Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela.

By Jacob Hagen, P7B

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1

“Education.”

“It always seems impossible until it’s done.”

-Nelson Mandela

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, a man, a brilliant man, a man who helped abolish the apartheid. Nelson was born in a wee village called Mvezo and was born into royalty. Mandela wasn’t born named “Nelson”, instead, he was born named as Rolihlahla, which, in Xhosan meant “Troublemaker”. Mandela didn’t get the name “Nelson”, until he was 7, when his teacher Miss Mdigane assigned Mandela’s name as Nelson, due to the British rule over South Africa. After Primary School, Mandela went to the Clarkebury Methodist High School, graduated Clarkebury High and then went to the Boarding School named the Headtown Comprehensive School. He then went to study law at both the University of Fort Hare, where he never got to complete his degree, and at the University of Witwatersrand, he was the only black man there enrolled in law, and due to that, got shown prejudice by one of his professors, who reportedly told Nelson Mandela: “The African mind is not suited to study and practise of law.” After University, Nelson wanted to abolish the apartheid, and Nelson joined the ANC to give South African black people equal

rights to their British oppressors, and when the National Party won the parliament of South Africa to strengthen the apartheid. Mandela then led some peaceful protests in South Africa, but after a few years of protesting, the Brits got tired and readied their aim.

2

“Imprisonment.”

“No one truly knows a nation until one has been inside its jails.”

-Nelson Mandela

March 21, 1960, in the township of Sharpeville, 69 people were killed, including 10 children, and 180 more were wounded, even shooting the backs of the fleeing protesters. Mandela had enough, and co-founded his own militia, the “uMkhonto we Sizwe” (which meant, in Zulu, Spear of the Nation) on the 16th of December 1961. Mandela planned to destroy British Military installations, power plants, and transport links to weaken Anglo authority, while strictly minimalizing the deaths of people. But unfortunately, Mandela was put in trial and was charged guilty by trying to overthrow the apartheid government and sabotaging their British oppressors. Mandela was sent to the maximum-security prison of Robben Island. His time there was brutal. First, Mandela was confined into a small, damp, 2 by 2 wide cell, where Mandela had to sleep on straws, with only a bucket for Mandela to relieve himself with. He and his political allies had to work a gruelling shift of, firstly, having to crush stones into gravel, and then having to work in a blinding limestone quarry, and got infected with something called “Snow blindness”, which permanently damaged Mandela’s tear ducts and eyesight. Mandela was extremely

isolated in his time at prison, being only able to write letters every half-year, and one half-hour visit every year, and the prison even denied him even a little freedom by going to his eldest son's funeral. But one city had seen enough, and that city, that city was Glasgow. Mandela was still in prison when Glasgow gave him the freedom of the entire city, and that move would give him his freedom, and when the Anglo-South African government denied his freedom, Glasgow even re-named St George’s Place (Just off of Buchanan Street) to Nelson Mandela Place (which the South African Consulate lived on), and after that, the South African government had no choice, but to let Mandela free.

3

“Glasgow.”

“Citizens of Glasgow, we are here today to say thank you.”

-Nelson Mandela

It had been 3 years since Mandela’s freedom. Mandela had visited loads of African countries, such as Morocco (where he was given firearm lessons at the Zegangan base), Egypt, Algeria, and many more, but now, he was getting the first ticket to Glasgow. Glasgow, at the time, was well known, and only got better-known after allowing Mandela the complete freedom of the city, and on Saturday, the 9th of October 1993, that day, the weather was a bit “Dreich” (what we Scots would call damp, or gloomy), but that day was anything but gloomy. There was a celebration, it was just by Queen Street Railway Station, at George Square, and even created the “Mandela shuffle”, where Mandela broke into his iconic rhythmic dance, and the crowd would go mental. It was a pandemonium, a crazy pandemonium. Mandela called for silence, and one of the most iconic speeches ever, Mandela said;

“While we were physically denied our freedom in the country of our birth, a city 6,000 miles away, and as renowned as Glasgow, refused to accept the legitimacy of the apartheid system, declared us to be free.”

4

“Retirement”

“Never, never and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one other.”

-Nelson Mandela

Mandela was in office for 5 years, from 1994 – 1999. Mandela humbly refused a second term. Mandela firstly used sports to unify the country, even wearing the Springbrook jersey at the 1995 Rugby World Cup. A year afterwards, Mandela signed South Africa’s permanent law constitution giving equal rights and freedom of speech. Then, Mandela founded the TRC to investigate human rights violations under the apartheid, prioritizing truth over racism. Mandela’s government then redeveloped the nation for better housing, giving his fellow South Africans clean water and electricity, spanning the country. After his reign of presidency, Mandela helped stop the civil war happening in Burundi at the time. Introducing the Arusha peace and Reconciliation Agreement. A couple years afterwards in 2007 alongside his wife Graca Machel and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, he founded The Elders, a group working together for equal human rights. Later, while HIV and AIDS ravaged South Africa, Nelson Mandela helped spread awareness, but after that, Mandela just

focused on family and philanthropy, until disaster struck. Mandela had a respiratory infection, even though he had months of intensive care, at the age of 95, Nelson T. Mandela, died. There were celebrations across South Africa, to remember Mandela’s Life and death.