgosi coming in second place, but Humphrey Khosi had already won the 440 yards.

During the apartheid era, mixing competition and training was almost unheard of. Because each grouping hosted separate national championships, black athletes were commonly excluded from international teams. Around 1963, "a black team toured overseas consisting of ten athletes, including Humphrey Khosi, Benoni Malaka and Timothy Koloti" (Steyn 2015:238). In contrast to track and field, other runners focused on ultra-marathons such as the Comrades Marathon, South Africa's largest road race, often referred to as the "ultimate human race" (Cameron-Dow 2011) which is held in May or June, from Pietermaritzburg to Durban or vice versa. It is said to be the world's oldest and longest ultramarathon (Merrett 1995). The Two Oceans Marathon is ranked second only to the Comrades Marathon in terms of popularity. The Two Oceans Marathon consists of a 56-kilometre ultramarathon and a 21-kilometre half-marathon. The name Two Oceans Marathon was derived from the race route, which passes along both the Indian and Atlantic Oceans shorelines. This marathon is usually held on the Saturdays of the Easter weekend in the South African city of Cape Town, and it has given rise to legends such as Miltas Tshabalala, who won the Two Oceans Marathon in 1991; Hoseah Tjale in 1980 with a time of (3:14:30); the late Vincent Rakabaele, who won twice in 1976 and 1979; Johannes Kekana and many others. Other marathons include the 56-kilometre Korkie (defunct) event from Pretoria to Germiston, the 50-kilometre City2City Marathon (defunct) from Johannesburg to Pretoria and the Om Die Dam (Around the Dam) Marathon, which is also one of South Africa's most popular road races. It is a 50-kilometre run that takes place every March around Hartbeespoort Dam, which is located 40 minutes away from Pretoria. Furthermore, there are local marathons, such as the Soweto Marathon, that most runners use as part of their training to qualify for ultra-marathons. The Soweto Marathon was founded in 1991 and is now known as the Old Mutual Soweto Marathon because it is sponsored by Old Mutual. This marathon is one of the most popular, most well-known, and best-attended marathons in South Africa, taking place annually in the Soweto Township and consisting of 10 km, 21 km, and 42 km distances. This marathon gained international attention during South Africa's apartheid era as the site of the liberation struggle, but it is now a vibrant centre of life in the greater Johannesburg metropolis. The Soweto Marathon became known as the "people's race" because it was organised jointly by all of Soweto's running clubs.

Problem statement

Regardless of the mandate to transform South African archives, evidence suggests that colonialism and apartheid shaped and continue to shape the country's archival collections. Even after the tangled pursuit of decolonising archive collections, which began in 1996 through the enactment of the new Constitution, archives and the archival profession remain as they were, animated by western canons in all aspects of life (Ghaddar & Caswel 2019). Sports archives are one example of an area that could be used to contribute to the transformation of archival holdings. Sport has always received considerable attention on social media and the public, in general, uniting people and being the prestige of the nation (Venter 2016; Grundlingh 2013). While the sporting memories of unique and gallant characters remain self-stored, they have been exposed to all natural disasters such as loss, rapid deterioration, and inaccessibility, and have turned into golden bulbs covered in black cloth. Archival memories should be a "beacon of light, a place... of and for sight," a place where the initiated can exclaim, "...once I was blind, but now I see" (Harris 2001). In

contrast, Jones (2015) observes a neglect of sports memories because individuals responsible for the management of sports archives do not consider depositing their archival memories in archives, are ignorant or are very secretive. Furthermore, according to Grundlingh (2015), the history, legacy and memorabilia displayed in road-runner museums are built around the achievements of individual athletes, whereas archives link the race's history where key 'heroes' over the decades are selective or non-existent. Aside from that, road running memories are overshadowed when compared to soccer, rugby, tennis and cricket (Van der Merwe 2010). Indeed, Ngoepe (2020) argues that road running is one of the most neglected sports.

Purpose and objectives

The study explored the memories of South African athletes to improve access to the endangered memories of the identified athletes. The objectives of this study were to:

- Identify measures taken to preserve athletics memory in South Africa
- Determine strategies used by athletes to store their athletic memories
- Determine athletes' memory donation concerns around the danger posed by memory self-storage
- Assess the accessibility of athletes' memories at the individual possession

Literature review

In South Africa, "sport has become a forum in which communal self-revelation occurs that substitutes religion and the popular auditorium in which there occurs the communal discovery of who we are. Sports arenas are contemporary venues in which we can observe champions as heroes and experience the sacred moments of exciting significance while leaving behind the profaneness of ordinary life" (Maguire 2009:1260). The use of the term 'sports hero' in this study is in line with Tirino and Bifulco's (2018) suggestion that a sports hero may be understood according to two distinct, yet related, categories: the prowess hero and the moral hero. "The term 'prowess hero' is used to describe a doing hero whose feats are relayed to people by whatever means of communication are used at any given point in history (Grundlingh 2015:66). "Successful athletes have become the mode through which modern-day societal values are displayed, but they have not necessarily become new 'gods' in society" (Grundlingh 2015:84). As such, the need to include these sports heroes' memories in archives cannot be underestimated given its apparent marginality, especially in a country that was fractured by segregation and white racial domination, which influenced archival holdings. Maguire (2009:1260) could not agree more, "a society needs its champions as heroes".

