

## Matsepo Sithole - Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu Natal

**Name:**

Matsepo Sithole

**Region:**

Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu Natal

**Age and birthday, day, month and year:**

21 (Born August 12, 1998)

**Occupation:**

I am a full-time 4<sup>th</sup> year law (LLB) student at the University of Pretoria. My goal in getting my LLB degree is transformation and justice in our country.



**Previous beauty competitions/pageants won:**

In 2016, I was crowned second princess in my high school pageant (Pietermaritzburg Girls' High School) and in 2019 I became Miss TuksVillage.

**Why do you want to be Miss South Africa and what do you think you will be able to bring to the role?**

My main objective is to afford individuals the opportunity to play to their strengths - strengths within the 'creative industry'. I feel like all the other mainstream careers already have enough spokespersons – but who speaks for the creative industry? The arts are often looked down upon and wrongly perceived to be a waste of time and not sustainable. I believe that people should follow their passions because when you do what you love you'll never work a day in your life. Covid 19 has highlighted how much the creative industry is undervalued and unprotected. I want to expose and address the exploitation within the industry. Furthermore, I would love to see people realising and cultivating their talents, making a living out of their talents and, most importantly, their talents being celebrated, protected and valued.

**How have you handled the lockdown due to Covid 19?**

I don't come from a wealthy family, so providing emotional and mental support for one another has been key. Moreover, keeping myself busy with my academics and focusing on myself has helped me a lot, although it hasn't been easy.

**What has this time taught you?**

It has reinstilled the principle of being grateful and doing with what you have.

**2020 has been a tough year globally. Do you see any positives in what has happened in the past months and weeks?**

Every dark cloud has a silver lining. Covid19 has highlighted various issues including how much the creative industry is undervalued and unprotected. I think this has opened a lot of eyes and opportunities for change within the industry.

### **What do you love about South Africa?**

I love the rich culture that South Africa has. We are a very talented nation with so much to offer.

### **What is one thing you would like to change about South Africa?**

The negative perceptions regarding the Arts, the socio-economic inequality and the exploitation within the creative industry.

### **Who is a previous Miss South Africa who has inspired you and why?**

Sasha-Lee Olivier. She has inspired in me to remind myself why it is so important to be comfortable in your skin and that every shape and size that women come in are nothing but beautiful.

### **Who are your role models/who has inspired you and why?**

My high school music teacher Mr Van Rooijen. He taught me that 'it's always better to make a glorious mistake,' which basically means that we should be present within our failures and be confident in ourselves enough to celebrate them. We shouldn't fear failure because failure is not detrimental but rather a learning curve. This is something I've carried with me ever since.

### **Tell us a bit more about your family**

I live with my mother, stepfather and eight-year old sister. My mother doesn't work but bakes amazing cakes in her spare time. My stepfather is musician that also runs an NGO that is involved in the development of the youth.

### **What do you do in your spare time/hobbies etc?**

I enjoy watching YouTube videos, listening to music and spending time with my family.

### **Do you think beauty pageants are still relevant today?**

In the past, beauty pageants celebrated women - but only a certain type of woman. Today's beauty pageants embrace every type woman. Women all over the world are breaking barriers and doing great things, so it provides a platform for all women.

### **Name two of your female role models and why?**

My mother for her undying love and strength and Thuli Madonsela for her ability to stand for what's right.

### **What is your message to young girls and young women in South Africa?**

Always challenge yourself, critically analyse the world because there is growth in that. Moreover, be independent and never lose yourself.

### **If you won the Miss South Africa crown and was able to meet one person, who would it be and why?**

Yvonne Chaka Chaka because she is a philanthropist, an ambassador of the United Nations Goodwill and a humanitarian. She did something that was unprecedented, she brought recognition to backing artists. I would love to meet her because I want to bring recognition to the creative industry as a whole.

### **What is the one thing people would be surprised to know about you?**

I am an introvert.

**What is the No 1 piece of advice that you would give to your younger self?**

To not be so hard on myself and to learn how to trust in the process. Trust that everything that is happening - both good and bad - is constantly moulding me into the woman I am meant to be.

**Describe yourself in three words:**

Optimistic, caring, assertive.

**What are you reading?**

The Secret by Rhonda Bryne.

**What music are you listening to?**

Jazz, hip hop and classical music.

**Your favourite TV shows?**

The Real Housewives of Atlanta, Chopped and The River.

**What is your favourite meal?**

Oxtail and pap.

**Who is your local and international celeb crush?**

Lunga Shabalala (local) and Michael B Jordan (international).

**What is your guilty pleasure?**

Sweet treats.

**Social media tags:**

- Facebook: Matsepo Tseppy Sithole
- Instagram: @tseppy\_sithole
- Twitter: @SitholeMatsepo