

SA netball celebrates 80th year of their most dedicated servant

SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

IN PRETORIA

SOME of the top names in South African netball gathered in Pretoria last week to celebrate the 80th birthday of one of the sport's most dedicated supporters, Lynette Ferreira.

Lynette, who was born on February 21, 1938, has been involved in South African netball for 73 years, as player, umpire, coach, selector, and administrator.

Lynette was largely responsible for the introduction of netball at the Pretoria Teachers Training College – at that stage, Afrikaans colleges and schools in what was then the Transvaal preferred to play korfbal, but Lynette, who was passionate about the sport, persuaded the Rector of the College to allow her to start a netball club.

He agreed, with one proviso – no money would be made available. So Lynette and her friends used their precious pocket money to buy balls, and the rest of the equipment needed.

They even painted the lines themselves.

Lynette was a member of the



Lynette Ferreira during her netball days.

Picture:
Supplied

Springbok netball team that took part in the first World Netball Cup in 1963, as well as the teams that competed in 1967, 1970 and 1973.

South Africa was then banned from taking part in international sport and it was not until 1994 that South Africa was once again allowed to play international netball

When she turned to umpiring

and coaching, she proved to be just as good, and became one of South Africa's top umpires and effective coaches. In 1976, she was awarded the State President's Merit Award as the Coach of the Year.

During the years of isolation, Lynette worked hard to keep the sport alive and she can be proud of the fact that netball is South Africa's biggest women's sport.

The top brass of Netball South Africa – President Cecilia Molokwane, Vice-President Christine du Preez and chief executive Blanche de la Guerre were among those who gathered to celebrate Lynette's birthday.

Others who joined the festivities included former Proteas coach Carin Strauss, several former Springbok and Proteas players, teammate and former NSA President Rita Oosthuizen, as well as Tuks, Jaguars and South African Under-21 coach Jenny van Dyk. The celebration was held in Kronendal retirement home Pretoria.

Netballers past, present and future all wish this diminutive giant of South African netball a very happy birthday.