Measures taken to preserve athletics memory in South Africa

There is now a greater sense of the value of records and legacy in general, the growth of sports exhibitions, the rise of sports history and sports studies, the recognition of the value of knowledge transfer and the fact that memorabilia have become big business. However, the value of sports memories has not been fully appreciated (Cashman 2000). Fagan (1992) laments that one problem with the collection of personal papers, especially concerning sports, is that it is often only the papers of the famous or successful that are collected. Fagan (1992) argues that while sport may be regarded as 'recreation and leisure' by some, and not an occupation, it has nevertheless become an acceptable profession. Why, then, do archival

institutions seek to acquire the papers of literary figures, entertainers, artists, and others, but not so much of sportsmen and women? Why is it that the records of sportspeople and organisations are not held in the same high regard? In South Africa, archives have "focused their collecting efforts on documenting the perspectives of the more prominent individuals and dominant communities of society, or of those that were and are represented in the positions of power or government, often overlooking the history of others" (Rodrigues et al 2014:98). Indeed, Fagan (1992) laments that there is limited interest in sports archives and that is a result of a failure of archivists, sports administrators, and sports scholars to show an interest in developing a creative discussion about their respective interests in records. This is so even though sport is a key component of popular culture (Bolsmann & Burnett 2015).

Strategies used by athletes to self-store their athletic memories

In Lebanon, Atallah (2017) concurs that many archive holders are unaware or ignorant of the historical value of such archival materials, which are often disposed of, left in bulky documents, or simply let to fall into disrepair. This is compounded by loss, damage, and hindered access to these "private" collections. Garaba (2013) is of the view that there is a problem with sports archives in sub-Saharan Africa because there is no centralised sports archives administration where archives of major sports organisations should be housed while in the custody of the national archives. In trying to assess the current situation, it has proven quite difficult to determine which institutions, if any, hold sports material. Indeed, Fagan (1992) states that sports are the most inadequately documented part of society, with significant gaps in documentation. Ngoepe (2020) contends that records of the FIFA 2010 World Cup, the 1999 All Africa Games and the 1995 Rugby World Cup, to mention just a few major events, are fragmented and not easily accessible by the ordinary person. The same sentiment is shared by Bianchi (2008) who state that few sports organisations have established archival programmes; however, the personal records of individuals involved in sport do not appear to be of high priority among collection institutions, because records of government sports administrative bodies seem to be scarcely represented or mixed with other subjects in governmental archival repositories. Gaps and omissions in archives are a real problem for sports historians (Booth 2006).

Athletes' memory donation concerns regarding danger posed by memory self-storage

Most athletes possess archival memories that could add up to the collective memory, yet the issue of donation to the archival mainstream is hardly discussed. Archival donors play a role in the making of collective memory as the owners and keepers of documentary material (Fisher 2015). It is unfortunate, however, that individual donors will have more leverage than others depending on their status, while some institutions will be keen to acquire certain personal collections (Fisher 2015). Indeed, "archiving is not a "natural" process; it is a societal process influenced by political and economic power, by bureaucratic, legal, cultural, and technological preconditions, and by the record creator's social position, intentions, and purposes." (Valderhaug 2006:7). As a result, many archives and manuscript collections around the world are held in unsuitable conditions and are in desperate need of preservation, conservation, restoration, or migration into newer formats if they are to remain accessible to humanity at all (Mnjama, 2017). Fagan (1992) laments that one problem with the collection of personal papers, especially concerning sport, is that it is often only the papers of the famous or successful that will be collected. The latter is also compounded by the fact that memory institutions hardly have clear guidelines on how memory donors could donate their

records. A study by Krtalić, Dinneen, Liew and Goulding (2021) related to Victoria University's Hidden Heritage project on personal collection organisation observed that individuals keen to donate their archival memories hardly have clear processes or clear information on how to donate their archival materials. This is not different from archival institutions in South Africa.

