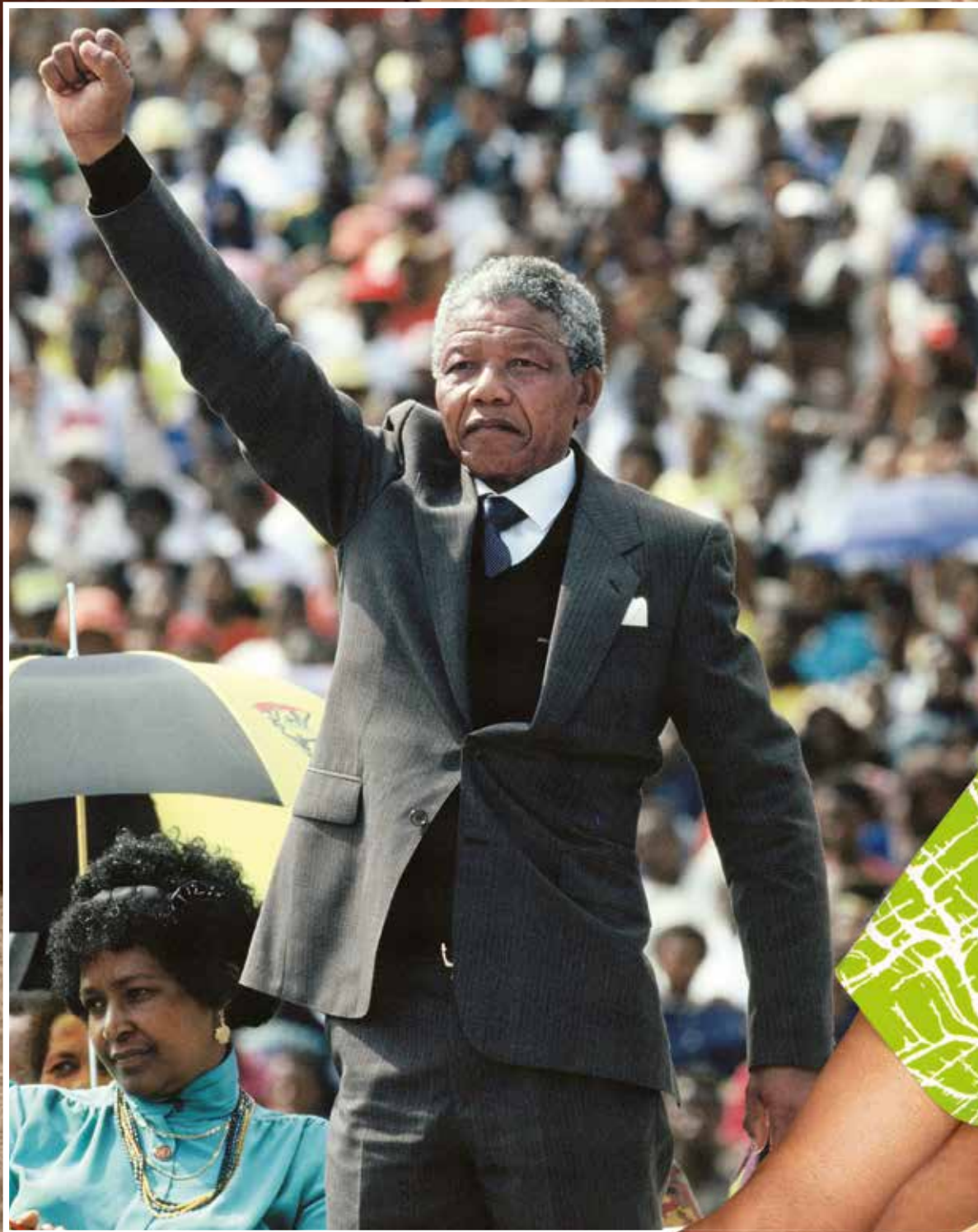


EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW AND PHOTOS

ON A POIGNANT TENTH ANNIVERSARY DR MAKI MANDELA REMEMBERS THE FATHER AND STATESMAN SHE SHARED WITH THE WORLD

'He set a tone for what type of leader the world needs and deserves... He tried to leave people with a sense of hope'



A photo in Dr Maki's book shows Nelson – the man she calls Tata – during a rally in Soweto in 1990 (above). But during her interview (right), she recalls a father who was “very much a family man”



As the eldest living child of the world's most revered and beloved statesman, Dr Makaziew Mandela appreciates both the privilege and responsibility that her name carries.

