

18^{of} 100**Welma Nape
Masenamela**

Here to be Trailblazing

**Leading with compassion
and building a legacy of
dignity:** Transforming a
traditionally male-
dominated industry.

Some leaders build businesses while others build industries, Welma Nape Masenamela is doing both. As the Managing Director and Shareholder of Phuti Funeral Ministry Group (PFMG), Welma has spent more than 15 years helping families navigate some of life's most difficult moments with dignity, compassion and care. Yet her story is about far more than the funeral industry. It is a story of resilience, breaking barriers and redefining what leadership looks like in spaces where women have historically been underrepresented.

Welma's journey into the industry began at a young age, but one defining moment would shape the trajectory of her career. In 2010, at just 19 years old, she was entrusted with managing a complex

grave relocation project involving more than 586 graves in Limpopo's Sekhukhune district. The responsibility would be daunting for even the most experienced professional. Yet she successfully delivered the project, earning the trust of communities and industry stakeholders alike. More than a decade later, it remains one of the most significant milestones of her career and a testament to her courage, determination and leadership under pressure.

Following the passing of her father, Welma faced an even greater challenge: helping steer a family business in a sector traditionally dominated by men. Rather than allowing doubt or expectation to define her path, she focused on what mattered most - serving people with excellence. Through strong leadership, strategic growth and a relentless commitment to client care, she helped strengthen the credibility and reputation of Phuti Funeral Ministry Group, ensuring that the business continued to thrive while remaining rooted in its founding values.

Today, PFMG operates 15 branches across Limpopo and Gauteng, alongside manufacturing facilities producing granite and wood products, including tombstones, coffins and furniture. Under Welma's leadership, the business has evolved into a diversified enterprise that not only serves communities but also creates jobs and economic opportunities.

Perhaps her greatest impact lies in her commitment to developing people. As National Training and Skills Coordinator for the South African Funeral Practitioner Association (SAFPA), a Services SETA board committee member, facilitator, assessor and skills development advocate, she has dedicated herself to professionalising the industry and

creating pathways for others to succeed. Her work in developing learning materials and advancing training opportunities reflects a belief that knowledge remains one of the most powerful tools for transformation.

What began as a desire to empower more women in the funeral sector has grown into a broader mission to cultivate inclusive leadership. Welma believes that when women are given opportunities to lead, entire industries become stronger, more innovative and more representative of the communities they serve. Through mentorship, education and collaboration, she continues to open doors for the next generation of women leaders.

As Phuti Funeral Ministry Group celebrates more than three decades of service, Welma's leadership stands as a powerful reminder that legacy is not only measured by longevity, but by impact. Her journey reflects the courage to challenge convention, the resilience to overcome adversity and the vision to create opportunities for others.

**Your
story
matters**