Accessibility of athletes' memories at the individual possession

Access is a fundamental aspect of archives because without access, the archives will have no meaning (Mhlanga, 2014:30). Cashman (2000) raises some concerns in this regard: while people do enjoy holding the archives, they do not understand their worth and how they might be publicised. Findings on personal archival storage by Kaye, Vertesi, Avery, Dafoe, David, Onaga, Rosero and Pinch (2006), writing from Canada, indicated that participants kept their memories, but rarely went back to those files to retrieve them. Cook (2000) mentions that archives may be used to trace society's history and preserve memories. Not only do archives legitimise and memorise society's identity, but they also influence the future by shaping the past. "Historians make extensive use of archives to retrieve knowledge about the sporting past" (Booth 2006:92). Jones (2015) speculates that the neglect of sports memories might be because individuals responsible for the management of sports archives do not think of depositing their material in archives, are ignorant or are very secretive.

Research methodology

This qualitative study adopted oral testimony that was triangulated with document analysis. This was done to balance biases that could arise from using only one data collection tool. Snowball sampling was used to help locate athletes who have historically been excluded by apartheid policies (Labuschagne 2016). This study's target participants were the unsung heroes of athletics (road running), people who had first-hand information about the lives of ordinary sportspersons. This study was limited to the Gauteng province to include athletes who competed in athletics while residing in Gauteng as well as those who have since relocated to other provinces. Due to the coronavirus, most participants preferred a telephone interview, although some requested a face-to-face interview. Interviews were conducted in English, and Sepedi or IsiZulu was used when English proved to be a barrier. Participants were asked to choose the platform they felt most at ease with for the interview, as well as the dates. Because the study aimed to preserve the memories of Gauteng's unsung running heroes, there was no need to conceal the identities of the athletes, except for the other participants who provided oral traditions for athletes that the researcher was unable to track down. Some had passed away, while others could not be found. Permission to record the conversations was granted in all the interviews. The audio recordings of responses provided the participants' exact responses and opinions. Before the interview, all participants were informed of this and gave their consent. In addition, the researcher went to the Comrades Marathon house and accessed the database of the South African Media House in search of old newspaper clippings on runners in the study.

Findings and presentations of the results

Nine participants were interviewed for this study, one of whom was an assistant director at the Gauteng Provincial Archives. In addition, some of these interviewees provided information about other unsung sports heroes, such as the late Simon Peu (1973-2016) and Albert Moholwa, who was not accessible to the researchers because he had retired from

running and could not be found. However, data saturation in this kind of a study was difficult to achieve because each participant had a unique story to tell. Nonetheless, the researcher identified some corresponding threads based on participant interviews.

Participants' outline

The athlete participants are listed below, except for the Gauteng Provincial Archives Director because the focus was more on athlete participants. Document analysis and interviews with athletes were used to create the profiles. In addition, old online and print newspapers from athletes interviewed, the Comrades House Marathon and SA Media House, as well as notes from athletes about their running careers, were used to compile athletes' profiles.

(a) Rosina Sedibane, the Black Panther

During apartheid, when black women were not officially allowed to compete, a star dubbed by the media the "black panther" emerged, defying all odds, and taking the tracks by storm. Rosina Sedibane is a "shero" who rose to prominence in the 1970s, when apartheid was still prevalent, and blacks competed against whites only when invited and deemed worthy. Sedibane was born on Boxing Day in 1958 and is a former black female athlete star who holds multiple South African athletics amateur and cycling federation records. Her peers referred to her as *mosetsana* (a Sepedi term for girl). Sedibane is best known for her track records of 47 seconds in the 400 m and 11 minutes and 4.4 seconds in the 3 000 m (Masemola 2009). At the South African Amateur Athletics Federation (SAAAF) meeting, she became the first black woman to compete against whites under the South African Athletics Federation. She finished second at the SAAAF junior championships in 1975, with times of 2 minutes 20 seconds in the 800 m and 5 minutes 2.5 seconds in the 1500 m. The stout-hearted Sedibane made history once more in 1976, when she set a new record in the 800 m event at the University of Port Elizabeth, clocking 2 minutes and 9.8 seconds. The SAAAF set a new record with that performance. In 1976, this valour became the first black female athlete to obtain a gold medal over 1 500 m in the Northern Transvaal Open Championships. The Black Panther visited Namibia, and her victory would be communicated via radio to all her supporters who were denied the opportunity to see her compete due to apartheid laws (Stockenström 2019). Sedibane rose to prominence after she and Sydney Maree were invited to the United States in 1978. However, due to a knee injury, the gold medallist was forced to retire from running later in 1978. While doing her household chores, she slipped and fell. It was initially thought to be minor, but after having her leg in plaster for six weeks, doctors told her she would be unable to run again because her knee cartilage and muscle had been torn. Her knee would often swell, and while she could still jog, she could not run as fast as she used to. She then enrolled in a teaching course at a college in Limpopo.

