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Attention: News Editors

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UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR PATRICK GASPARD VISITS LUTHULI MUSEUM

United States Ambassador to South Africa Patrick Gaspard paid a special visit to the Luthuli Museum in Troutville today in honor of Africa's First Nobel Peace Prize laureate Chief Albert Luthuli.

The visit had significance for Ambassador Gaspard who was a student activist in his youth and is well acquainted with the political history of South African – in particular the unofficial 1966 visit to the home of Chief Albert Luthuli by former Senator Robert Kennedy, his wife Ethel and two journalists.

Senator Kennedy was in the country at the time at the request of the anti-apartheid National Union of South African students or NUSAS organisation to deliver its Annual Day of Affirmation Speech to be held that year at the University of Cape Town. The visit emphasized the connections between the fight against racism in the United States and South Africa.

Ambassador Gaspard was accompanied by his wife Raina Washington, Durban Consul General Taylor Ruggles and other consular staff. He held a private meeting with the daughter of Chief Albert Luthuli, Dr Albertinah Luthuli and Luthuli Museum Director Brian Xaba before he and his team undertook a brief tour of the museum.

Ambassador Gaspard and his team viewed the original 1927 home, sat at the famous site where Kennedy met and discussed with Chief Albert Luthuli and stopped to listen to the famous Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech made by Chief Luthuli in 1961, in Oslo, Norway.

“Chief Luthuli’s legacy means much to me personally and to the American people. When Senator Robert Kennedy defied government to visit Luthuli in 1966 it resonated deeply in our country. The words he spoke inspired a generation of Americans to get active in ending the scourge of injustice in South Africa. I remember being a young activist and listening to Kennedy quote Pericles.

His words about Luthuli and to the world at large formed a grounding place for freedom. We spoke about it so passionately. Chief Luthuli is a son of this soil but he belongs to everyone. His legacy will continue to inspire the American people. On behalf of my president and my people I am honoured to be here today,” said Ambassador Gaspard.

ENDS

NATIONAL CULTURAL INSTITUTION

Council members: Mr. DJ. Sithole (Chairperson), Adv. MJ Ralefatane (Deputy Chairperson), Dr AN Luthuli, Dr ZP Njongwe, Mrs NZ Yokwana, Mr. V Naidoo, Prof. VT Msila, Mr. D Brijlal, Mr. AS Bodrick, Ms TP Mapipa-Ndlovu