

## This is My Fort Hare

I had initially applied to study at NMMU, wanted to get out of the small town of Whittlesea and live in a city for once. After not getting a response from NMMU until January 2005 my dad suggested we try Fort Hare as a backup option. Fort Hare admitted me immediately. My dad tells me my admission letter from NMMU arrived but wanted R9500 registration and res fee so he hid from me because he knew he did not have that kind of money, so I registered at Fort Hare which cost just R1500 at the time. I was met with struggle right away, like every other student.

We struggled to find Residence until we were luckily allocated rooms at "Men's" after days of sleeping in any open room, but I never told my parents I didn't have accommodation as I didn't want them to worry. I stayed at Jolobe 1 throughout my university career, one of the dirtiest residences in the university but I loved it! I loved the sibling-like atmosphere we shared and the simplicity of life at Men's. As a poor kid, I didn't have all the pink trimmings, continental pillows and teddy bears on the bed that were so common at the girl's residences so I was very happy at Men's, I fit right in. The guys looked after us girls, we ate together so when we didn't have food one would never go hungry. I met my boyfriend, now husband at Fort Hare when I was doing my final year.

Fort Hare has moulded me as an African citizen, it gave me a chance to make something of my life and rescue my parents from the poverty they have known all their lives. I owe everything to that university!!!