(b) Margarete Sedibane

Margarete Chukudu Sedibane, 66, is a mother and wife from Soshanguve, which is only a few kilometres from Pretoria. This courageous athlete competed under apartheid laws alongside her sister Rosina Sedibane. Due to Rosina's track records, the sisters were later permitted to compete in multiracial races. Margarete was forced to give up running after finishing standard 8 in high school due to the norm of most black women at the time. She married and was blessed with a child. Margarete speaks fondly of running because it forces one to remain healthy. She was especially motivated to run because she had a bronchitis

ailment that used to bother her, but it went away shortly after she started running. To date, Margarete still trains every day, but now with her children.

(c) Titus Mamabolo

Titus Mamabolo was born in April 1941 in GaMolepo, just a stone's throw from the city of Polokwane in the Limpopo Province. Titus is regarded as the first black athlete to reach the pinnacle of South African athletics during apartheid, winning an epic battle against Springbok Ewald Bonzet in the 5 000 m in 1974. But for most people in Limpopo, Titus has been nothing but an icon. Children running fast would often refer to themselves as Titus Mamabolo. Titus became the first black South African champion in athletics in 1975, at the open South African Championship in Pretoria. He went on to become a record-breaking marathon athlete, breaking the South African masters' record of 2:19.40 just after he turned 50; the record still stands in the master's category today. Titus has won senior titles in South Africa, including the SA Open 5 000 m in 1974 and 1975. According to De la Motte (2014:76), Titus Mamabolo will be remembered as the first black South African to win a South African athletics title in 1976 through the South African amateur union Athletics Club. Titus was the second black South African to receive Springbok colours in 1977 for his participation in the 1973, 1974 and 1975 Springbok tours to Europe. In 1978, when given an award at the International Awards for Valour in Sports at the Victoria Athletics Club Hall in London, Mr C Lavan stated that Titus drove himself to a standard that made it difficult for athletics establishments not to recognise him. He ignored the hostile treatment that came with racial discrimination when doors were opened for him. The media dubbed him a "pathfinder" for his courage. Inspired by Titus Mamabolo, Onismas Mokgohloa noted:

Titus is an excellent international athlete par excellence. Touch him, you will be touching many countries if not continents. Talk to him, he is a piece of personified experience of rare quality and leave him, you won't forget him.

In 2009, a book was dedicated to the track and road veterans, the late Matthews Motshwareteu, Matthews Batswadi and Matthews Temane, titled *Three men named Mathews*. Attorney Richard Mayer devoted an entire chapter to Titus in recognition of the heroic role he played for the latter runners. This veteran continues to train daily while coaching children at his MEMO athletics club, which he co-founded with Jorge Mehale.

(d) Linda Hlophe

Linda Hlophe is a runner coach and 'bus driver' who developed thick skin through running. A bus driver is an experienced runner known as a pacesetter who leads a group of runners to the finish line in a specific time (sub-7:30 silver medal, sub-9:00 Bill Rowan medal, or sub-11:45 Vic Clapham medal at Comrades marathon) and they carry flags with their target time so that runners can easily spot them, join the bus of their choice and rely on the pacesetter to guide them to the finish line (Falconer 2018). Linda is a 57-year-old legend from Mamelodi, just outside Pretoria, who joined the Department of Correctional Services in 1989 and was inspired to participate in sports because of the discipline it teaches. This legend became known as the "servant of the people" because he assisted many runners in improving their times, primarily as a pacemaker. His service and servanthood, however, extended beyond that. Linda not only leads, but he is the type of a leader who motivates, teaches and inspires his followers (Falconer 2016). Linda finished his Comrades Marathon in a time of 7 hours, 15 minutes and 49 seconds in 2003, adding to his five Comrades Marathon runs, six Bill Rowans and nine bronze medals. However, this novice runner rose to prominence in the early 1990s,

contributing to the victories of elite runners such as Shadrack Hoff, Laban Nkete and others. Shadrack Hoff was also a pacemaker for the Correctional Services Athletic Club, now known as Mr Price, in the 10 km and 21 km road-running and cross-country events (Abdellah 2019). Linda also competed in several major races, including the Soweto Marathon, Sanlam Cape Town, Loskop, Om die dam, Irene, and Wally Hayward marathons, to name a few. From 2012, he dedicated himself to serving others without expecting anything in return, thanks to his love of running. He then served on the executive committee of the Zwakala Athletics Club, which provided him with a platform for his weekly training project, Zithande (an IsiZulu word for loving yourself). It was not long before he established a beginner's programme for those looking to lose weight, start running or live a healthier lifestyle. Linda was named Volunteer of the Year at the National Sports Awards in 2018. Elite runners such as Gift Kelehe and Elroy Gelant backed this up (Abdellah 2019). Coach Linda's "die-hard" attitude earned him the trust of many runners as a pacesetter in all races. Linda defied the odds in 2018 by running a sub-10:00 time (Safe Bronze medal) at the Comrades Marathon, despite commentators predicting that none of the sub-10 buses would make it to the finish line on time. Runners from all walks of life, locally and internationally, continue to follow this remarkable man because they know he will deliver them home, come rain or come shine.

