

Julie Naran

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Sent: Tuesday, April 25, 2006 2:31 PM
Attach: Van's Speech.doc
Subject: Dr Van Zyl Slabbert

Fifty years ago, on August 9, 1956 – South African women from all corners of the country braved bullets and prison cells to fight for their most important freedom – the freedom of movement.

About 20 000 women of all races marched to the Union Buildings in Pretoria to protest against the extension of pass laws to them – a move that sought to tighten the apartheid government's control over women and their movements. Pass laws not only curtailed their freedom, but threatened their ability to provide for their children and create stable families.

The marchers – organised under the banner of the Federation of South African Women – challenged the notion that a woman's place was in the kitchen and instead declared it to be everywhere. The march gave birth to the famous slogan which has become synonymous with women's struggles 'wathint' abafazi, wathint' imbokodo' (you strike women, you strike a rock).

Financial Mail – in association with the International Women's Federation of SA – will publish a special report to honour the women who took part in this historic march. The report, to be published in June, will include interviews with some of the women who participated in 1956. The publication will also celebrate other women who have made a significant contribution to the making of SA. It will also profile the many courageous women who continue to shatter glass ceilings imposed on them.

The publication will feature in-depth profiles of SA's most influential business women, along with their counterparts in government and civil society.