“I tell people I’m not related to my father,” the 69-year-old says with an easy laugh that she’s clearly inherited from Nelson Mandela, regarded by many as the greatest political leader of the 20th century. “When people ask me, I say: ‘No, the Mandela name is very common in South Africa.’”

“It becomes too much. I’m not him, I’m his progeny.”

She strives, however, to keep the legacy alive. “One of the things I’ve learnt with my father is he was true and authentic to who he was. He was a proud Tembu man and he tried his best to care for and nurture people.”

“When he met you, you’d feel like the most important person in the world, whether you were a servant or royalty, because he treated people equally,” she adds proudly of the anti-apartheid activist who spent 27 years in prison

before becoming South Africa’s first black president in 1994. “He was a leader people wanted and desired, who touched your heart and soul.”

He also loved to gossip and had an appreciation for beautiful women, she discloses during our interview at London’s exclusive The Stafford hotel, a stone’s throw from St James’s Palace.

PERSONAL MEMORIES

A public speaker who passionately tackles issues including female empowerment, social justice and diversity, Dr Maki has spent the past year preserving her father’s memory by writing her book *Mandela: In Honor of an Extraordinary Life*, published in the tenth anniversary year of his death and coinciding with Black History Month.

It’s a beautiful book filled with personal photographs, letters, family stories and sketches by the man she calls Tata. It covers his childhood growing up in the village of Qunu, where his family had close links to the royal house of the Tembu people, his time in Johannesburg as leader of the



As she takes time out in the Park Suite at London's Stafford hotel, Dr Maki explains that 52 her new book about her father will "tell more fully the story of who he was and what formed him"

(LEFT) DRESS: MEHEM

'As children we didn't really grasp why he had given his life to the freedom of black people'

African National Congress fighting apartheid, his three decades of imprisonment and his role as president and philanthropist.

It is also a deeply personal reflection on an absent father whose children had to share him with the world.

"A lot of books have been written about my dad, but they've always focused on Mandela the freedom fighter, the politician. I wanted to focus more on Mandela the man – a son, a brother, a father, an uncle – to tell more fully the story of who he was and what formed him. And about his children. As much as one appreciates as an adult the sacrifices he made, as [children] we didn't really grasp why he had given his life to the freedom of black people in South Africa and the world."

It was a conflict that dominated her relationship with him, causing rifts that weren't fully healed until the last years of his life.

Serene, warm and naturally shy – she is not used to photoshoots or interviews – Dr Maki, who is married with four children, is the fourth and only surviving child of Nelson and his first wife Evelyn Mase. He went on to have two daughters with his second wife, Winnie, before meeting his third wife, Graça Machel, in 1995, to whom he was married when he died in 2013.

Dr Maki remembers a father who would "bathe us, spend time with us – very much a family man".

She adds: "He was a caring father, but stuck in the values and traditions of his ancestors. Tata would be furious if he came to sit at the table to eat and none of us were there. You had to be sitting; you are the children, he is an adult, the patriarch of the family."

DIVORCE AND POLITICS

Her parents divorced when she was four years old and Nelson, who was training to be a lawyer in Johannesburg when he met his friend and mentor Walter Sisulu and became politically active, would see Dr Maki and her two brothers (her sister had died in infancy) every weekend.

"He would try to explain why he chose the path he chose. He wasn't eating a lot and when I asked him why, he'd say he was training himself for any eventuality that they'd have to take up arms against the government. But for a child, you don't understand it fully."

She was at boarding school in Swaziland with her brother when their father went on trial in 1963 for his anti-apartheid activism, which attracted worldwide attention. "I learnt that he said at the trial that he was prepared to die and to me that was: 'Oh!'" she says, sadly.

"When he was sentenced to life imprisonment, whenever me and my cousin-sister Lindiwe Sisulu [daughter of Walter, who was also imprisoned] ate a chicken, we would break the wishbone between us and the one who had the biggest bit would pray for their father. If we saw a fountain, we'd throw pennies into it and make a wish that our parents didn't die in jail."

Dr Maki was 16 years old and hadn't seen her father for nine years when she made the journey to visit him for the first time on Robben Island – the first of three prisons where he stayed during his 27-year incarceration. "I travelled by

train with my mum to Johannesburg, where she handed me over to a woman who was also travelling to Cape Town. The following day, my brother took me to the docks in Cape Town and I boarded the boat to Robben Island. But we had to go into the hull as only the whites could sit on deck," she remembers.

FACE TO FACE WITH FATHER

"When you arrived, you were taken to a waiting room. The prison commander said: 'You are not to speak in any other language except English. You're not to speak about politics.' I didn't mind, as long as I was going to see my dad.