(e) Enoch Skosana

Enoch Skosana is a seasoned runner who has represented his country at international level. Enoch began representing the Gauteng province at the age of 15, eventually reaching international level. In 1994, he represented the country in Germany and finished in the top 10. Every two years, this legend would travel internationally to represent the country. He competed in local marathons such as the 10 km McCarthy Toyota race, which he won in 2010 with a time of 30 m 31 sec. In 2016, Enoch worked as an assistant coach for John Hamlet, who coached Athletics South Africa's (ASA) five best cross-country ultra-marathon runners (Bungmuso Mthembu, Gift Kelehe, Ludwick Mamabolo and Rufus Photo) to compete in the International Association of University IAU 100 km Spain World Championship (Mothowagae, 2016). This 10 000 m and cross-country legend also founded the Skosana Development Club, which is sponsored by the Nedbank Running Club, among others. Enoch has also produced top athletes such as Thabang Maleka, the best junior athlete, and Samuel Segoaba, who represented the country and won the JP Morgan Chase, among others (Mamabolo 2019). Enoch also hosts the annual Nedbank Skosana Running Marathon, which is held primarily in December and includes races of 10 km, 5 km and 1.6 km for children. The marathon, which has over 1 500 participants, has been held since 2012 and is usually attended by top runners such as Shadrack Hoff and Linda Hlophe to inspire beginners and young stars.

(f) Johannes Kekana

Johannes Kekana was born and raised in Ga-Mashashane, Limpopo, just a short distance from Mokopane town and Polokwane city. Kekana's running career took off shortly after apartheid policies were abolished in 1997. This veteran is best known for his long-distance running. Kekana is one of South Africa's most experienced road runners, having won the All-Africa Games marathon title in Abuja (Nigeria) in 2003 and going on to have a stellar career. Johannes finished second in the City2City Marathon in 2008, and he repeated this performance in 2013 and 2015. Johannes took part in more than ten international races, including those in Paris, Germany, North Korea, Japan, Lebanon, and Sweden. In 2009, Johannes competed in the South African national championships in Berlin alongside Coolboy

Ngamole and Noman Glomo. Johannes completed a marathon in Mumbai, India, in 2 hours and 21 minutes. This athlete also finished second in the Sweden Marathon in 2 hours, 16 minutes, and 9 seconds, and ran the Marseille Cassis 20 km marathon in France in 62 minutes and 23 seconds. As if that was not enough, Johannes went on to win a gold medal at the 2013 Comrades, finishing fifth behind the legendary Ludwick Mamabolo (Baloyi 2017). Kekana competed in races in Lesotho, Nigeria and Swaziland, finishing in the top ten of the Soweto Marathon eight times. Although he still has a lot to give to the sport of running, this star now enjoys coaching athletes at his athletic club in Mpumalanga and enjoys the comfort of his home with his wife and three children.

(g) James Mokoka

James Durbagh Mokoka is a world-renowned athletics coach who was born on 3 August 1939, in Black Drift, near Rooiberg mines in Warmbaths. He is the third child of Mailong Theodore Mokoka and Catherine Taunyana Mokoka. Coach James Mokoka pursued private studies and earned his Diploma in Sport Management at the University of Pretoria and the former Medical University of Southern Africa (MEDUNSA), where he was trained and qualified as an international coach, technical official and athletics course facilitator. The renowned coach then gained experience as a sports organiser at the City Council of Johannesburg, where he founded the Soweto Hurtze Club. In 1973, James was employed as director of athletics at the Sports Foundation of South Africa, where he trained and produced sports administrators and municipal sports officials at tertiary institutions and teacher training colleges. In 1982, James joined the South African Coal Estate in Witbank as a welfare officer, where he founded the Bophuthatswana Amateur Athletics Club and was the founding president of Athletics North West. James was appointed to the ASA Board as a member, chairperson of the track and field commission, and the ASA selection committee chairperson. During the same year, he was appointed as MEDUNSA's head of sports and elected president of Athletics Gauteng North. In 1983, he was appointed track and field coach for the South African Amateur Athletics Union (SAAAU). Coach James Mokoka founded the following clubs between 1986 and 1996: Atteridgeville Club, also known as Dream Team, produced stars such as Rosina Sedibane and Sydney Maree as founding members; Soshanguve Athletics Club; Mabopane Athletics Club and Ga-Rankuwa Athletics Club. From 1996 to 2003, this trailblazer served as the manager and coach for international competitions as well as the Olympic Games. Makoka went on to manage the national ASA junior team at the World Junior Championships in Sydney, Australia, in 1996. He also managed the ASA team to the International Association of Athletics Federation (IAAF) Championship in Athens, Greece, in 1998, and the ASA young team to the IAAF Championship in Poland in 1999. Makoka took over as athletics manager for the Commonwealth Games in Manchester in 2011. The Department of Sports and Recreation presented James with a lifetime sports achievement trophy in recognition of his valour. Coach James Mokoka is now a retiree from the Sefako Makgatho University (former MEDUNSA) and lives quietly at home with his wife Francinah Dilsamai Mogoatlhe and their three daughters and one son.

