

## Antoinette Sithole delivers powerful account of apartheid demonstration

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STAFF WRITER

Antoinette Sithole spoke about her role in a high school student-led demonstration against apartheid in Soweto, South Africa. Director of Multicultural Education Holly Wilson and a group of Guilford students invited Sithole to the Bryan Jr. Auditorium on Nov. 17 after hearing Sithole tell her story while on a trip in South Africa.

Sithole's presentation began with background on Soweto's living conditions at the time of the demonstration, showing slides of small run-down homes and children playing soccer in the street. Another staple of Soweto was its racial identity.

While Johannesburg was known as the white city, Soweto was where the black people lived.

"Black power was a key into

Soweto," said Sithole in her South African accent.

She spoke of groups of patrolling people; if you did not say "black power," they would not let you remain in Soweto.

The students carried that attitude into the demonstration that occurred on June 17, 1976.

Four high schools, including Sithole's, chose to proclaim their wish for equality and nonbiased education in the streets of Soweto. They wanted to show their imprisoned leaders — Nelson Mandela, and Desmond Tutu — that the struggle for equality would not die. Nor would they abandon their goal of an education that focused on their history, not simply white South African history.

Pictures of Sithole and her peers flashed across the auditorium screen. They filled the streets in their school uniforms, raising signs to the

sky that called for equal education.

Sithole did not anticipate that her younger brother, not yet in high school, would be taking part in the demonstration. Only high school students were supposed to be in the streets of Soweto that day.

Sithole remembers seeing him across the street, too young, in her mind, to be in such a chaotic scene with students pressed shoulder to shoulder, chanting at the tops of their lungs. She lost him in the crowd.

"All of a sudden there was a shot," said Sithole.

Sithole watched as protesters descended around the area of the noise, and a man emerged from the crowd carrying a limp boy in his arms. Sithole remembers seeing her brother's face, and the blood pouring from his mouth.

The next picture showed the man, a protester but too old to be in

high school, carrying her brother in his arms, with Sithole screaming to his right.

"That picture impacted a lot of people," said Wilson, recalling the picture as a symbol of apartheid.

Sithole told of how they ran with her brother to a nearby hospital, and how the doctor told her there was nothing he could do. Her brother was dead.

"I was in disbelief, but the demonstration went on," said Sithole. "Outside it was another chapter."

She recalled the protesters destroying any government property in sight, and she remembers her fellow students seeing a white man get out of his car and doing whatever they could to hurt him.

Although the demonstration turned in a violent direction that Sithole did not expect, the students

caught the attention of South Africa. One newspaper headline read "(Our education) makes us feel inferior."

The students' activism led to eventual change in the education of South Africa's youth, but Sithole did not want that day, or her brother's death, to be forgotten. She said she thought a museum would be a good way to commemorate her brother and her peers for what they did together that day.

Front and center in Sithole's museum is the picture of her dead brother in the man's arms, with Sithole screaming to the side. Her brother's spirit lives on through the education of South Africa's youth today.

"My brother is a symbol of the demonstrations in Soweto," said Sithole when speaking about her museum, "but we all know it's about all those who died that day."

### SOY UN LÍDER

## Soy un Líder helps minority students achieve college dreams

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stepped onto the podium. Granados' family immigrated from Mexico to California when he was 14 to be farm workers. He spoke of initially being ashamed of his immigrant status, but then growing to take pride in himself as a Latino.

The key to reaching college for Latino students, Granados said, is to question every bit of discouraging information, like supposed scholarship unavailability. He also noted that while financial success is important in the long term, a surer route to personal happiness is to find a career that one enjoys. Granados forewent a career in engineering to teach theatre.

"It's not how much you make, but how you can use what you have to benefit the community," Granados said.

Students divided into groups and attended workshops in Duke Hall on college-related topics. These seminars included information on financial aid, the application process, and how to select the best choice of college. Irving Zavaleta, a 2008 alumnus, led a workshop on how to present oneself professionally.

Zavaleta presented his 2007 conference, and has been highly involved with Latino advocacy activities in the community.

"I still believe in the mission," Zavaleta said, referring to the struggle to elevate students of color in society. He went on to detail how he would like to see Soy un Líder become a statewide event, reaching out to all Latino students in the spirit of *Sí, se puede*.

*Sí, se puede*, meaning, "Yes, it can be done" is a common rallying cry in Latin America to unite the public around a common cause. César Chávez and the United Farm Workers famously used the phrase as their slogan. It was in this spirit of unity that all involved with the conference came together.

Following the workshops, representatives

from Guilford, Elon University, and Salem College, as well as the North Carolina Society of Hispanic Professionals held a small college fair in the gym. This fair allowed prospective students to get a sense of what questions they should ask and what answers they should expect in searching for a college.

As the day came to a close, the students assembled again in the Alumni Gym to hear the winners of the essay contest. Of four finalists, José Francisco Reyes Morales, an Early College junior, won first place and a prize of \$500.

Second-place winner Stephanie Cedeño, a junior at West Guilford High School, gave her opinions on the day.

"(The conference) is really informative. It makes you feel like you really can be a leader," said Cedeño.

García Rico gave the closing address, explaining how the essay contest was meant to encourage students to prepare to write their college application essays.

The group leaders gathered in front of the audience to wish the students good luck. With tears in her eyes but her voice brimming with joy, Rico exhorted them to success.

"We're just the students (here at Guilford.) There's no difference between you and us," Rico said.

Afterwards, she spoke of plans to expand next year's conference beyond hosting solely Latino students to welcome all minorities.

The presence of multiple language barriers will be a challenge, because the primary language of the conference is Spanish, but García Rico is already looking ahead to employing the Guilford student body's full range of linguistic abilities to make it even more accessible to others.

Soy un Líder organizers and volunteers look forward to improving the future for students of color from many different backgrounds.

## THE BEEHIVE COLLECTIVE



On Nov. 23 two representatives from the Beehive Collective came to educate the Guilford community on their group's current work, "The True Cost of Coal."

The Collective is a fluctuating group of activists rooted in and stemming from small-town Machias, Maine. The entirely volunteer-run organization is made up of artists, travellers and researchers scattered throughout the Americas. All members are storytellers, acting as vital components of the grassroots initiative.

By translating verbal and written information into accessible imagery, the group creates collaborative tools for education and organization.

The latest of these graphic campaigns, as explained in the information session, is a big-picture portrayal of Appalachian mountaintop removal. The artwork combines past, present, and future to inspire critical reflection and tactical action.

