

A Short Biography of Noxolo Grootboom

Noxolo Grootboom was born on the 8th of October 1960 in Lady Frere in the Eastern Cape. She spent the best part of her formative years in Tyatyorha location in Healdtown, Fort Beaufort. She went to do her primary school years between Healdtown Primary School in Fort Beaufort, Lovedale Primary School in Alice and Davis Primary School in Butterworth. She did her high school years in Lamplough High School and Bethel College in Butterworth.

In 1981 she moved with her siblings to Soweto, where she enrolled in a computer course at a Computer Academy. On the 1st of December 1983, she joined the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) as a typist. After spending three years on the job, she was appointed as a Production Assistant. During this time, she was mentored by senior journalists as her interest at the time was storytelling. Later, she would start serving as a current affairs producer and a field journalist and later became a news anchor.

In 1990, her big break came when she was asked to stand in for the late Mam Thandi Mesetywa's news anchor to read a bulletin. The station was impressed enough that they asked her to continue to anchor the isiXhosa news.

She then saw this as an opportunity to continue the legacy of the broadcast stalwarts who came before her. As a result of being entrusted with critical broadcast events, she was known as “the undertaker”. This, because she was tasked with anchoring Live funeral broadcasts of some prominent leaders in the country. She anchored the funerals of high-profile politicians such as Chris Hani, the PAC’s Sabelo Phama, Nelson Mandela, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, Joe Slovo, Oliver Tambo, Manto Tshabalala-Msimang, Walter Sisulu, Albertina Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, Steve Tshwethe and young prominent, well-known personalities like Akhumzi Jezile.

Many in the industry refer to this broadcast legend as “Mam Noxolo” because of her eagerness to teach the generations that come after her, to nurture them and transfer skills. She has influenced and encouraged many journalists such as the current SABC journalists Yolisa Njamela, Chriselda Lewis, Group Editor of Eyewitness News and South Africa National Editors’ Forum Secretary-General, Mahlatse Mahlase and well-known news personality, Vuyo Mvoko.

With thirty-seven years of public broadcast service, Mam Noxolo read her last bulletin on the 30th of March 2021. She left the SABC as an Editor of the isiXhosa news bulletin. On this

day, she was recognised by President Cyril Ramaphosa, who delayed his national address (during a pandemic) since it clashed with Mrs Grootboom's last bulletin. The public widely welcomed this gesture on social media platforms.

Television Audience Measurement Service reported that 3,832,686 people tuned in to hear Mam Noxolo say "Ndinithanda nonke emakhaya" (translated 'I love you all at home') one last time. The impressive number constituted a third of all TV views during that time slot on the day.