

Winnie K gware (1917 – 1998)

ORDER OF LUTHULI IN SILVER (POSTHUMOUS)



**AWARDED TO
WINNIE KGWARE
FOR OUTSTANDING
LEADERSHIP AND LIFE-
LONG COMMITMENT TO THE
IDEALS OF DEMOCRACY,
NON-RACIALISM, PEACE
AND JUSTICE**

Winnie K gware was born in Thaba Nchu in the Free State in 1917.

A teacher by profession, and resident at the University of the North (Turfloop) as the wife of the rector, K gware got involved in supporting students in their protests against government restrictions on campus. One of her early acts at the University was to organise a Methodist prayer group in defiance of an order that banned students from worshipping on campus. She gave sustenance to the student movement and in an ironic twist, allowed the rector's residence to be used as a meeting place for the University Christian Movement, an organisation that was banned from the campus at the time.

In spite of the age gap between her and fellow activists, K gware was valued for her strategic and emotional maturity and played a leading role in the launch of the SASudents' Organisation at the University in 1968.

Having moved to Kroonstad, K gware became the first president of the Black People's Convention (BPC) formed in 1972 as an umbrella body of the black consciousness movement led by Steve Biko. The BPC was amongst the organisations that were banned in 1977.

One incident which demonstrated the determination of K gware occurred in 1977 when the bus taking mourners to Steve Biko's funeral in King William's Town was stopped by security forces. K gware then 66 years old, evaded the police and determined to be at the funeral, hitched a lift all the way to King William's Town.

The Umtapo Centre in Durban awarded the Steve Biko Award to K gware in recognition of her role in the liberation struggle.