(h) Joseph Leserwane

Joseph Masego Leserwane is a 76-year-old elite runner from Kuruman in the Northern Cape. This veteran was also known as Fagu Express (the fastest American train), the pacemaker, and the black diamond, and he competed in races ranging from 100 metres to 400 metres. In Potchefstroom, Leserwane made history by winning the South African non-white 100 m championships. Spectators were divided along racial lines, with whites in a small grandstand

near the finish line and blacks against the wire fence. Joseph was greatly disappointed in 1968 when the International Olympic Council (IOC) decided to bar South Africa from competing in the Mexico City Olympic Games due to its apartheid politics (Maule 1968). Leserwane was a fast runner who represented South Africa in international competitions during the apartheid era. He was the first South African to be awarded Springbok colours. In June 1973, the famous Malan reached the pinnacle of his career in Munich Olympic Stadium when he broke the 1000 m world record with the help of Joseph Leserwane, who paced him to 600 m to break the world record (Mayer 2009). Leserwane joined the South African Bantu Athletics Association in 1973 and finished second with a time of 10.6 seconds behind Vernon Balie of Hewat, who won the WP senior men's 100 m title. Leserwane's running group became the Olympic Games' first black medalists. After being harassed by white police officers at the Jan Smuts International Airport (now OR Tambo International Airport) following a race in which he assisted Malan to break the 1000 m world record, Leserwane stopped running. He retired to coaching, where he produced top athletes like Matthews Motshwarateu, who is also a Springbok. Leserwane is now a pensioner and enjoys his time in the comfort of his home in Kuruman.

Findings

The following data were presented according to the themes extracted from the objectives.

Measures taken to preserve athletics memory in South Africa

The first objective sought to identify measures taken in South Africa to preserve athletics memory. According to the literature, there is still a large collection of non-public records that have a significant impact on the history of this country, but these are still overlooked by the archival mainstream (Archival Platform 2015). However, in shaping public memory by filling gaps resulting from past imbalances, the National Archives and Records of South Africa (NARSSA) was established as a mitigatory strategy by acquiring non-public records and actively documenting the experiences of those who were either excluded from or marginalised in colonial and apartheid archives (Halim, 2014). The latter inclusion strategy arose as a result of South African sport's strong regulatory apartheid policies, which resulted in a situation in which the history and performances of black athletes were largely obscured and unreported (Labuschagne 2016).

According to interviews with the Assistant Director of the Gauteng Provincial Archives Repository, there is an oral history project through the Gauteng Provincial Archives and Records Services that mandates all provincial archives to collect non-public records with an enduring value of provincial significance that cannot be more appropriately preserved by another institution, with due regard for the need to document aspects of the province's experience neglected by archive repositories. The latter mandate was also supported by the inaugural Gauteng Provincial Archives Council (2015-2020), which recommended that the Gauteng Provincial Archives and Records Services conduct an oral history project to collect and document undocumented stories about sports from Gauteng communities. As a result, the Gauteng Provincial Archives of South Africa (GPAA) collaborated with the University of South Africa's Department of Information Science under the Collection Development Policy, appraisal strategies and the Oral History Programme (OHP) to fill gaps in the archive by focusing on the documentation of the black majority, which is absent from the colonial archive. The collaboration was solely to work towards the creation of an inclusive archive in the GPAA by recording Gauteng community oral history, specifically sports archives from 1960 to 2010.

