

Matthew Goniwe (1947 – 1985)

ORDER OF LUTHULI IN SILVER (POSTHUMOUS)



**AWARDED TO
MATTHEW GONIWE
FOR CONTRIBUTING AND
DEDICATING HIS LIFE TO
A FREE, JUST AND
DEMOCRATIC
SOUTH AFRICA**

Matthew Goniwe was born in Cradock, Eastern Cape in 1947. He attended St James' Primary School and Sam Xhallie Secondary School, where he obtained his Junior Certificate. He obtained a teachers' diploma from Fort Hare University and returned to Sam Xhallie School to teach mathematics and science.

Goniwe was arrested in 1977 under the Suppression of Communism Act and sentenced to four years imprisonment in Umtata Prison. After his release, Goniwe returned to teaching in Graaff-Reinet and completed a BA degree through the University of South Africa.

In 1983, Goniwe became active in leading protests against high rents in Cradock. Under political pressure, the Department of Education and Training attempted to transfer him back to Graaff-Reinet. This resulted in teachers and pupils from Cradock's seven schools embarking on a 15-month class boycott – the longest in the country's history.

On 27 June 1985, Matthew Goniwe and three other activists, Fort Calata, Sparrow Mkonto and Sicelo Mhlauli, were murdered and their bodies mutilated by members of the apartheid security forces.