"I expected to see him face to face, but it was not to be as there was a glass window, so we kissed the glass. We spoke through the intercom and my dad said: 'Stand up – let me see how much you've grown up.'"

"I was over the moon," she says with a broad smile. "I didn't mind that it was 30 minutes, as long as I saw my father. He was always in high spirits."

"He was a big advocate that we don't wallow in victimhood, that we shouldn't allow ourselves to be controlled by external events. And to be positive about life. My dad was always positive."

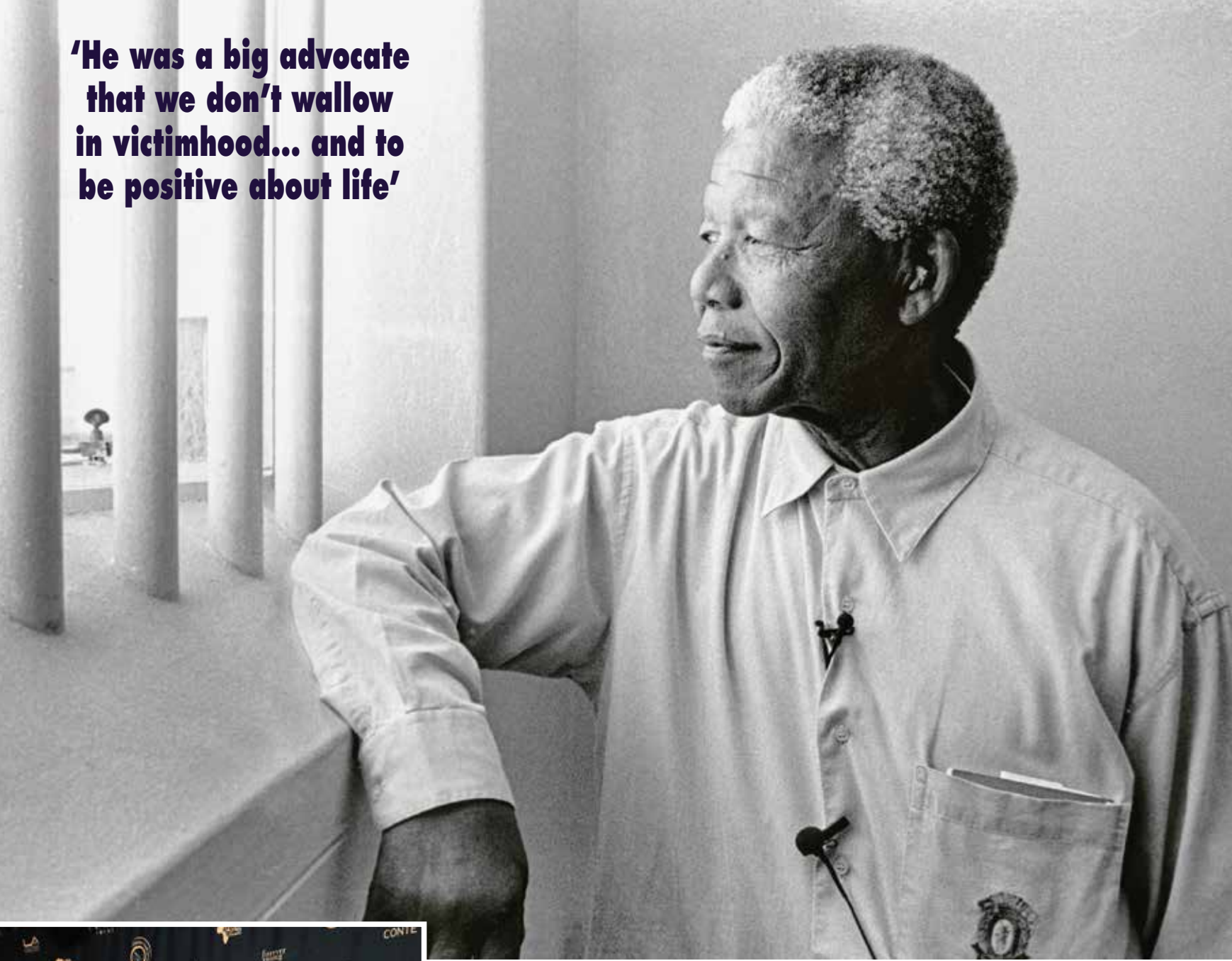
His favourite visits, she ▶



One of the joyful personal family photos that Dr Maki has shared in her book shows her along with her sisters Zenani (right) and Zinziswa (back), smiling with their father in his later years. It's a far cry from the time of apartheid that divided South Africa. Nelson as a young lawyer is pictured (below) making his way to court through a crowd of singing supporters during his 1958 trial, during which he and a number of other political activists were accused of treason



'He was a big advocate that we don't wallow in victimhood... and to be positive about life'



said, were from her aunt. "She would tell him about the village gossip because Tata loved gossip, even just from his grandchildren. He would just say: 'I enjoy it when Notancu is here because at least I can relax and forget.'"

