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**PRESS RELEASE**

**University of Pretoria hosts Tjo!StoryFest to encourage a culture of reading**

Tjo!StoryFest, a festival of literacy, reading and history was launched at the University of Pretoria’s Mamelodi Campus on Friday 30 June and Saturday 1 July. Poet and actress Masello Montana led the launch proceedings, with authors such as Zakes Mda in attendance. The event will be held annually.

“Tjo!StoryFest is an exploration of how communities can practically assert and implement the common desire for ‘telling our own stories’. We included a tribute to Fabian and Florence Ribeiro as a way of highlighting the importance of biographies in our communities. Many of us travel along Florence Ribeiro Drive but would not know what to say if asked who she is,” says Festival Director Kgauhelo Dube.

The project has been a close collaboration between non-profit Orenda Arts Collective, UP Faculty of Humanities and Mamelodi Campus, and Puku Children’s Literature Foundation.

“I’m excited to be part of the celebration of the often-untold yet vast creative and intellectual heritage coming from our capital city. Tjo! Storyfest is an opportunity for us to all reflect on as yet untold stories about people, place and history, enabling us to dig into memory with our goal of building a community archive,” says Professor Vasu Reddy, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities at UP.

The two-day activities included a celebration of Tshwane-born writer Kagiso Lesego whose novel The Mending Season, is included in the Grade 12 curriculum. Celebrities Hlubi Mboya, Sisanda Henna, and Lindiwe Matshikiza led interactive readings.

As a special tribute to community activists Florence and Fabian Ribeiro, their daughter Dr Barbara-Ann Ribeiro shared the family’s history with the audience and took the audience down memory lane as she told stories of how her parents became social activists in Mamelodi. “It is important to write. As a family we have missing pieces in our history because we did not write down certain events,” she said.

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