

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE MARJORIE COURTENAY-LATIMER. SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE FUNERAL BY THE PREMIER OF THE EASTERN CAPE, THE HON. NOSIMO BALINDLELA.

Ladies and gentlemen, family of our dear Marge and friends, it gives me great pleasure to be here today, together with the Executive Council, on this very important occasion. It was our scheduled Executive Council meeting, but we all felt it was important for us to adjourn and come and pay our respects to Dr Courtenay-Latimer.

Before I go on with what we are here for, let me say it was with sadness to learn from the print media the morning of Tuesday 18th May of the death of Dr Marjorie Courtenay-Latimer, an internationally renowned and respected ichthyology icon. By some coincidence, she died on Monday 17th May, while the next day we celebrated International Museums Day. I send the Provincial Government's sincere condolences to her family, relatives and all those whose lives had been influenced by her in one way or another.

The Eastern Cape Government therefore is here today to pay tribute to this outstanding lady, a mother of our nation. Her outstanding contribution in the establishment of the East London Museum will never be forgotten - it will benefit today's generation and generations to come. In fact, she was a founder member of the South African Museum's Association in 1936.

Marge pioneered the diorama concept in museums in South Africa by displaying them in as natural a setting as possible. Her bird and mammal displays have delighted thousands of visitors from across the country, the continent and the world.

It is unfortunate that Marge leaves us at a time when as a country and a province we are busy with the transformation of our museums. We really needed her guidance and expertise.

We as a nation have indeed lost an icon. As we mourn the death of Dr Courtenay-Latimer, we need to draw lessons from what Marge has done and lived for to advance the meaning of scientific research for the benefit of the sons and daughters of this country. I pass my and the government's sincere condolences to all those affected by her death.

I thank you.