Apart from that, the athlete participants were asked to refer the researcher to athletes who had disappeared from the running world without a recognition. The majority of South African athletics history in the 20th century was dominated by white men in particular (Merrett 2004). More support was provided by the media, which has always been controlled by those in power. Today, a sizable portion of the local media and archival mainstream continue to ignore historical perspectives on black athletes' accomplishments (Smith, 2002). Sadly, most of the legendary road runners mentioned were either deceased or their whereabouts were unknown. For example, one participant, (Titus Mamabolo) reckoned:

I would refer you to Mathews Batswadi or Hosea Tjale, but he left running fraternity with a sour heart. As for Matthews Motshwarateu, sadly he passed away. He was killed by thugs on his way to work in the morning, for only R30 he had. I would refer you to many just that most of them left running fraternity a long time ago.

The aforementioned Titus Mamabolo's utterances are consistent with James Mokoka's point of view, who also stated that:

Joseph Leserwane, Titus Mamabolo, Benoni Malaka are forgotten road runners. The latter three were sneaked out of the country around 1974 to go and represent the country internationally. But it is pity that some of them died poor and neglected. With Titus, there was a time when he and I as the assistant coach were in a team of only whites representing our country in Germany and runners there would refuse to compete with him because he was from an apartheid country.

Apartheid policies within the South African borders denied racially mixed sport in the 1960s, and black runners seeking international recognition were denied a passport to travel overseas. When asked about the whereabouts of black runners at international level, white athletes would respond that they were not yet up to standard (Merrett 2004). Few black athletes, however, would be sneaked out of the country to represent South Africa in the same way that Titus Mamabolo, Joseph Leserwane and Benoni Malaka were in 1974. As running legends were remembered, Joseph Leserwane reckoned that:

I recall Didibeng Mokoena, Benoni Malaka and Humphrey Kgosi. One of the reasons South Africa was expelled from Olympic Games, was because the latter two guys qualified, but they could not compete because of the colour of their skin.

Strategies used by athletes to self-store their athletics memories

The second objective sought to identify athletes' strategies for storing athletic memories. Most of the participants' memories included medals, trophies, photos, certificates and newspaper clippings that they kept at home, according to the study. Cashman (1988) contends that sports history has suffered as a result of a scarcity of sports memory materials. It has proven difficult to determine which institutions, if any, hold sports material when attempting to assess the current situation. The study established that athletes kept their archival memories with them. For example, Rosina Sedibane indicated that:

I have medals, trophies, certificates from high school, certificates of awards, trophies, and pictures here with me in my house. I also have a lot of newspaper clippings from newspapers that used to publish our results after every competition, just to keep a record of those bombastic words used to regard my performance.

In contrast, of all the memories elite athletes normally possess, Joseph Leserwane had only a Springbok jacket at home. Joseph indicated that most of the memories were stored in his head and could be passed through oral tradition, as he did during the interviews. He remarked:

I know it will be hard to believe, but I hated memories such as medals, certificates, and trophies. All I wanted was to qualify to run. All I have here in my house is my delayed Springbok colour jersey. I have two now since the first one became too small, and they gave me the second one.

Findings by Kaye et al. (2006) in Canada indicated that the primary purpose of most personal memory storage is to allow visitors to make a visual sweep of the room to take in important aspects of the subject's personality and life's work. Most of these memories are stored by being displayed on the walls. For example, Linda Hlophe indicated that:

Most of the medals and trophies are displayed in my house. However, I usually give some to my family and people who mean a lot to me to remember me with. Certificates that I received at the time I was still at high school are also just stacked in a storeroom.

Athletes' memory donation concerns regarding the danger posed by memory self-storage

The third objective sought to determine athletes' willingness to donate their memories concerning the danger posed by self-storage. Despite their critical role, many archives and manuscript collections around the world are held in unsuitable conditions and are in desperate need of preservation, conservation, restoration, or migration into newer formats if they are to remain accessible to humanity at all (Mnjama 2017). Participants indicated willingness to donate memories as long as government archival repositories take good care of them and make them available to the general public. For example, when asked if she could donate some or all of her memories, Rosina Sedibane said:

Yes, I do not mind donating some of my memories. But as for the printed ones, please make copies for me and take the originals. The original paper, as time goes by, loses its life and the content becomes blurry.

Similarly, Linda Hlophe explained that:

Why not? I cannot say, 'Yes, this is not for me.' This is a footprint I would love to leave for my beloved South Africa to remember me by. To see that footprint and say, 'Wow, we want to meet this person.' So, I do not mind donating some of my memories, for I am overwhelmed with these memories.

Titus Mamabolo expressed concern that if he donated his original memories to archives, he would be left with nothing. Rather, he said:

Yes, I do not mind donating, but it would be better if you made copies of the originals I have. That is so I can remain with the originals for future reference. Concerning the trophies and medals, perhaps a museum or archives can have a display for them. When I am no longer relevant, my descendants can inherit them back. These are the terms and conditions that I can put for such a donation.

