

Q & A with Mayor Maripe Mangena

GTM Bulletin: Where were you born?

My name is Maripe Mangena, I was born in Mogapene village, Shiluvane in the late 1960's. I only have one sister (younger) Mamokidi and me but I do have siblings from another mother in Cape Town, Stellenbosch where my dad lived for many years.

GTM Bulletin: Where did you attend school?

I started my primary school at Mogapene Lower Primary, proceeded to Mmalahla Higher Primary then to the well-known Bokgaga High School. After matric I went to Kwena Moloto College of Education. Then in 1992 I started working as an Educator at my childhood school, Mmalahla. In 1993 I joined the local high school called Mokwane High school, and in 2003 I joined Molomahlapi High school in Maruleng Municipality. In 2006 I joined Mapula Primary School in Bolobedu South as Head Of Department until 2011 when I resigned to be full-time in the Greater Tzaneen Municipality Council.

GTM Bulletin: When did you realize your passion for politics and ventured into politics?

Like many young people, growing in a poverty stricken area, an area that was directly and physically involved in a black on black ethnic based fights, an area where some had to travel over 10 km to access education. Where we had to witness brilliant minds dropping out of school because of lack of finances. These are the circumstances that were compelling for one to get involved in politics not as a passion for it was not necessarily an option.

GTM Bulletin: What is your political background?

As highlighted, we got involved when we were around 17-years old as did many young people in my area led by the late cde Nkaswilavi, the late Mataung Rakgoale, Cde Lando and others. We were marshalled into many protest actions including Safari Bakery boycott and mobilising our communities to start refusing to pay the compulsory annual Bakgaga cool drink for the queen of the Maake tribe. Also the political environment of a demand for the recognized SRC's by Bo cde Banda, the current chairperson of one branch in Letaba, cde Kenny Nghomaneni Maake, the late Mogaleamalla Joseph and many others was inescapable. I did not lead at that stage. My conscious was strengthened by the pure pro black life drama that we started performing under a cultural club in 1987 organized and directed by Cde Rasemea Moribo.

With this background, upon arrival at the college, I was nominated into the sub-committee of cultural committee of the SRC in 1989, October and was elected the head of that committee in Oct 1990 and served till 1991 Oct. I also served as the secretary of then SANSCO of Kwena Moloto that really brokered cooperation with the Seshego community which was severed and literally physical.

Coming back home I started serving my community both politically (ANCYL, ANC, SANCO, SADTU) and socially at branch level from 1990 until 2014 when I was elected as the chairperson of the ANC MARKSHOPPE sub-region and GTM Chief Whip. I never had a two month break without political activity/engagement because I never belonged to an inactive structure for all this years up to date

GTM Bulletin: What are some of your achievements?

Since when I was delegated to the ANCYL national conference on 16-20 Dec 1991 at the Kwa-Ndebele college through a branch mandate, and reported back to the BEC and BGM, all the branches I belonged to sustain that culture to the letter. We never had a meeting postponed due to a lack of quorum. We became the best ANC branch in 2011/12 in Mopani Region. Our branch and Ward 27 community remain most organized and responsive to any progressive programme. Out of the expected 40 quarterly community meetings in my ten years of Ward

councillorship, 38 were successfully held. The leadership collective I lead is more united beyond imagination both politically and governance.

We have delivered the State of the Ward for ward 27 since 2011 and it is now a GTM council policy.

GTM Bulletin: What are your views on the current state of Tzaneen?

The previous leadership ably led by former Mayor Cde Dikeledi has done much. We are happy we were able to identify the problems and have way forward on the legal fees, slow or non-spending on capital projects, poor monitoring of projects, shrinking income base and low revenue collection, insufficient or lack of human resource to serve the community beyond contractual obligation on behalf of this people based institution called a municipality.

GTM Bulletin: What changes are you as the mayor going to bring to Tzaneen?

As part of the collective leadership deployed by the ANC, We have a mandate to further the development so far. Having identified the gaps in response to the last question, the manifesto and policy positions of the ANC and government will guide us.

Significantly, we seek to speed the following up: implementation of the By-laws, expanding our revenue base to our rural communities by providing quality services, updating our indigent register and doing the justifiable thing. Create more jobs for our people through the above thinking and make our villages as habitable as towns and townships. This will surely reduce urbanization.

GTM Bulletin: What job creation efforts will you make as a mayor?

Engagement with Limpopo Economic Development Environment and Tourism (LEDET, Limpopo Economic Development Agency (LEDA), our own arm, GTEDA to zoom into unlocking of Tours Tea farms, Nkowankowa closed factories, Makgoebaskloof/Sapekoe Tea Estate, Mopani Mosupatsela Farm and supporting initiatives to build shopping malls as immediate tasks to create jobs. Our major focus for the next five years over and above the many things we shall be doing includes insourcing of numerous municipal services that we can simply do internally. We will invite business to augment the efforts of the Mayor with 100 p/c on student financial aid to skill our disadvantaged youths. We also will engage our local FET's/other tertiary institutions to align their out-put to the economic needs of the municipality. E.g being a highly agriculture area we produce no Agriculturalists. We must address Relevancy.