

Alain Tschudin, of the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Conflict Transformation and Peace Studies Programme and organiser of the colloquium titled "Community serving humanity and beyond — the legacy of Archbishop Denis Hurley OMI" at the Howard College campus, with speakers Ela Gandhi, peace activist and granddaughter of Mahatma Gandhi, and Archbishop Njongo Ndungane, former Anglican archbishop of Cape Town.

PHOTO: STEPHEN COAN

Colloquium honours Hurley

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SOUTH Africa is a country with a "long legacy of suffering" and after 20 years of democracy service delivery protests are a reminder that "life has not changed for the still disadvantaged and the marginalised," Archbishop Njongo Ndungane, former Anglican archbishop of Cape Town, said yesterday.

He was the keynote speaker at a colloquium titled "Community serving humanity and beyond — the legacy of Archbishop Denis Hurley OMI" in Durban.

Hosted by the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Conflict Transformation and Peace Studies Programme, the two-day colloquium at the Innovation Centre on the Howard College campus commemorates the 10th anniversary of Hurley's death.

Hurley was Chancellor of the former University of Natal (1993-1998) and Catholic Archbishop of Durban from 1951 to 1992 and a campaigner for justice and peace. While chairperson of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference the slogan, "Community serving humanity" was chosen to promote their pastoral plan in the apartheid South Africa of the 1980s.

During that decade there was a state of war between the police and the people, said Ndungane. "Thirty years on not much has changed in terms of mistrust between the people and the police." He added the Marikana tragedy was a "reminder" of the Sharpeville massacre.

Ndungane cited studies demonstrating the distance between citizens and the government and said that government through either "failure or inertia has been unable to deal decisively or effectively with the plight of the poor".

In a year in which the country marks 20 years of democracy "we both celebrate, and reflect on what we have and have not achieved", Ndungane said, and urged South Africans to move beyond the transition to democracy "to the country, not of our imagination but of our inspiration" — a country embodied in the constitution.

Ndungane noted the fact that he had been a political prisoner for three years on Robben Island and was now honouring "an archbishop who spent his carefree youth on that same island some four decades earlier as the son of the lighthouse keeper".

Ndungane concluded by comparing Hurley to the lighthouse of his childhood and said his "quenchless flame still burns and his inextinguishable light still shines in and through us".