Accessibility of athletes' memories in the individual's possession

The last objective sought to ascertain the strategies used by participants to gain access to their athletes' memories. Venter (2016) implies that there is a dearth of sports archives due to a lack of structure in what is worth preserving and because individuals in charge of those

existing sports never considered or took full responsibility for depositing them in public archives for public access.

When asked about the accessibility of their sports memories, several participants stated that the researcher must be present to assist in accessing these memories. For example, James Mokoka noted that:

You have to be here to be in my house so that we can go through a pile of archival memories in the office I used to perform all my coaching duties.

Kaye et al (2006) discovered that while participants kept their memories, they rarely went back to those files to retrieve them. When participant Titus Mamabolo had to retrieve his running memories, which included photos of where he ran, newspaper clippings of athletes he used to compete with, and notes from interview preparations, they were piled in a file. Furthermore, Kaye et al (2006) discovered that participants stored their memories in the most convenient ways accessible to them.

Discussion of the results

This section discusses results based on the themes derived from the objectives and recommends solutions.

Measures taken to preserve athletics memory in South Africa

The study established that initiatives were in place to preserve the memories of the athletes who were historically undocumented such as the project by the Gauteng Provincial Archives Repository, in collaboration with the University of South Africa's Department of Information Science. Although there is a tendency to preserve only the politically connected, business tycoons and the elites. Indeed, measures in place to preserve the marginalised typically focus on capturing only a few famous individuals while memories of the marginalised are declining (Cook 2002; Flinn 2007). This study recommends the establishment of a museum for athletics trophies, medals and other awards and archival displays of photos and certificates as part of the Arts and Culture goal of protecting, preserving, promoting, and developing arts, culture, and heritage, and advancing the socio-economic inclusivity.

Strategies used by athletes to self-store their athletic memories

Jimerson (2007) observed that individuals in possession of their memories normally take measures to safeguard their unique heritage through the creation of their repositories. The study also established that athletes' self-stored memories are mostly displayed in their living rooms, on their walls and on television stands. Running memories, such as medals, are just piled up in a bag if they are not donated to loved ones or local runners in races normally organised by these elite athletes. Those in a paper format end up fading away, as paper loses value over time if they are not handled in special ways. The literature also indicated that if the mainstream archives were to be examined in search of the totality of our archival heritage, it would be found that archival memories of many black heroes exist outside the archival mainstream. Indeed, the study established that memories of athletes are randomly stored in the form of display; they remain in the custody of athletes' houses and are inaccessible, and as such, remain endangered. The study recommends that athletes can be trained to better handle their running memories to ensure safe preservation. Alternatively, the existing GPAR can be used to attain athletes' memories of running and preserve them. That will help to account for the location and storage of these athletes' memories. In this way, a situation whereby it is not even known who or which intuition harbours athletes' memories will be avoided.

Athletes' memory donation concerns regarding the danger posed by memory self-storage

The study established that participants do not mind donating some or all of their archival memories to the memory instructions so that their archival athletics footprint would be left behind. This could avoid memory self-storage situations that pose a risk of losing valuable memory collections due to the ravages of nature, political instability, and other deteriorating agents. A donation to archival intuitions is suggested as one of the ways to let the light shine on all citizens. This will also rectify the situation in which the golden bulb is covered with a black cloth. The literature also indicated that documentation of memories created by sports associations or individuals is in decline (Cannon 2009). The study, therefore, recommends that since the athlete participants are already committed to donating some or all their archival memories, this is an opportunity to collect these materials and preserve them at an archival institution.

Accessibility of athletes' memories at the individual possession

The study established that athletes' memories are preserved in their homes where they are only accessible to them. Already, a large portion of athletes' historical memories is unaccounted for and inaccessible. The study further established that, because most black athletes' histories are obscure, there is a need to identify athletes' archival memories in possession of the athletes and those who have historically never had a fair chance to be memorialised. Hence, it is recommended that the accomplishments of black athletes should be collected and documented for legitimacy and improved accessibility of those citizens' concerns.

Conclusion

The study established that there are initiatives already in place to preserve the memories of the athletes who were historically undocumented such as the project by the Gauteng Provincial Archives Repository, in collaboration with the University of South Africa's Department of Information Science. The study further established that athletes' self-stored memories are mostly displayed in their living rooms, on their walls and on television stands. However, it was recommended that since the athlete participants are already committed to donating some or all their archival memories, this is an opportunity to collect these materials and preserve them at an archival institution. The latter will further contribute to ensuring that the accomplishments of black athletes are collected and documented for legitimacy and improved accessibility for those citizens concerned.

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