Despite her father's battle with the state, Dr Maki never felt her own life was in danger – even when taken in for questioning by police at the notorious John Vorster Square police station in Johannesburg. "I wasn't terrified. There were many there who were tortured, but when you live

in fear, you live in prison," she states simply, having learnt from her father's resilience.

During Nelson's imprisonment, she married, had children, studied for degrees in social work and sociology and lived in the US for nine years, doing a master's and PhD at the University of Massachusetts. She was still in the US when Nelson was released from Victor Verser prison to universal celebration in February 1990.

"I watched it on TV like everyone else. I did wish I was there, but he had insisted: 'You have to

Two months after becoming president of South Africa in 1994, Nelson visits the cell where he had spent nearly three decades (above). In his new role, he met politicians and celebrities, as did his daughter, pictured (left) with Naomi Campbell and (right) the then Prince of Wales. "But I'm not starstruck and my dad wasn't either"



'I wanted to focus more on Mandela the man – a son, a brother, a father, an uncle'

go and study,' so..." she shrugs. However, at the time of his release, daughter and father were not getting on. Dr Maki carried the wound of his absence during her childhood and would often challenge his more traditional values. She also had a difficult relationship with her stepmother Winnie.

"I couldn't understand why he had made the choice to take the political path when he had children. I think he also struggled with me being a free-thinking, educated woman. How dare I have my own mind?"

"But I realised that when you're bitter, you just poison yourself, so it was important for me to heal myself because otherwise I would poison my children and I didn't want that to happen. A friend said: 'These are precious moments. Use them, seize them.' And that's what I did." They remained close until his death.

FAMILY SUPPORT

After his release, Nelson relied on his grandchildren to help him navigate the modern world. "He would engage with them about school or boyfriends. He didn't even know what Jelly Babies were." And he fully embraced the company of others – friends and family and, as President from 1994, Presidents and Prime Ministers, religious leaders and royalty, sports heroes, Hollywood stars and rock musicians.

Dr Maki also rubbed shoulders with a few of them. "I met Michael Jackson, Naomi Campbell, Oprah Winfrey," she says, listing them off on her fingers. "But I'm not starstruck and my dad wasn't either. He genuinely appreciated people who had an interest in what he was doing."

"But there's no doubt he liked beautiful women," she adds, laughing. "I remember we visited my brother and his wife Zondi. Tata said: 'Oh darling, I didn't know you were so beautiful – come and sit next to me'."

Now, she celebrates her father through House of Mandela, a lifestyle online boutique and wine business that she runs with her daughter Tukwini, as well as the family foundation, which, among other projects, helps the farming community of Qunu in the Eastern Cape.

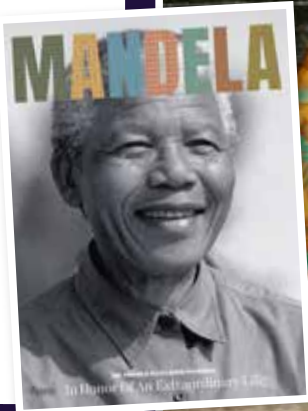
Reflecting on her father's greatest legacy, she says: "He set a tone for what type of leader the world needs and deserves. Everywhere he went, he tried to leave people with a sense of hope for a better tomorrow. And he led by example with courage, integrity, perseverance, forgiveness, and humility. Tata was the embodiment of all those things. He didn't pretend to be something he's not and he acted on what he believed in."

We all "have Mandela within us", she says. "We just have to remind ourselves on a daily basis to make the commitment and the sacrifice and to persevere in acts of kindness. If we do, we'll have a better world."

INTERVIEW: ROSALIND POWELL
PHOTOS: TREVOR LEIGHTON

STYLIST: JODIE NELLIST
HAIR & MAKE-UP: NEUSA NEVES AT
ARLINGTON ARTISTS USING MAC COSMETICS

Mandela: In Honor of an Extraordinary Life is published by Rizzoli International Publications



As well as writing her new book (left), Dr Maki supports 55 her father's legacy through the family foundation



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